

Johannes M. Luetz · Tony Dowden
Beverley Norsworthy *Editors*

Reimagining Christian Education

Cultivating Transformative Approaches

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Preface

Christian education is a process of formation and holistic endeavour. It involves shaping an environment in which students can learn to know and love God, themselves and others so that as a consequence, all may flourish. Simply put, it invites the student to imagine how they might live as a proactive, influential and enlightened protagonist in God’s redemptive story. Further, the verb *to educate* stems from the root word *ex ducere*, ‘to draw out’, which requires a process of holistic human development intended to culminate in the formation of ‘whole’ persons. Well-known Professor of Philosophy Arthur Frank Holmes (1987) once contended: ‘The question to ask about an education is not “What can I do with it?” but rather “What is it doing to me—as a person?”’ (p. 25).¹ Ultimately and importantly, education is concerned with the making of ‘whole’ persons. This state of affairs illustrates the need for integrated approaches to Christian education that are both theoretically sound and practically beneficial, and for the identification of innovative pedagogical methods and tools, which are field-tested and practice-approved. Holistic approaches, which engage the head, heart and hands, open up expansive horizons. It is within this framework and the possibilities which emerge from the questions raised that this book has been prepared as a truly interdisciplinary publication on Christian education.

Most chapters in this book are papers that were first presented and discussed at the Research Symposium² ‘Learning & Loves: Reimagining Christian Education’, organised and hosted by CHC Higher Education, Brisbane, Australia, in cooperation with the Millis Institute and Associated Christian Schools (ACS). The symposium featured paper presentations by leading scholars and educators affiliated with Universities and Christian Colleges and Seminaries in Australia, New Zealand, UK, Philippines, Germany and the USA. In total, 36 research papers were presented by delegates affiliated with 34 institutions. Further, the research symposium also

¹ Holmes, A. F. (1987). *The idea of a Christian college*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

² http://www.chc.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/symposium-program_FINAL.pdf.

featured two keynote presentations. Well-known philosopher and author Dr. James K. A. Smith presented a keynote address ‘Higher Education: What’s Love Got to Do with It? Longings, Desires and Human Flourishings’, based on his book *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation*. The Executive Director of The Millis Institute, Dr. Ryan Messmore’s keynote address was titled: ‘The Trinity, Love and Higher Education: Recovering Communities of Enchanted Learning’.

This book presents a selection of 23 shortlisted papers that underwent rigorous double-blind peer review (two reviewers per chapter) by a total of 29 experienced scholars in their fields, all of whom have doctoral degrees. These papers, which speak to the heart of Christian education, incorporate a wide range of transformative approaches to learning, scholarship or research within a twenty-first century ‘real world’ context, including secular education environments. Scholars, professionals and practitioners from around the world explore topics such as integrating Christian worldview into programmes and courses; learning challenges and opportunities within organisational management; a theology of business; Christian models of teaching in different contexts; job preparedness; developing different interpretive or meaning-making frameworks for working with social justice, people with disability, non-profit community organisations and developing country contexts. These discourses make important contributions in three areas:

- (1) They offer a wide range of perspectives and topics on lifelong learning within a Christian framework collated into a single volume.
- (2) They address a gap in current literature on the practical applicability of Christian values to educational contexts, which extend past traditional learning institutions to other ‘real-world’ professional and non-professional contexts and environments.
- (3) They bring together international scholars and practitioners on fresh and transformational Christian reflections and perspectives on the place of love in education.

Last but not least, a further aim of the book is to document and disseminate a selection of some of the leading-edge research and praxis available today.

This book has been organised into five parts: Part I: Conceptual Horizons for Christian Education: Theoretical, Theological and Philosophical Perspectives; Part II: Holistic Pedagogical Perspectives: Integrating Spiritual and Practical Approaches; Part III: Inclusive Education and Hospitality: Educational Perspectives on Voice, Agency and Inclusion; Part IV: Contemporary Trends in Learning, Business, and Technology: Proactively Engaging Socio-Cultural Realities; and Part V: Promoting Reconciliation in a Changing World: Social Justice, Environmental, Historical, and Global Perspectives in Education.

The book will appeal to graduate and postgraduate students, teachers, school administrators, organisational leaders, theologians, researchers and education practitioners who will find it contains a fresh and inspiring reimagining of Christian

education perspectives and practices with ramifications of their application to lifelong learning and a wide range of contexts.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the authors for their willingness to share their expertise and experiences. Further, a special note of thanks goes to the 29 anonymous expert peer reviewers who gave generously of their time and proficiency but who cannot be identified and thanked individually by name. Finally, the editors wish to thank Kirsty Andersen for her professional copy-editorial services during all stages of the manuscript preparation.

With a line-up of chapters as rich in content and diversity as you are now holding in your hands and with five diverse parts promising a broad range of interesting, thought-provoking and engaging themes, it is our joy and privilege to present to you *Reimagining Christian Education: Cultivating Transformative Approaches*. We hope that you will enjoy a delightful time of reading, reflection, inspiration and (re)imagination of Christian education!

Brisbane, Australia
March 2018

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Contents

Part I Conceptual Horizons for Christian Education: Theoretical, Theological and Philosophical Perspectives	
1 Learning and Loves Envisaged Through the Lens of James K. A. Smith: Reimagining Christian Education Today	3
Beverley Norsworthy, Tony Dowden and Johannes M. Luetz	
2 God’s Curriculum: Reimagining Education as a Journey Towards Shalom	17
David M. Benson	
3 The Trinity, Love and Higher Education: Recovering Communities of Enchanted Learning	39
Ryan Messmore	
4 Christian Theological, Hermeneutical and Eschatological Perspectives on Environmental Sustainability and Creation Care—The Role of Holistic Education	51
Johannes M. Luetz, Graham Buxton and Kurt Bangert	
5 Reimagining Christian Schools as Revelatory Communities	75
Craig B. Murison and David M. Benson	
Part II Holistic Pedagogical Perspectives: Integrating Spiritual and Practical Approaches	
6 Transformative Learning: Insights from First Year Students’ Experience	91
Beverley Norsworthy	
7 Teaching Counselling from a Christian Worldview: Why and How Do We Do This?	103
Barbara Bulkeley	

8	Modelling Our Teaching on the Jesus of the Gospels	111
	Irene Alexander	
9	Teaching as Relationship	123
	Ann Crawford	
10	Making Sense of the World: Reimagining Bible Engagement in Christian Education with Teenagers in Light of Maxine Greene’s Aesthetic Pedagogy	135
	Graham D. Stanton	
11	The Wesleyan Quadrilateral as an Aid to Formation in Tertiary Education	145
	Sam Hey	
12	Reimagining Reflective Practice as Lifelong Learning for Professional Development Within Christian Ministry	163
	Graham James O’Brien	
13	Measured Reflection to Assist in Dealing with Conflict: Can an Educative Approach Improve Reflection and Cultivate a Healthier Classroom Community?	175
	Debra Ayling	
14	Narrative Possibilities and Potential for Understanding a Twenty-First Century Christian Spiritual Journey	197
	K. Rhonda Ransford and Ann Crawford	
Part III Inclusive Education and Hospitality: Educational Perspectives on Voice, Agency and Inclusion		
15	You are Welcome: Hospitality Encounters in Teaching	209
	Kaye Chalwell	
16	Personalized Learning and Teaching Approaches to Meet Diverse Needs: A Prototype Tertiary Education Program	233
	Karenne Hills, Kirsty Andersen and Samuel Davidson	
17	Using Appreciative Inquiry and Multimodal Texts as Transformative Tools Within a Christ-Following, Missional, Learning Community	259
	James Arkwright and Clement Chihota	
Part IV Contemporary Trends in Learning, Business, and Technology: Proactively Engaging Socio-cultural Realities		
18	Investing in Australian Youth: Nurturing Values Integrated Through Action-Based Learning	273
	Tony Dowden and Mark Drager	

19 Hope, Faith and Love: Engaging the Heart in the World of Business 283
Julian Jenkins

20 The 5P Model of Missional Business: Background and Description 295
Rod St Hill

21 Reimagining Christian Formation in Online Theological Education 327
Diane Hockridge

Part V Promoting Reconciliation in a Changing World: Social Justice, Environmental, Historical, and Global Perspectives in Education

22 Teaching History for a Moral Purpose: Wilberforce as Evangelical Hero 347
Mark Stephens

23 Songs of Orientation: Cultural Liturgies, the History Classroom and the ‘Winter Christian’ of Discontent 357
Richard Leo

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Part I
Conceptual Horizons for Christian
Education: Theoretical, Theological and
Philosophical Perspectives

Chapter 1

Learning and Loves Envisaged Through the Lens of James K. A. Smith: Reimagining Christian Education Today



Beverley Norsworthy, Tony Dowden and Johannes M. Luetz

Abstract This chapter introduces the reader to the notion of learning and loves in relation to Christian education. In particular, it draws from Smith's (CHC Higher Education Research Symposium 2016a) keynote address at the 2016 research symposium 'Learning and Loves: Reimagining Christian Education' and sketches a range of contemporary perspectives on the nature and purpose of Christian education today. Critical to this discussion is the educator's understanding of what it means to be human and Smith's (CHC Higher Education Research Symposium 2016a) presupposition that 'every pedagogy implicitly assumes an anthropology'. Given that Christian education has been shown to be concerned with the making of 'whole' persons (Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College* 1987; Ream and Glanzer, *The Idea of a Christian College: A Re-Examination for Today's University* 2013), holistic approaches that are both theoretically grounded and practically beneficial are critical to and for such a transformative endeavour. This discourse also introduces the content and organisation of the book *Reimagining Christian Education: Cultivating Transformative Approaches*, which focuses on some of the manifold facets, expressions and experiences of Christian education encountered in innovative contemporary research and practice today. The book is organised into five thematic sections and includes the introduction of both theoretical perspectives and pedagogical methods and tools, which are field-tested and practice-approved: (1) Conceptual Perspectives; (2) Pedagogical Implications; (3) Inclusive Education

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and Hospitality; (4) Trends in Learning, Business and Technology; (5) Promoting Reconciliation and Social Justice. By looking at Christian education through the lens of James K. A. Smith, this chapter offers fresh perspectives on (re)imagining education as the passionate pursuit of learning and teaching by lovers of God.

Keywords Christian education · Christian worldview · Imago dei
Learning · Cultural liturgies

1 Reimagining Christian Education

Christian educators continue to seek education which is ‘Christian in the fullest sense of the word’ (p. xiii), and this end, according to Knight (2006), requires ‘clearly understanding their basic beliefs and how these beliefs can and must affect their educational planning and practice’ (p. xiii). The focus in education has most often centred on the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of education rather than the ‘why’ and the ‘who’ (Palmer 1998).

Over its recent history, the emphasis for the purpose of Christian education has been on developing and living a Christian worldview (Greene 1998; Walsh and Middleton 1984; Wolters 2005); responsible discipleship (van Brummelen 1998; Wolterstorff 1980) and more recently, the notion of equipping to live in the Biblical metanarrative has been influential (Bartholomew and Goheen 2004; Goheen and Wolters 2005; Wright 1991). Integrated through these approaches is the idea of educating for character with references back to scriptural passages such as Micah 6:8, Galatians 5:22-23, Titus 2 and 3.¹ In terms of higher or adult education, similar foci have increasingly been on transformational education where the focus is typically on changing one’s way of understanding, perceiving and engaging the world (Craig and Gould 2007; Cranton 2002; Dockery and Thornbury 2002; Norsworthy 2011) leading to changed ‘ways of being’ (Rom 12:1-3) or dispositions with commitments to hopeful educational outcomes such as justice, shalom and faithfulness (Garber 1996, 2014; Plantinga 2002; Shortt 2017; Wolterstorff 1980, 2004). Christian educators would claim that the premises which inform and shape their educational philosophies are, as one would expect, referenced back to Biblical foundations.

¹All scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, New International Version (2011).

2 Learning and Loves

Recent works of Smith (2009, 2013, 2016b), which intrinsically link learning and loving in a fundamentally different manner, interrupt these more traditional approaches to Christian education by suggesting a change of focus for educational endeavour to shaping or forming one's loves, or desires. At the heart of his argument is the axiom that 'every pedagogy implicitly assumes an anthropology' (Smith 2016a); an understanding of what it means to be human. This is not a new idea in terms of developing one's philosophy of education. For example, authors such as Sergiovanni (2005) and Palmer (1993, 1998) drew attention to the fact that our learning, work, service and leadership are autobiographical or embodied expressions of our 'inner most being' (Entwistle 2010; Forsyth and Kung 2007; Iselin and Meteyard 2010; Norsworthy 2006; see also Psalm 1:1-3 and Psalm 37:4).

The contribution and challenge which Smith presents is that a teacher's understanding of humanity is not restricted to how they conceptualise people, and therefore students within their philosophical framework, but is evidenced by their choice of pedagogies. However, first things first: How do Christian educators conceptualise people? How do we answer the question, 'What does it mean to be human?' Smith (2016a) claims that 'the assumed model of the human person is 'the thinking thing' model [...] that human beings are primarily brains on a stick'. This inadequate but contemporaneously pervasive anthropology leads to a simplified understanding of the purpose of education as 'the depositing of ideas and beliefs [...] into the intellectual receptacles of thinking things in order to equip them for various tasks' (Smith 2016a). With reference to the work of Leclercq (1992), Smith (2016a) reminds us that in the eleventh century the university had a very different purpose based on a different anthropology. It invited people into a way of life to make them lovers of God who desired to learn so that they could be image bearers of God to and for the world around them. There is agreement that 'human beings are defined by their creation "in the image of God"' (Sands 2010, p. 28), but currently the dominant understanding of what this means continues to be from structuralist (or substantialist) or functional (or relational) viewpoints which give the impression that 'humans are "stamped" with attributes such as reason, self-consciousness, moral sense, self-transcendence and as such resemble or mirror God on earth' (Norsworthy and Belcher 2015, p. 2). Authors such as Sands (2010), Sherman (2011), Welz (2011), and Anderson (2014) have more recently drawn attention to the concept of *imago dei* (made in the image of God) as one's vocation, in terms of being God's representative on earth. Norsworthy and Belcher's (2015) research invited 120 teachers in Christian schools to articulate their generic understanding of 'image bearer' and its application to their students and its influence on their teaching. While multiple understandings of the nature of image bearing were presented, their conclusion was captured in the words of a participant who claimed that 'it changes everything when you view people and your pupils through this lens' (p. 8). It made all the difference to how classroom management,

curriculum decision-making, teachers' role and the very purpose of education were understood and therefore enacted or embodied.

Smith (2009) challenges the dominant ways of understanding *imago dei* and their reliance on reason and rationality. He claims 'to be human is to love and it is what we love that defines who we are' (p. 51). On this basis, as highlighted by Anderson (2014), education becomes 'the process of learning to love the right things, of learning to love what God loves so we can reflect what He is and what he does' (p. 97; see also Psalm 78 and Jeremiah 9:23-24).

Smith's (2016b) proposition that educators understand humans as those who have desires, who are by nature lovers rather than predominantly thinkers, presents more challenges for the Christian educator than those of an ontological nature. He draws from an Aristotelian model of the human person to highlight that humans are purposeful; the needle on their compass is always seeking some telos, goal or end. What he suggests is 'that the human creature is created by God as the kind of being who is animated and oriented towards some end and that end is something that they take to be ultimate' (Smith 2016a). This idea is inherent within Augustine's (trans. 1944) famous confession and prayer: 'Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless till they rest in thee' (p. 1). The purpose of Smith's links to Aristotle and Augustine is to identify three components of the design claim that is being made.

First, we are made *for* something. In fact, as creatures we are made *for* our Creator. This design claim has implications for education which seeks human flourishing: The process of becoming fully human. In his presentation at the 'Learning and Loves' conference, Smith (2016a) suggested that the task of Christian education might be framed as the process of helping 'people find what they were made for' and 'help me learn to love what I'm made to love'.

Second, it is not our minds that are restless until we find rest. It is not a matter of knowledge or a quest for information. Smith (2016a) argues that 'the centre of the human person is the heart; the heart is the seat of our loves and our longings'. The consequence of this for education is, as previously indicated, that it is aimed at the heart. The most holistic education will be the one that helps me to understand and live what I'm made to love.

Third, Smith (2016a) invites us to make sense of Augustine's notion of 'restlessness'. While, 'Every human creature is created by God as a lover, as a desiring creature, as an erotic creature and every human being is actually created with this sort of engine of desire that drives them towards something ultimate', the effect of sin and brokenness means there is 'no guarantee that they find their end in the one who has made them'. In other words, it is likely we will choose to love alternate things and to love them in the wrong way. We attend to things that are not ultimate as if they were ultimate. In the words of Romans 1, we worship the creation rather than the Creator. This is idolatry; idolatry of the heart; a misplacement of our desires (see Rom 1:25-32).

In the light of the three components of Augustine's confession and the focus for the 'Learning and Loves' symposium and therefore this book, the key questions become, 'How do I learn to love? How does my heart get "aimed"?' Smith's (2016a) response is that this occurs through practice. He explains:

You learn to love by practice. That is your heart, your desires, your ultimate longings are in some sense not just the outcome of ideas and beliefs that have been deposited into your mind. They are more like habits, dispositions, internal inclinations that in fact you acquire through being immersed in rhythms and rituals and routines that over time train your loves, even at a kind of unconscious or preconscious level to be oriented toward something ultimate. (Smith 2016a)

Pedagogies, traditions, rituals and the overarching narratives in which we teach are not naïve or neutral, they ‘do something to us’. For example, Postman (1995) argues that, ‘public education creates a public’ and the kind of public which is created is totally dependent on ‘[...] two things, and two things alone: the existence of shared narratives and the capacity of such narratives to provide an inspired reason for schooling’ (pp. 17–18). We see this same idea in Biblical passages, such as Psalm 78 and Judges 2, which clearly link the nation’s well-being to the education of the youth *and*, in particular, the fact that they ‘know who God is and what He has done’—both experientially and vicariously through the continual telling of the narrative. As Smith (2016a) noted, educational practices are:

[...] really pedagogies of desire that are training us to love some vision of the ultimate, some version of the good life. Not because they are targeting our intellect but because [they] capture our imagination [they] get hold of our hearts[...] and over time commit] our loves towards that vision of the good life.

The challenge for those of us involved in Christian education is that there is often a gap or mismatch between what we say we love and the desires which have been captured through routine, ritual and hidden curricula. According to Smith (2016a), ‘we underestimate the extent to which our desires have been co-opted by secular liturgies that have trained us to love other gods’.

Smith’s (2016a) understanding of humans and the consequential implications for education is reminiscent of the work of American educator Beane (1995) with regard to his democratic model of integrated curriculum where he wrote, ‘Curriculum integration does not just mean doing the same things differently but doing *something different*’ (p. 619, italics in original). In other words, if we take Smith’s (2016a) premise that learning is about forming students’ loves or desires, then the resulting approaches to Christian education at all levels become ‘something different’. He suggests that the more holistic approach to education which is needed is one which designs intentional routines and ‘ways of being’ which enable us to form habits or dispositions through engagement, involvement and embodiment of those practices. These practices he calls liturgies. The repetitive participation in these ‘inscribe in you a habitual disposition [...] that means you become the kind of person who’s default leans in that direction’ (Smith 2016a). He argues that, in this sense ‘what Christian education should be about then is a re-habitation of the heart’—something which is not achieved as a ‘trickle-down effect of what you know and believe’ but rather ‘they are caught bottom up from the practices’ in which you are immersed (Smith 2016a). The ‘something different’ which Smith (2016a) argues for ‘is a holistic, radical Christian education’ which is understood as ‘the re-habitation of what we love’ that moves from a narrow focus on information

‘so the scope [...] includes our gut, our loves, our longings, our cardia’. According to Smith (2016a), ‘it may be that Christian colleges and universities are the last outpost to remind us how to be human’.

The exploration of and engagement with these ideas have implications for how we understand the nature and purpose of education, our pedagogy, policies related to enrolment and behaviour guidance, curriculum design and decision-making as well as for the way students and teachers are organised and grouped. There are also arising implications for research both in terms of what we choose as the focus of research and also the methodologies which we choose and their ability to honour the participant as an image bearer rather than a statistic. Recent research also suggests opportunities for proactively inviting the contributions of marginalised people with little formal education and enlisting them as active participants, contributors and educators (Luetz et al. 2018, in press). Advocating ‘reversals of learning’, the authors of that research offer that poor and marginalised people with little formal education:

[...] are a valuable, although largely under-utilised and under-appreciated source for ‘bi-directional learning’[...] ‘Reversals of learning’ need to be standardised and normalised [... This will] empower passive ‘recipients’ and ‘beneficiaries’ (of benevolent concern) to become active ‘stakeholders’ and ‘partners’ (of a common [education] agenda)[...]A Judeo-Christian Theology underpins this discussion, offering hopeful historical perspectives on the Divine preference for self-revelation and human betterment through the least expected voice. (Luetz et al. 2018, in press, pp. 1, 18-19)

There are many other examples from research and practice that elaborate and illustrate the outworking of how educators may live and work as image bearers of God. The chapters within this book (Sect. 3) are presented for their ability to support or illustrate such exploration and engagement.

3 Pertinent Literature: A Succinct Overview of Contemporary Research and Practice

The chapters of this book are organised according to particular themes or foci in Christian education. In Part One, ‘Conceptual Horizons for Christian Education: Theoretical, Theological and Philosophical Perspectives’, the authors of Chaps. 1–5 explore the implications for the very nature and purpose of education in terms of a holistic understanding of humans and their task. Chapter 1—the current chapter—first discusses the notion of ‘learning and loves’ within the context of Christian education according to James K. A. Smith and then introduces the remaining chapters (Norsworthy et al. 2018). In Chap. 2, Benson (2018) uses a theological narrative approach to investigate the dimensions of shalom with a view to reimagining Christian education in terms of a pilgrim’s journey of growth under divine tutelage. In Chap. 3, Messmore (2018) argues that Christian educational institutions are most effective when serving as communities of ‘enchanted learning’

and that this necessarily implies an orientation towards the Trinity. Chapter 4 discusses education for environmental sustainability, including reducing global poverty and advancing the United Nations' sustainable developmental goals. In the process, Luetz et al. (2018) use theological, hermeneutical and eschatological perspectives to conceptualise education for environmental sustainability and 'creation care' as an intrinsically Christian endeavour whereby the plight of the poor and needy is attended to according to both physical and spiritual dimensions. Chapter 5 reimagines Christian schools by arguing that approaches to the integration of faith and academic learning can be reimagined holistically in the form of revelatory learning communities (Murison and Benson 2018).

In Part Two, 'Holistic Pedagogical Perspectives: Integrating Spiritual and Practical Approaches', the authors of Chaps. 6–14 explore the relationship between a holistic view of students and practical approaches. Chapter 6 utilises a visual research methodology in order to explore the experiences of first year students in an undergraduate counselling degree in terms of their identity and experience as learners (Norsworthy 2018). The chapter then elucidates how the methodology appeals to the Christian educator for its ability to honour the participant as *imago dei* (made in the image of God). Drawing on the belief that 'we counsel out of who we are', Chap. 7 discusses teaching of counselling from the perspective of a Christian worldview with the intention that students will engage in personal transformation in terms of accessing shalom (Bulkeley 2018). In Chap. 8, Alexander (2018) ponders how we might transform Christian tertiary institutions and rediscover the way of Jesus by sharing an understanding of 'living the kingdom' with students. Chapter 9 discusses the teacher–student relationship in terms of creating a space in Christian education whereby the learner will not only flourish but also experience the joy of 'transformational knowing' (Crawford 2018). In Chap. 10, Stanton (2018) reimagines a pedagogy of Bible engagement in secondary education that sensitively responds to the developmental needs of adolescents. Chapter 11 considers a conceptual framework for Christian student formation in tertiary education in terms of the four sources of reason, tradition, the Bible and experience (Hey 2018). In Chap. 12, O'Brien (2018) reimagines reflective practice in terms of life-long learning for professional development and for nurturing leadership within Christian ministry. Chapter 13 discusses a reflective approach to helping primary students deal with conflict within their friendship groups (Ayling 2018). In Chap. 14, Ransford and Crawford (2018) propose a narrative approach to enable Christians to effectively articulate their spirituality and thus embed the story of their spiritual journey in the contemporary context.

In Part Three, 'Inclusive Education and Hospitality: Educational Perspectives on Voice, Agency and Inclusion', the authors of Chaps. 15–17 illustrate approaches to the more holistic education advocated in Smith's (2016a) keynote address that design new 'ways of being'. Drawing on two qualitative research studies of Christian teachers' experience of hospitality in the classroom, Chap. 15 examines the nature of Christian hospitality in light of Derrida's theories, Biblical hospitality and classroom hospitality (Chalwell 2018). In Chap. 16, Hills et al. (2018) discuss a personalised learning and teaching approach for a student with an intellectual

disability in a Christian tertiary education context in Queensland. Chapter 17 reflects on an ‘appreciative inquiry’ research project undertaken in a Christian tertiary education context in Aotearoa New Zealand (Arkwright and Chihota 2018). The project explored how staff journeyed together to nurture more conscious and intentional attachments with God, which resulted in a transformed professional community.

In Part Four, ‘Contemporary Trends in Learning, Business, and Technology: Proactively Engaging Socio-Cultural Realities’, the authors of Chaps. 18–21 discuss ways that Christian education can articulate and interact with other sectors of society. Chapter 18 discusses the case of a non-profit community organisation in Queensland that used a values-based learning approach, underpinned by a Christian worldview, to help adolescents develop robust personal values (Dowden and Drager 2018). In Chap. 19, Jenkins (2018) explores the intersections between some important Biblical themes and mainstream business activities before going on to discuss implications for educators when engaging in business contexts. Chapter 20 describes and explains the ‘5P’ model of missional business that is used in the business curriculum of a Christian tertiary education context in Queensland (St Hill 2018). In Chap. 21, Hockridge (2018) reimagines Christian formation for theology students in the online learning and teaching context.

In Part Five, ‘Promoting Reconciliation in a Changing World: Social Justice, Environmental, Historical, and Global Perspectives in Education’, the authors of Chaps. 22 and 23 reveal some original ways for Christian educators to assume missional responsibility. Chapter 22 utilises the example of William Wilberforce, and his efforts to secure the abolition of slavery in the British Empire during the nineteenth century, to discuss how history education best advances moral understanding when pedagogies use all the available historical data and avoid oversimplification (Stephens 2018). In Chap. 23, Leo (2018) examines the advantages and pitfalls of critiquing societal and cultural liturgies within the context of history education. He discusses ways to circumvent the creation of the ‘Winter Christian’ whereby the student becomes overly critical of perceived disconnects between faith teachings and practices of faith.

4 Concluding Synthesis

As suggested by the title of this chapter (‘Learning and Loves Envisaged Through the Lens of James K. A. Smith: Reimagining Christian Education Today’), Christian education is a vocation for lovers as much as thinkers. In this sense, it is a life-long endeavour for all those students of life who passionately desire to learn so that they may optimally and fittingly bear the image of God for and to the world around them (Smith 2016a, attributed to Leclercq 1992). In short, and as discussed in Sects. 1 and 2, Christian education is a process of formation and holistic endeavour that enlists our passions more than perceptions (Smith 2013, 2016b). It involves the shaping of an educational environment in which students can learn to

know and love God, themselves and others so that consequently, all may flourish. Simply put, it invites the student to imagine how they might live as a proactive, influential and enlightened protagonist in God's redemptive story. As suggested by the verb *to educate*, which stems from the root word, *ex ducere*, 'to draw out', education requires a process of holistic human development intended to culminate in the formation of 'whole' persons. Well-known Professor of Philosophy Arthur Frank Holmes (1987) once contended: 'The question to ask about an education is not "What can I do with it?" but rather "What is it doing to me—as a person?"' (p. 25). Relatedly and importantly, education is concerned with the making of 'whole' persons. This state of affairs illustrates the need for integrated approaches to Christian education that are both theoretically sound and practically beneficial, and for the identification of innovative pedagogical methods and tools which are field-tested and practice-approved. Holistic approaches which engage the head, heart and hands open up expansive horizons. The myriad facets, expressions and experiences of Christian education are exemplified by the diverse range of innovative research and practice presented in Sect. 3. It is within this framework and the possibilities which emerge from the questions raised that *Reimagining Christian Education: Cultivating Transformative Approaches* has arisen as a truly interdisciplinary contribution to the Christian education discourse, offering a thought-provoking commixture of reading, reflection, inspiration, and (re)imagination of education as the passionate pursuit of learning and teaching by lovers of God.

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Chapter 2

God's Curriculum: Reimagining Education as a Journey Towards Shalom



David M. Benson

Abstract What is education *for*? Despite their differences, secular and religious schools alike are often busy with the mechanics of delivering their prescribed curricula. Relatively little attention is given to metaphysics, discerning the end towards which they labour. What, then, might be a sufficiently inclusive and encompassing Christian vision of education for all citizens in our simultaneously secular and religious pluralistic democracy? Christian educational leaders rightly seek an integrated vision of faith and learning. What is arguably lacking, however, is a unifying metaphor of faith and learning which is capable of sparking our imagination and serving our differently believing neighbours studying in our midst. The most comprehensive purpose for humanity as a whole and education therein is arguably *shalom*. However, this rich term is nebulous unless grounded in the concrete story of scripture. In this chapter, then, I adopt a narrative theological stance to revision and intend our educational efforts as serving the key dimensions of *shalom* that together comprise humanity's educational journey of growth under divine tutelage. 'God's Curriculum' helps us reimagine Christian education as a transformative pilgrimage. It is replete with practices, where diverse learners are drawn forward by desire as together they walk towards the promised garden city of peace.

Keywords Australian curriculum · Journey · Scripture · Metaphor
Narrative theology · Common good · Shalom

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1 Introduction: New Curricular Vision from an Evangelical Perspective

In this chapter, I will explore the difference that a particularly Biblical metaphor and narrative might make to why, what and how we teach—that is, our educational vision, the curriculum content and our pedagogy, being the art of teaching and learning. I will contend that reimagining education as participating in ‘God’s Curriculum’, a transformative journey or pilgrimage towards *shalom*, can be a powerful and simultaneously inclusive vision serving Christian and non-Christian students alike in a diversity of educational settings (see Benson 2015, 2016a). It can reinvigorate Christian educators tired of today’s factory-like efficiency and penchant for producing ever-better outcomes. Appropriate to this imaginative and expansive journey, this chapter will proceed from my subjective experience as a former high school teacher, and a current theological educator, to a wider frame of reference concerning curriculum language and ends. First, however, let me briefly ground and qualify my vantage point.

It is commonplace for contemporary philosophers to acknowledge that there is no ‘neutral’ perspective on education (Henderson and Kesson 2004; Ornstein and Hunkins 2009). Education deals with religiously interested questions such as the nature of being human and the meaning of life (Cooling 2010, pp. 15, 40). Indeed, without a sense of who we are (anthropology) and where we are going (*telos*), our educational vision becomes somewhat arbitrary (Noddings 2004, pp. 331–344). Virtue ethicists like MacIntyre (1984) are fond of pointing out that we each act according to the story we think we are living in (pp. 204–225; see also Crites 1971; Taylor 1989, pp. xi, 51–52). This is a tradition-formed story, irrespective of whether it is a secular, spiritual or religious account. It is shaped by one’s identity within a larger community of belief (Westphal 2009, pp. 18–19, 26). As such, and given my faith precommitment and community of belief, I offer a particularly evangelical account of the purpose of education, the path there, the constitution of this community of learning, and the ultimate guide to the destination of holistic flourishing. My retelling of the Biblical story as an educational adventure and coming of age for humanity as a whole, both in what we learn about and how we journey with God as the author of this redemptive history, is intended to locate learners and courses of study within divine pedagogy. These are normative claims that you are welcome to challenge, adopt or reframe, according to your own framing narrative. My hope is that out of the critical interaction of a diversity of such metanarratives present in our global village may emerge fresh curricular visions that enrich us all (Pinar et al. 1995, pp. 863–867).

2 What Is Education *for*?

With this preface in place, we are positioned to address the central question of this chapter. *What is education for?* Posed alternatively, if education were a trek, where is it headed? What is the *telos* of schooling, its purpose and end? The social critic and educator Postman (1995) mused that:

Without a narrative, life has no meaning. Without meaning, learning has no purpose. Without a purpose, schools are houses of detention, not attention. [...] without a transcendent and honorable purpose schooling must reach its finish, and the sooner we are done with it, the better. (pp. 7, x-xi; see also Kronman 2007)

Identifying the stories and metaphors which animate our educational efforts is thus no small matter. A personal vignette from my early teaching career concretises these questions. In the year 2000, Queensland's educational authorities were busy reworking the Secondary School Curriculum. This affected me as a third-year physical education teacher in a remote mining community. With 40% staff turnover per year, I was soon the most experienced teacher in my department. Someone thought it would be wise to appoint me as curriculum head for my subject area. Picture a bemused young adult, poring over abstract documents from central office, trying to form a set of balanced syllabi that met all their requirements. It piqued my interest in what we were trying to achieve. What were all these objectives about? What kind of human being would they produce? And who determined what mattered in education, and the kind of content we should cover?

It was a particularly turbulent period in the system. I started this role just as a new curriculum was introduced, so I painstakingly went through every previous syllabus and aligned them with the latest and greatest vision some faceless curriculum theorist had determined. Little did I know that a change of government was on the horizon, with new leadership and initiatives in the education department. By the following year, I was handed a whole new set of objectives, all coded, requiring me to restart the process from scratch. No extra pay, countless extra hours, with no apparent point.

Where was education going at that time? With new curriculum changes aplenty, today's teachers are likely wondering the same thing. For me, at the time, I felt I had successfully contended with the curriculum mountain, only to query if my Christian faith was illuminating a more meaningful *telos*. (We will attend to that peak later in this chapter.)

Australian education, as a microcosm of trends captivating the modern western world, primarily offered a story of material progress through 'social efficiency' (Graieg 2017b; see also Schiro 2008, pp. 4–5, 51–90, 175; Slattery 2006). It was built upon 'linear curriculum development', a technocratic and top-down model which dictated the rational flow from predefined purposes to content, procedures

and finally evaluation (see Tyler 1949).¹ Teachers were technicians, transferring data and guiding students along the automatic advancement conveyer belt from grades P to 12 through this ‘disciplining technology’ that shaped the identity of learners as effective consumers and producers (see Popkewitz 1997, p. 132 cited in Graieg 2017a, p. 28).

This is not surprising, given the era in which widespread public education was birthed. As Usher and Edwards (1994) explain, ‘Historically, education can be seen as the vehicle by which modernity’s “grand narratives”, the Enlightenment ideals of critical reason, individual freedom, progress and benevolent change, are substantiated and realised’ (pp. 2, 7–10; see also Robinson 2010). Emancipation and economic uplift were to come through an efficient process of scientific control and objective knowledge that would ensure the prescribed outcomes (Dewey 2004).

The dominant metaphor was industrial. Education was a factory, even a production line (Quiggin 1999). Curriculum was akin to assembly instructions, specifying the outcomes head office required. I had been through a corporate restructure where, instead of recalling the product, we decided to freshen up the labelling and hope the customers failed to notice. (This may be a cynical take; it is not, however, without substance.)

Lest I be construed as saying ‘secular’ education is dysfunctional, but Christian institutions have the remedy, let me briefly reflect on a further vignette, depicting my experience as a lecturer in a theological college. Coming off the back of marking season, assessment moderation and planning new units for next semester, I confess to easily slipping into a jaded take on what I do. The language of criteria, efficiency, progress from one iteration of a course to the next, improving our educational product, accuracy in assessment—this also fits the image of education as a factory. God is the owner, or perhaps the controlling shareholder, standing at some distance, but expecting a large return for his investment. And in this constellation of metaphors, our college Principal is cast as the middle manager, cracking the whip to keep up the standards. Students are the product, though simultaneously also the hypercritical consumers. Outcomes-driven assessment is the quality control and, on a bad day, I feel like an industrial minion making widgets that will soon be shipped off to God-knows where for someone else to employ.

This imaginary, this story—whether in a secular or religious educational setting—makes a kind of twisted sense of my job as a teacher. No educator may explicitly adopt or advocate this frame of reference, even as it saturates much of our rhetoric. It is a classic hidden curriculum. In all honesty, it saps the life out of me, reducing the wonder of guided discovery in an intriguing world to achieving a long list of objectives as part of a segmented curriculum and separate subjects (see Huebner 1999a).

¹For a devastating critique of Tyler-esque ‘scientific’ linear curriculum development models, and a rationale for a shift towards collaboration and conversation between diverse perspectives, see Pinar et al. (1995, pp. xvi, 6, 186–187, 867–868), Giroux (2005), and Kliebard (2017).

These modernist and industrial visions of education's end die hard. They linger even today in Australia's curriculum development models and rhetoric of education existing to produce 'successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens' (Graieg 2017a; Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs 2008, pp. 7–9). Having spent more than a few years studying the Australian Curriculum, as expertly constructed as it is, you will not find a transcendent purpose for education among the countless dot-points, oriented almost exclusively back towards our immanent and material anthropocentric existence (Graieg 2017c). Teachers should be excused for losing their bearings and at times motivation, faced with the 'overcrowding of specified content' and no metaphorical compass to orient their priorities and pedagogical approach (Brennan 2011, pp. 259, 275–277; see also Australian Curriculum Coalition 2011). The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)—Australia's curriculum authority—offers no definition for, or unifying vision of, curriculum as a practice in any document (Reid 2009, p. 8).²

Akin to traditional conceptions of education as transferring defined subject matter from the learned to the uninformed, curriculum is simply equated with content—'what teachers are expected to teach and students are expected to learn', expressed in terms of 'knowledge, understanding, skills and dispositions' (ACARA 2012a, p. 5; see Print 1993, p. 5). Granted, one can find evidence of the four major curriculum models (scholar academic, social efficiency, learner centred and social reconstruction) at work in ACARA's (2013) 'Shape of the Australian Curriculum' documents, as students are propelled towards education's diverse ends of learning how to know, do, be and live together (Delors 1996; Schiro 2008, pp. xv–xvi, 1–12). And yet, this bricolage is internally contradictory, calling out for an overarching narrative to bring coherence and enrich what is otherwise a consumeristic and utopian desire for progress, courtesy of our humanistic education system (Kliebard 2017).

As the educational philosopher Dwayne Huebner (1999b) challenged back in the 1960s, during the height of this craze for linear curriculum development, the human is so much more than a 'learner', and education is so much more than meeting prescribed goals and objectives; beyond this technocratic curricular myth, education concerns growth through encounter with life in its integrated complexity (pp. 102–104). Graieg (2017c) rightly extends this concern to our contemporary curricular quagmire, wherein ACARA's founding vision 'appears to represent a defining narrative or "sacred text" [...]. This sacred text for our society short-changes the person through a materialistic view of the world.' (p. 29). Our challenge at this curricular crossroad, then, is to unearth the 'ancient paths [...]' where the good way

²ACARA outlines the curriculum development process, but sidesteps foundational curriculum theory. See ACARA (2012b). On the danger of disconnecting curriculum writing from philosophy, see Lovat (1988).

is, and walk in it', constructing an imaginary and narrative sufficient for our calling as Christian educators in a post-Christendom pluralistic context (see Jer 6:16, New International Version³).

2.1 *The Power of an Image*

My particular vocation as a Christian educator and theologian is to uncover more faithful metaphors and tell these more compelling stories, discovering the power of an image to reimagine the integration of faith and learning. More influential than external accountability to ACARA's (2012a, b) curriculum documents are the internal myths we hold which imbue our educational efforts with meaning. Christian teachers may thus be resourced with subversive scripts and pictures of education's end, rightly conceived, that propel their work even while serving a secular curricular authority preoccupied with progress through material prosperity.

The importance of imagination and language is clearly evidenced in a classic work of philosophy by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), entitled 'Metaphors We Live By'. Their point is simple. While we like to picture ourselves as rational creatures who objectively navigate the world through use of hard data and linear development models, we are actually far more imaginative. We typically grasp the world through metaphor. Our language is soaked in metaphor. *This is that*, where the comparison is implicit. Argument is war. Time is money. Communication is sending. The mind is a machine. Education is business. Examples abound, though—to employ an artistic analogy—I trust you get the picture.

This happens because we are bodily creatures. The way we physically experience the world maps itself onto our language to make sense of our existence; it leads to assumptions that up is good, down is bad, bigger is better and so forth. This exceeds semantics. For better or worse, these metaphors group together into larger conceptual systems that end up defining our 'reality', our worldview—itsself another metaphor. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) explain, 'Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people [...] [T]he way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor' (p. 3; see also Lakoff and Johnson 1999).⁴

Out with *cogito ergo sum*, I think therefore I am. Being human is more than functioning as a 'thinking thing'. The Christian philosopher, James K. A. Smith, carries this argument in a metaphysical direction. He argues that *amore ergo sum* is closer to our created identity. As image bearers of the God who is love, 'we love therefore we are' (Smith 2009, pp. 19, 32–46; see also Smith 2016). Love, desire: This is at the core of who we are and why we do what we do. And in turn, what we

³All scripture quotations are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version 2011*.

⁴Following Janet Soskice (1985), metaphor may simply be defined as 'that figure of speech whereby we speak about one thing in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another' (p. 15).

desire with our bodies is intimately tied to our imagination: How we *image* the world (Smith 2009, pp. 62–63). Again, metaphors are that by which—even through which—we live. In his words:

It is because I imagine the world (and my place in it) in certain ways that I am oriented by fundamental loves and longings. It is because I ‘picture’ the world as *this* kind of place, this kind of ‘environment,’ that I then picture ‘the good life’ in a certain way that draws me toward it and thus construe my obligations and responsibilities accordingly. While my actions and behaviour are, in a sense, ‘pulled’ out of me because of my passional orientation to some *telos*—some vision of the good life and what it means to be human—my love and longing for that ‘good life’ is itself a signal that I conceive that ‘kingdom’ as something that attracts me. So, in some sense, imagination precedes desire. (Smith 2013, pp. 124–125)

Essentially, Smith (2013) is saying that the way we imagine our ultimate goals, and the way we imagine the story we are in, essentially shapes our desire.⁵ This picture can enliven or destroy our driving force to educate—that driving force which powers us to get up in the morning and mark that paper, tap out on that keyboard another lesson plan, and face those students afresh, even if they yet again failed to do the assigned pre-reading.

As I explored earlier, the metaphor of education as a factory, producing students according to predefined outcomes, is demotivating for many. Where, then, might we find richer images? As a liberal arts educator, having taught ancient philosophy, I perceive Socrates calling from beyond the grave, provoking me to define key educational terms, starting with an etymological survey.

What, then, is ‘curriculum’? As we have explored, it is inadequate to conceive of curriculum as simply assembly instructions guiding content delivery. An exchange of metaphors is necessary, drawing on richer and more relational pictures. *Curriculum*, like a Curriculum Vitae, captures the meandering course of one’s life—hardly a linear learning process with prescribed ends artificially adopted for a defined period, as in contemporary schooling. Curriculum was a relatively open-ended pursuit of wisdom: The way you walk, and where your journey is headed (Blomberg 2007). It comes from the ancient chariot race (‘Curriculum’ 2018; Hamilton 1990; Quinn 2002, pp. 232–244; Triche 2002). *Curriculum* was the course the chariot would follow, somewhat like the content we cover in a course of study. Curriculum is a noun. But it is also a verb, *currere*. It captures the dynamic running of the race itself. It represents the transformative experience of diverse individuals located within larger communities on a trek (Doll 2002, pp. 28–34).

Or think of the word *education*. The Latin root, *educere*, suggests that we are to educe, or draw out, what lies within each person. The religious motif of education as the story of a communal journey or a pilgrimage is appropriate (Huebner 1999c). At the macro level, the pedagogue, or *paidogogos*, is a guide called to journey alongside students, leading them out *from* somewhere, *to* somewhere (Smith 2012; see also Young 1987). Perhaps from ignorance to enlightenment; from poverty to

⁵Jamie Smith is here following a long line of virtue and narrative ethicists, such as MacIntyre (1984) and Smith (2003).

prosperity; from unemployed to employable; even an exodus from death to life: It depends on your vision for education.

Consequently, both education and curriculum must go beyond content. They represent a vision that includes the process of education and meaning-making (Print 1993, p. 6). Educators such as Pinar and Grumet (1976) birthed a widespread ‘narrative turn’ in education since the 1970s. They have reimagined *curriculum* as ‘the collective story we tell our children about our past, our present, and our future’ (Grumet 1981, p. 115; see also Gough and Gough 2003, pp. 11–12). Students are formed in identity as selves-in-relation to ‘academic knowledge, the state of society, the processes of self formation, and the character of the historical moment in which we live, in which others have lived, and in which our descendants will someday live’ (Pinar 2012, p. 187 cited in Graieg 2017a, p. 28). This communal journey educes students from where they are, to a shared destination that requires their active participation.

2.2 *Shifting Metaphors*

Etymologically, then, my educational metaphor of a communal journey must minimally include four constituent elements: This trek of lifelong learning comprises a destination (that is, a *telos*), a course of study as the journey’s path, a community of students as pilgrims, and a teacher as a guide. Resourced by Biblical imagery, we are positioned to reimagine Christian education as an essentially transformative process.⁶

When considered as a whole, I refer to this collective metaphor as ‘God’s Curriculum’. Rhetorically, this parallels the ‘Australian Curriculum’; theologically, it recognises divine educational intent across the canon of scripture (Brueggemann 1982). I commend this to you as playful and promising hermeneutic to supplement, perhaps even replace, dominant industrial images which I believe constrain contemporary schooling. It remains to unpack the functional equivalents of each element in this Biblical imaginary: *telos*, path, pilgrims and guide. We begin this exploration, then, with a consideration of the educational journey’s destination.

⁶Particularly helpful towards this end are Chaps. 7–11 of Smith and Shortt (2002, pp. 67–134). See also Smith and Felch (2016), where they, too, explore education through ‘Journeys and Pilgrimages’, before unpacking two additional metaphors of ‘Gardens and Wilderness’ and ‘Buildings and Walls’.

2.2.1 Telos

What is education for, from a Christian perspective? There are no shortage of answers. As outlined by Goheen and Bartholomew (2008), prominent theologians and teachers variously conceive of education as aimed at:

- responsive discipleship (Stronks and Blomberg 1993);
- responsible action (Wolterstorff 1980);
- freedom (Fowler et al. 1990);
- commitment (Thiessen 1993);
- the Kingdom of God (Groome 1999); and
- witness (Goheen and Bartholomew 2008) (p. 170).

While each of these visions illuminates important aspects of this endeavour, there is a tendency towards Christian-centrism: An excessive focus on Christianity and Christian agendas to the exclusion of others (Greider 2012, p. 459). 'Education for witness', for instance, is theologically sound in the context of Christian Schools (see Wright 2014). Nevertheless, talk of divine reign ushered in by elect witnesses tends to derail dialogue with secular educationalists; it is perceived as the triumphalist exclusion of every non-Christian storyteller who refuses to bow the knee. Evangelical authors, in particular, tend to construct Christian theologies of Christian education for Christians. What we need, however, is an encompassing Biblical vision that empowers Christian teachers—whether in pluralistic public education or private Christian schools—to draw out diverse citizens of all beliefs and none to serve the common good. We require a more irenic and inclusive frame for where education is going, if the Church is simultaneously to resist missional drift and yet also serve the flourishing of the secular city and ACARA's (2012a, b) curriculum aspirations therein (Iselin 2009; Shortt 2007; Thompson 2003).

Biblically conceived, the most comprehensive purpose for humanity as a whole is arguably *shalom*. This Hebrew word, translated as 'peace', exceeds the absence of hostility to embrace the completeness of life abundant (Wolterstorff 1983, pp. 69–72). *Shalom* comprises duty and delight through right relatedness with God, others, self and the world (see Stackhouse 2008, pp. 205–220). In short, *shalom* represents the common good of humanity and the holistic flourishing of all creation (see Francis 2015, nos. 156–158; Paul II 1997, nos. 1905–1912; Taylor 2007, p. 245; Volf 2011, pp. 55–74). From a theological perspective, education is ultimately in service of *shalom* (Wolterstorff 2002, pp. 79, 262; Wolterstorff 2004; see also Spears and Loomis 2009). We are drawn forward by longing for communion in this city of peace, our collective *summum bonum*.

2.2.2 Path

What, then, is the path to *shalom*? The epic story of the Bible is commonly divided by pivotal moments into discrete acts or chapters. This plot is driven by tension and

resolution towards the *telos* (Wright 1992, pp. 71–77; see also Ganzevoort 2012, p. 216). This structure is a helpful construct within which to consider God's Curriculum. My reading closely aligns with the work of Wright (1996) as a narrative theologian bridging evangelical, Catholic, Orthodox and liberal interpretations. I have adopted Wright's (2005) 'Six-Act' hermeneutic of Creation, the Fall, Israel, Jesus, Church and the New Creation as the fundamental legs of the path to holistic flourishing (pp. 121–127; see also Bartholomew and Goheen 2004).

Following von Balthasar (1990), Quash (2005) explains that *theodramatics* 'concerns itself with human actions (people), temporal events (time) and their specific contexts (place) in relation to God's purpose' (pp. 3–4). As such, it is helpful to crystallise key lessons learned as the Biblical narrative camps out at metaphorically rich locations. For the six legs of this travelogue, respectively, I have centred on a representative place to spark our imagination: The garden of creation; the tower of Babel in our rebellious fall; the tent in the wilderness of Israel's exodus; the mountain, both Olivet and Golgotha, as Jesus reveals the way of life abundant and redeems the world; the house at Pentecost; and the city of peace at the journey's end.

Before moving onto the pupils, as the third element of this metaphor, I must briefly address postmodernist concerns understandably raised at this point, that an explicitly Biblical account is necessarily coercive of non-Christian students and indoctrinatory through privileging only one perspective. If the Bible is understood as a relatively 'open' and non-foundationalist metanarrative with an underdetermined end comprised of 'little narratives', then we need not a priori dismiss divine authorship as a totalising discourse (Bauckham 2003, pp. 87–93; see also Thiselton 2009, pp. 312–316; Vanhoozer 2010, p. 44; Wolterstorff 1995). A 'responsible plurality' of readings is invited, leaving space for human improvisation as actors in a theodrama (see Vanhoozer 1998, pp. 415–421; Wright 1991). In Smith's (2013) words, 'We live *into* the stories we've absorbed; we become characters in the drama that has captivated us. Thus, much of our action is acting out a kind of script that has unconsciously captured our imaginations' (p. 32). Alternatively expressed, immersion in the drama of God, oriented towards our *summum bonum*, is how we are both restored, restoried and 'characterized' (Smith 2016, pp. 89–92). This hermeneutic has been employed by leading educational philosophers to demonstrate that Christians can simultaneously hold to the authority of their Sacred Text without it becoming authoritarian, thus making space for a constructivist pedagogy that cultivates participatory and transformative approaches to education (Cooling 2013, pp. 145–158).

2.2.3 Pilgrims

Who, then, are the pilgrims? In simplest terms, this 'school' takes in every human being, past, present and future. This universal horizon is reflected in the creation narrative of Adam being the 'every man' and Eve being the representative

'life giver' (Stackhouse 2008, p. 215). To be sure, the Biblical story focuses in on the children of Abraham. Nevertheless, Genesis 12 through Revelation 22 captures the mission of God to redeem a broken world and set everything right (Wright 2006, pp. 17, 189–190, 195, 213). God chooses the few, even the least, as a model to the nations and a means by which to call all pilgrims back to the path to *shalom* (1 Cor 1:18–31; Bauckham 2003, pp. 27–54; Wright 2006, pp. 252–265, 327–329). In this economy, the 'logic of election' does not exclude one's neighbour (Newbigin 1989, pp. 80–88; Newbigin 1995, pp. 66–90; Wright 2006, pp. 262–264). The particular story of Israel and the Church's re-formation, then, should resonate with the education of all pupils, irrespective of the particular religious or secular company they keep.

In my reading of the journey from the garden to the city, via the mountain of redemption, I have noticed a developmental motif of identity formation that accords with both educational progress and stages of faith (see Fowler 1995, p. 153; Wadsworth 1996, p. 124; Weiten 2001, pp. 445–447). The Biblical epic can thus be read as the story of humanity's maturation. This is best explained, however, by attending to the final metaphorical constituent in God's Curriculum. Who is our guide?

2.2.4 Guide

While we have many guides as human companions in the journey of life, simply put, there is only one Guide, the Teacher of us all (Matt 23:8; Jn 7:46; 1 Cor 4:15; see also Csinos 2010, pp. 45–62; Price 1954; Smith and Shortt 2002, pp. 135–146; Wilson 1974; Witherington 1994, Chap. 4). It is, after all, *God's Curriculum*. As Gabriel Moran (2002) suggests, divine revelation and human response may be understood through the metaphor of the teaching–learning relationship (pp. viii, 188–214, 219–220, 224–225). God speaks and draws humanity towards life abundant for the sake of holistic flourishing in all creation. We, however, have the freedom to participate or resist. Only as we actively journey with God in the present—remembering the past yet with our feet set towards *shalom*—may revelation be deemed a living reality. The Creator is thus our Teacher (1 Jn 2:27).

In the same way, I addressed postmodern concerns above, it is important at this point to allay theological concerns—particularly those raised by my Reformed brethren—surrounding this whole metaphorical project, imaginatively understanding the Creator God through a created human image of teaching and learning. I recognise that imaging God is dangerous business. Calling God a 'worker' of any type—a composer, potter, gardener, shepherd, builder and so forth—is necessarily analogical, anthropomorphic language (Banks 1992, p. 12). It can only be an imperfect comparison. God is transcendent, above and beyond any human conception. And yet, in love, God condescends like any good teacher (our primary vocational metaphor under consideration); He employs words and pictures that we

can grasp (Banks 1992, p. 18).⁷ To be sure, finite creatures cannot see into the essential Trinity, the identity of God, as the apophatic stream of Christianity contends. Nevertheless, as the cataphatic theological tradition has done for millennia, and following scriptural precedent, it is still legitimate to describe the economic Trinity, the works by which we know God's attributes, principally interpreted through revelation of the Christ.⁸ We do so by creatively employing Biblical images and rich metaphors that open up our understanding, growing our relationship with God (see Ticciati 2016)⁹ and inspiring our work in the world

⁷That Christians with Reformed convictions can adopt this human analogy with theological consistency is well evidenced by Calvin's (1975) own reflections, in no less a source than his authoritative 'Institutes of the Christian Religion', on Biblical metaphor and how God speaks to his simple creatures:

The Anthropomorphites, also, who imagined a corporal God from the fact that Scripture often ascribes to him a mouth, ears, eyes, hands, and feet, are easily refuted. For who even of slight intelligence does not understand that, as nurses commonly do with infants, God is wont in a measure to 'lisp' in speaking to us? Thus, such forms of speaking do not so much express clearly what God is like as accommodate the knowledge of him to our slight capacity. To do this he must descend far beneath his loftiness. (p. 121 [Bk. I, Chap. XIII]).

This same caveat should be charitably applied to Calvin's gendered description of God as 'he'.

⁸Again, this tension is well held by Calvin (1975, pp. 41–42, 61–62, 96–97, 121 [Bk. I, Chaps. II. 1–2, V.9, X.1–2, and XIII.1, respectively]). He avers, 'What is God? Men who pose this question are merely toying with idle speculations. It is more important for us to know of what sort he is and what is consistent with his nature' [i.e., not what God essentially *is*, but what God is *for us*] (p. 41). Thus,

We ought not to rack our brains about God; but rather, we should contemplate him in his works. [...] For the Lord manifests himself by his powers, the force of which we feel within ourselves and the benefits which we enjoy. We must therefore be much more profoundly affected by this knowledge than if we were to imagine a God of whom no perception came through to us. Consequently, we know the most perfect way of seeking God, and the most suitable order, is not for us to attempt with bold curiosity to penetrate to the investigation of his essence, which we ought more to adore than meticulously to search out, but for us to contemplate him in his works whereby he renders himself near and familiar to us, and in some manner communicates himself. (Calvin 1975, pp. 61–62)

Calvin (1975) later reaffirms this sentiment: In Scripture, God's 'powers are mentioned, by which he is shown to us not as he is in himself, but as he is toward us: so that this recognition of him consists more in living experience than in vain and high-flown speculation' (p. 97).

⁹In Ticciati's (2016) frame, 'doctrinal reference [must be reconceived] within the context of human transformation' (p. 123). Drawing on Augustine's thought, she suggests that 'the role of doctrine is to ward off general classification in respect of God, making way for redemptive encounter with God' (p. 123). That is, lightly held *metaphors*, largely derived from what we believe God has in some sense 'revealed', are less a grasping of God's nature, and more a bridge to relationship and reformation into the image of our Creator (p. 139). See also Augustine (1960) on Psalm 144:6 (as paraphrased by Calvin 1975): '[...] disheartened by his greatness, we cannot grasp [God], [therefore] we ought to gaze upon his works, that we may be restored by his goodness.' (p. 62).

(Banks 1992, pp. 19–25; see also Gunton 1989, pp. 37–38).¹⁰ Thus, in this qualified and minimalist sense, even a premier theologian such as Thomas Aquinas (1953), who is regularly associated with the *via negativa*, can speak of God as humanity's Teacher *par excellence* (Mooney and Nowacki 2014, pp. 329–332).¹¹

Returning to the metaphor, then, through God's explicit commands and the narrative flow from our infancy at Creation to our adulthood in the New Creation, we can trace an implicit core curriculum for humanity to come of age (Augustine 1972, Bk. 10, Chap. 14; Moran 2002, pp. 197–198). This curriculum has content we are to *learn about*, and a potent action we are *called to* freely perform, capturing our genuine agency and fundamental posture if we are to walk with the divine pedagogue. From this narrative theological perspective, we may see anew and intend our educational efforts as serving the key dimensions of *shalom* that together comprise humanity's educational journey of growth under divine tutelage. 'God's Curriculum' helps us reimagine education as a transformative pilgrimage. It is replete with practices, where diverse learners are drawn forward by desire as together they travel towards the promised garden city of peace. This metaphor will not deliver a particular educational design. It will, however, yield an open approach that may enrich curriculum development and our vision for education, informing what and how we teach (see Smith and Shortt 2002, pp. 56–66).

3 God's Curriculum: Human Participation in Divine Pedagogy

Thus far we have shifted our modern and industrial educational metaphor to a more expansive picture of pilgrimage: God educes, or leads us out, from infancy to adulthood, and from death to life. It remains to briefly narrate this trek as suggestive for how we might see anew our subjects and teaching efforts within this story, cultivating transformative approaches to Christian education. In passing, I will also outline a rationale within the warp and woof of redemptive history which makes this vision of education fundamentally open to one's differently believing neighbour and her Sacred Text.¹² It can be no more than a fragmentary recounting of a travelogue that spans thousands of pages and as many years, inviting the active

¹⁰Bringing this lengthy defence of divine metaphor to a close, it is helpful to revisit the nature of analogical language. According to Ricoeur (1977), *metaphor* is 'the rhetorical process by which discourse unleashes the power that certain fictions have to redescribe reality' (p. 70). In so doing, this imaginary channels our vocation. On the process of designing metaphors to unleash creativity and direct action, see Erard (2015).

¹¹For a helpful survey of Aquinas's theological method exemplified in 'Summa Theologia' (1948), see Hector (2007).

¹²This brief *apologia* for a Christian curriculum open to other perspectives is a restatement of assertions first made in my public lecture on finding an 'Uncommon Good' with unbelievers (Benson 2016b, pp. 22–24).

Stage	Plot: education for <i>shalom</i>	What we learn about	How we journey with God	Fusion: education for <i>holistic flourishing</i>
Creation making <i>shalom</i>	Designed for good ... cultivate God's garden	Work	Cultivate	Responsibility (practice creativity)
Fall breaking <i>shalom</i>	Damaged by evil ... repent over the tower	Knowledge	Repent	Critical Thinking (practice discernment)
Israel seeking <i>shalom</i>	Chosen to bless ... bless from the tent	Wisdom	Bless	Understanding (practice dialogue)
Jesus saving <i>shalom</i>	Restored for better ... love on the mountain	Reciprocity	Love	Care (practice compassion)
Church embracing <i>shalom</i>	Sent to heal ... reconcile in the house	Holiness	Reconcile	Inclusion (practice virtue)
New Creation entering <i>shalom</i>	God sets it right ... worship in the city	Hope	Worship	Integration (practice gratitude)

Fig. 1 Tabulated summary of ‘God’s Curriculum’

reader to insert myriad places and faces to flesh out the plot.¹³ Figure 1 traces the contours of the narrative, elucidating what God as guide would have us learn about as curriculum content, and the primary way we may actively participate in *currere*, journeying with God towards divine ends (see also Graieg 2017d). Finally, this figure highlights how this educational vision may be translated into a public school setting, *shalom* reframed as *holistic flourishing* that embraces and yet transcends the merely material world of human concern. While I contend that ‘God’s Curriculum’ has relevance for all levels of education, the illustrations I offer are drawn from my experience in middle school education, in defined subjects that align with ACARA’s (2012a, b) stipulations. As sketchy as this account is, I trust it is enough for the reader to be caught up in the drama, discovering one’s own role in moving the story forward.

As with any story, our retelling must start ‘in the beginning’ (Gen 1:1).

Stage One: Creation, where the cosmos is designed for good. We were infants in Eden, making *shalom* as we learned about the duty and delight of work, called to cultivate God’s garden. Creation highlights that all humans, irrespective of belief, are image bearers; consequently, we had better understand each other’s basic maps directing our visions for cultivating the world that we might work together. This curriculum serves responsibility and is fostered through the interdependent practice of creativity. Through this metaphor, we can reimagine subjects like Geography as innovatively working together to sustain our world; teachers are called to awaken wonder in pilgrims, helping them steward the gift of creation.

Onwards, then, to Stage Two: The Fall, where all creation is damaged by evil. As toddlers we believed a lie in the garden, and threw a tantrum at Babel, breaking *shalom*; God focused our attention on the promise and peril of knowledge, calling us to repent over the prideful towers we build. The Fall reveals our God-given ‘freedom’ to choose a lie, and our shared tendency to deceive and be deceived;

¹³The catch phrases summarising each leg of the journey—with my addition for Israel and the New Creation—draw from Choung (2008).

exposure to a competing take on life's *telos* may thus jolt us out of complacency, ignorance, pride and self-interested readings that enshrine unjust privilege. This curriculum serves critical thinking and is fostered through the practice of inter-perspectival discernment. Through this metaphor, we can reimagine subjects like Science as evaluating humbly what and how we know; teachers are called to support pilgrims in discovering the nature of the world, critically seeing our human bias, and—when warranted—embracing the dynamics of trust.

Onwards, then, to Stage Three: Israel, chosen to bless the world. To fix the fall, our divine pedagogue chose the few as a means to rescue the many. The children of Abraham, as wanderers seeking *shalom*, learned about obedience to the way of wisdom, called to bless from the tent. We are thus oriented by a vision of flourishing. Israel's election to bless the nations requires an expansive wisdom that is open to multiple worldviews and truth wherever it may be found, especially in the cries of those we are tempted to ignore. Through this metaphor, we can reimagine subjects like History as discerning wisely a path to holistic flourishing; teachers train pilgrims to bridge the contested stories of our past with a preferred vision of a peaceful future, seeking a way of growth in the present. This curriculum serves deep understanding and is fostered through the practice of dialogue—especially conversing with those across lines of division.

Onwards, then, to Stage Four: Jesus, where humanity is restored for better. The elect, like every other nation, were blown off course by their selfish desire. So the Teacher stepped in as the True Israelite to anchor their identity, fulfil their call and embody our *telos*. Through Jesus' exemplar, instruction and sacrifice, God was saving *shalom*. As adolescents with a real choice to make, we learned about reciprocity, called to love on the mountain. At the story's climax, Jesus confronts us with the Golden Rule: Do unto others as we would have them do unto us. Reciprocity demands even-handedness for the inclusion of diverse perspectives in a pluralistic educational space. Like their Messiah, Christ-followers are to take the lead in sacrificially giving up our grasping for control and clinging to rights. Our vocation is to listen to and radically love our neighbour, irrespective of creed. Through this metaphor, we can reimagine subjects like Civics and Citizenship as inculcating empathy for the Other; teachers model to pilgrims the way of the cross, preserving difference and fostering harmony through self-giving that advances the common good. This curriculum serves care of citizens and non-citizens—such as refugees lost in transit—alike, made real through the practice of compassion, tilted towards service of the least powerful.

Onwards, then, to Stage Five: The Church, sent together to heal the world. Through the Spirit, God bound all people together in harmony at the table of friendship, embracing *shalom*. As emerging adults in the upper room at Pentecost, we learned about the responsibility of holiness to sustain such a community, a call to reconcile in the house. Out of this Biblical plot, we find in the Church's mission a call to become a community of character capable of working for reconciliation and hospitality. My neighbour's functionally sacred story reveals the myriad tongues and imaginaries shaping the nations, whose differences the Spirit longs to refashion and fit together in unity. Through this metaphor, we can reimagine subjects like

English as tying our lives together with diverse Others; teachers inspire pilgrims to wrestle with the meaning of life, reflecting upon alternative sacred stories at play in their local context as a training ground for peacefully living together in a pluralistic society. This curriculum serves inclusion and is built up through the exercise of virtue.

Finally, we reach Stage Six: The New Creation, where God sets everything right. Our *telos* is being invited into full maturity as divine image bearers, entering *shalom* in God's glorious presence. With our feet set towards the destination, we learn about hope, called to worship in the city. In the story of the New Creation, we look forward to the glory of the nations in the form of their richest cultural artefacts refined through judgment and brought into the Garden City to God's glory. We pre-empt this celebration by spotting truth, goodness and beauty in our neighbour's tribe and framing stories such as found in their Sacred Texts. Through this metaphor, we can reimagine every subject, whether in a secular school or a theological college, as an avenue to foster holistic integration; teachers invite pilgrims through creative and reflective practices to cultivate gratitude, anticipating the song of a mixed multitude praising the Creator from whom all that is true, good and beautiful flows.

4 Walking Out This Vision

Reviewing the expedition above, the winding course of life's curriculum traverses the central themes of work, knowledge, wisdom, reciprocity, holiness and hope. We trek with the Creator on this transformative journey as we cultivate, repent, bless, love, reconcile and worship. God's Curriculum calls all people to seek *shalom*, starting with our shared secular existence in the here and now. When fused with more secular perspectives such as those espoused by ACARA (2012a, b), we can construct a curriculum vision aimed at holistic flourishing. That is, we educate for responsibility, critical thinking, understanding, care, inclusion and integration. Each subject and its course of study becomes a vehicle through which we progress towards our goal, the means and ends aligned. The student-pilgrim—and her human guide journeying alongside—is formed through the communal practice of creativity, discernment, dialogue, compassion, virtue and gratitude.

Once we have seen anew our subject matter in light of God's Curriculum, we are then positioned to choose an appropriate pedagogy that makes these links and resonances explicit.¹⁴ Finally, we can reshape our practices, attending to classroom dynamics, layout and routines that cultivate necessary habits and aid students in their journey to *shalom* (see Cooling and Green 2015; What if learning n.d.b). In conclusion, I commend to you 'God's Curriculum' as a rich metaphor and a fruitful hermeneutic. Reimagining education in this larger frame can serve to animate our schools, our syllabi, and even our classroom teaching, come what curriculum may.

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¹⁴In Chap. 7 of my dissertation (Benson 2016a, pp. 154–156), I suggest a five-movement pedagogy aligned with the practical theological action–reflection cycle, consisting of *encounter*, *questions*, *stories*, *synthesis*, and *response*. In turn, I structure my curricular and pedagogical innovations around the three *What If Learning* movements of 'seeing anew, choosing engagement, and reshaping practice' (What if learning n.d.a).

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Chapter 3

The Trinity, Love and Higher Education: Recovering Communities of Enchanted Learning



Ryan Messmore

Abstract The claim that God is Love (1 Jn 4:16) implies that a dimension of otherness or plurality exists in the Godhead and supports a Trinitarian notion of the divine. The doctrine of the Trinity, in turn, grounds a relational understanding of human personhood, a notion of the human person as relationally constituted—a notion of the human person as a lover. Educators should take seriously the nature of students as lovers by helping to direct their students' loves towards the right end. This will entail recovering a sense that the object of study in each discipline is enchanted. In other words, the particular facet of reality being explored in a given academic field was created by the Logos who is Love, and therefore it is not neutral but has a purpose and a given meaning—and perhaps even beauty—that is worthy of appreciation. Given the nature of human personhood, such learning—understood as the shaping of loves—will take place in the context of relationships. I argue that educational institutions that identify as Christian are most effective when serving as *communities of enchanted learning*. Moreover, such learning can be truly integrated and coherent if it is ordered towards the ultimate source of beauty, wonder and unity-in-diversity: The Trinity.

Keywords Trinity · Education · Personhood · Enchanted learning
Love · *Perichoresis* · Community

1 Introduction

The argument of my chapter is driven by a simple yet significant conviction: That how we think about God shapes how we think about human persons, which in turn shapes how we think about education. That is, because education (from the Latin root *ex ducere* = to draw out) has to do with drawing out the inner potential of humans, our approach to education will be determined to some extent by how

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we understand the human person. As Smith (2016a, b) noted in two recent presentations, every pedagogy assumes an anthropology; but I want to argue that anthropology—and particularly the notion of the human person as a lover—is influenced by prior assumptions that we hold about the God in whose image humans are created (God concepts shape anthropology, which shapes pedagogy).

I will take as my starting point the present state of education, which, in modernity, is not what it used to be. We have much to be thankful for concerning modern developments in knowledge and technology, but we also need to acknowledge that the modern West has lost or moved away from key assumptions about the world and how we know it.

In the Western tradition of education, there was one question that was considered to be the ‘Great Question’—the question that students worked for years developing the intellectual and conceptual tools to grapple with: The question of the One and the Many. According to Clark and Jain (2013), the question of the One and the Many was so significant that it formed the basis for the core subjects constituting a basic liberal arts curriculum.

Gunton (1993) argues in his book ‘The One, the Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity’ that this question has been a thread linking the thought of every age since the beginning of Western philosophy. ‘The dialectic of the one and the many,’ he claims, ‘has provided the framework for most subsequent thinking about many of the basic topics of thought.’ (p. 18). This includes how we understand the nature of the universe and human society. Gunton (1993) even suggests that the Cold War was, in part, fought over the question of whether a collectivist or individualist vision of society is the right one: ‘of whether the one or the many should have predominance.’ (p. 19)

Prior to modern times, the quest for some sense of unity in society—some sense of peaceful order that can be achieved within human relations—was seen to be connected to another conviction: That there is a unity or coherence inherent in the universe itself—that all things hold together in some way rather than existing in random chaos. Throughout the development of Western civilization predominated a belief that the created order carries within it a given purpose or meaning, *given to it* by a purposeful Creator. As a result, things like truth, goodness and beauty were realities to be *discovered*, not merely invented by human subjects. Thus, learning was to be approached through a humble, listening mode—a posture of submitting to and appreciating the various given orders of creation.

This led to yet a further conviction: That all *knowledge* of reality is somehow connected—there is a unity that underlies the great diversity of academic disciplines, and the pinnacle of a good education was understood as the ability to contemplate that unity-in-diversity.

Several of these core assumptions have been lost in modern Western culture in general, and in modern approaches to education in particular. Rather than unified, today education is often more fragmented; as one professor has noted of the modern university, the only thing that many academic departments share in common anymore is a parking lot!.

Education in today's society is also more sterile, by which I mean the world has become stripped of any inherent meaning or *givenness* of purpose (if there is any purpose, it is to be imposed by man upon reality, or, more precisely, imposed by each individual community upon reality). In Gunton's (1993) words, the universe has come to be viewed as 'an empty and hostile place,' interpreted as a neutral field of data to be collected and manipulated for our own purposes (p. 20). In other words, the world has become *disenchanted* of any teleological or spiritual reality that can be known and pursued in a public way.

Thus, for example, whereas theology used to be considered the 'Queen of the Sciences', the modern western Academy is largely dismissive of such fields, with many academic departments assuming that in order for knowledge to be reliable—in order for it to be credible as knowledge—it has to be disinterested and neutral in terms of the big, metaphysical or moral questions. Moreover, in the higher education arena, especially, the pursuit of knowledge is often a highly individualistic experience, pursued solely for individualistic goals (such as employment and monetary gain).

In light of this assessment of modern Western culture, the question I want to explore is how we can recover an approach to education that is more integrated, more communal and more enchanted. The answer has to do with what I submit is the most foundational doctrine of the Christian faith: The Trinity.

2 Lovers in God's Image

If it is true that our understanding of education carries with it an implicit understanding of what it means to be human, we need to understand what it means to be human in terms of our creation *imago dei*. The Biblical story suggests that the God in whose image we are made is a God who is *love*. In his *De Trinitate*, St. Augustine (trans. 1955) comments on the verse in 1 John, Chap. 4¹:

[John] says explicitly: 'Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not, has not known God; for God is love.' (1 John 4:7 f.). The train of thought makes it clear enough, that this same brotherly love (the love wherewith we love another) is being proclaimed with apostolic authority to be not only 'of God,' but 'God.' (cited in Burnaby 1955, pp. 52-53)

Here, caution is required, for the claim is not that love-as-it-is-understood-by-many today (as a soft, warm, romantic feeling) is the almighty creator of heaven and earth. Rather, the claim is that God's nature is the love that is revealed in Jesus Christ as *the act of giving oneself for another's good*. 'This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.' (1 Jn 3:16). 'Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.' (Jn 15:12-13)

¹All scripture quotations are from the *Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version* (1997).

Drawing on the work of theologians Hart (2003) and Torrance (1991), I want to draw out two implications of the claim that the nature of the Christian God is love.

Love, by definition, requires an ‘other’. If love is the act of giving oneself away to another, then the presence of love presupposes at least two: A lover and a beloved—one who gives himself away and an ‘other’ to whom he gives. Hart (2003) notes that, given the nature of love, the God who reveals himself as love, therefore, has some dimension of otherness in his nature. He describes this in terms of a ‘distance of address and response’ internal to the Godhead—distinct ‘intervals’ of giving and receiving, initiation and return—within God (p. 172). The God in whose image humans are made is love and, therefore, is characterized by an internal unity-in-plurality.

The second implication of God’s nature as love flows from the fact that love is a dynamic action. Drawing from Athanasius, Torrance (1991) notes that activity and movement are intrinsic to God’s very being. ‘God is never without his activity (*energeia*)’, writes Torrance, ‘for his activity and his being are essentially and eternally one. The act of God is not one thing, and his being another, for they coinhere mutually and indivisibly in one another.’ (p. 73). In short, if God is love and love names the *activity* of self-giving, then we can understand God’s nature in terms of dynamic activity. Hart (2003) sums this up by writing:

When Scripture says God is love, after all, this is certainly not some vague sentiment concerning the presence of God in our emotions, but describes the *life* of God, the dynamism of his substance, the distance and the dance: the unity of coinherence, but also the interval of appraisal, address, recognition, and pleasure. (p. 175)

Here, Hart reiterates a very similar claim by Lewis (1980), who says:

What Christians mean by the statement ‘God is love’ [is] that the living, dynamic activity of love has been going on in God for ever and has created everything else...God is not a static thing—not even a person—but a dynamic, pulsating activity, a life, almost a kind of drama. Almost, if you will not think me irreverent, a kind of dance. The union between the Father and Son is such a live concrete thing that this union itself is also a Person. (p. 175)

What emerges from these considerations is a certain understanding of *personhood*—i.e. the notion of persons not as autonomous, self-enclosed and self-defining individuals, but rather persons as beings constituted by relationships with others. The German theologian Moltmann (1981) argues that this kind of relational constitution characterizes the three persons of the Godhead:

The three Divine Persons exist in their particular, unique natures as Father, Son and Spirit in their relationships to one another, and are determined through these relationships. It is in these relationships that they are persons. Being a person in this respect means existing-in-relationship. (p. 145)

LaCugna (1991) expounds on this idea by claiming that the triune persons:

[...] ‘are’ what they are by relation to one another [...] No person exists by him/herself or is referred to him/herself [...] Rather, to be a divine person is to be by nature in relation to other persons [...] taking his/her existence from the other [...] each person comes to be (in the sense of *hyparxeos*) what he/she is, entirely with reference to the other. (pp. 270-271)

If humans are created in the image of this sort of God, then this relational notion of Divine personhood should shape our understanding of human personhood (which we will come to shortly). Indeed, Hart (2003) asserts that this relationality should serve as ‘the starting point for a theological assault on the modern notion of the person’. (p. 170)

According to one of Moltmann’s students, the American theologian Meeks (1989), ‘There is, in reality, no such thing as a radically individual and isolated human being.’ (p. 12). Instead, persons are relationally constituted; we depend upon each other and cannot rightly understand ourselves apart from others. Persons are, to use Volf’s (2003) phrase, “‘not without’ the other’, and this is true of humans because it is true of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (p. 177).

This is the first crucial link in the argument: The link between a God who exists as a relational communion and the relational nature of human persons made in His image.

3 The One and the Many

In addition to providing conceptual resources for understanding what it means to be a personal lover, the doctrine of the Trinity also helps us to think about unity and diversity, and thus the question of the one and the many. When faced with the Biblical testimony of a Christ who was fully human and fully divine, and who said that he was one with His Father, early Church theologians were forced to contemplate what sort of unity makes possible these revelations. The Cappadocian fathers, in particular, asserted a unity that exists as a unity of intimate relations. St. Basil (trans. 1980), for example, wrote that ‘The unity of God lies in the communion [*koinonia*] of the Godhead.’ (cited in Ware 2010, p. 114). This sort of unity is different from the idea of mathematical or numerical oneness that has become dominant in Western thought.

The language the Cappadocians used to describe this sort of relational unity was ‘mutual containment’ or ‘coinherence.’² The three persons mutually contain one another. This allowed the Cappadocians to speak of distinct persons who nevertheless so completely interpenetrate each other that they are an inseparable unity. Referring to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Pseudo-Cyril wrote in the seventh century, ‘they are one not so as to be confounded but so as to cleave to one another and they possess coinherence [*περιχωρησιν*] in one another without any coalescence or confusion.’³

²“They reciprocally contain One Another, so that One permanently envelopes, and is permanently enveloped by, the Other whom he yet envelopes” (Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trinitate* 3.1, cited in Torrance (1994, pp. 120–121)).

³Pseudo-Cyril, *De Sacrosancta Trinitate* 10, PG 77.1144B.

Again, this is a different conception of unity than claiming that the three divine persons participate in some other, more fundamental reality called ‘divinity.’ Rather, there are just the three divine persons who are never-without-the-other; their nature is the complete nature of God, and their very identities lie in their intimate relationships with the others in whom they are contained. In this way, the doctrine of the Trinity provided a way of speaking about the One and the Many by positing a relational unity in terms of containment without confusion, or interior presence without coalescence.

An important implication of this is that, if God’s nature and unity are to be understood relationally in terms of love, then the presence of that God on earth would fittingly be in and amongst relationships of love among persons. More simply, if the triune God is to be embodied on earth, it would be appropriate for that God to be embodied in a community of persons.

This community is called ‘Church’, by which I do not mean *a place* where people go to sing songs or hear a spiritual message, but rather *a people* who embody God’s presence and identity and mission. This means that the life of the Christian faith is inescapably social and communal—not just a private relationship between me and Jesus. It does include a personal relationship with God, but because God is love, the relationship He calls us into is one that, by definition, must include others.

Lohfink (1984) makes this point by noting the numerous passages in Scripture where the calling to follow Christ is bound up with our relationships with others. He notes, for example, the numerous appearances of the Greek reciprocal pronoun *allelon*, which means ‘one another’:

- love *one another* earnestly from the heart (1 Pet. 1:22)
- bear *one another’s* burdens (Gal. 6:2)
- live in harmony with *one another* (Rom. 12:16)
- welcome *one another* (Rom. 15:7)
- admonish *one another* (Rom. 15:14)
- greet *one another* with a holy kiss (Rom. 16:16)
- wait for *one another* (1 Cor. 11:33)
- be servants of *one another* (Gal. 5:13)
- bear with *one another* lovingly (Eph. 4:2)
- be kind and compassionate to *one another* (Eph. 4:32)
- be subject to *one another* (Eph. 5:21)
- look to the interests of *one another* (Philip. 2:4)
- forgive *one another* (Col. 3:13)
- teach *one another* (Col. 3:16)
- encourage *one another* (1 Thess. 4:18)
- build *one another* up (1 Thess. 5:11)
- be at peace with *one another* (1 Thess. 5:13)
- do good to *one another* (1 Thess. 5:15)
- exhort *one another* (Heb. 3:13)
- be hospitable *to one another* (1 Pet. 4:9)

- have fellowship with *one another* (1 Jn. 1:7)
- pray for *one another* (James 5:16)
- confess your sins to *one another* (James 5:16) (pp. 99–100)

The frequency in the New Testament of such examples suggests that Christian discipleship is inescapably tied to relationships with others. In short, the Christian life is, in the words of Bonhoeffer (1954), *life together*—it is intrinsically communal (p. 17). This should not surprise us if we are made in the image of a God whose very nature is community—the triune life together among Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

To summarize my argument thus far, the Christian God is a triune communion of love, and this has implications for understanding (1) the relational nature of personhood, (2) the relational nature of God’s divine unity and (3) the communal nature of His body, the Church. So what does this have to do with education?

4 Education Is for Lovers

The first point to emphasize is: When we educate human beings, we are educating lovers. As St. Augustine (trans. 1955) stressed centuries ago, human persons are creatures created by love and for love. To bear God’s image means, in part, to be capable of giving (and called to give) oneself for another in love.

As Lewis (2013) writes, ‘[The pupil is] an unregenerate little bundle of appetites which is to be kneaded and moulded into human shape by a teacher.’ (p. 24). This means that students are creatures who are always embedded in, and even defined by, their relationships—in particular, their relationships of sacrifice and self-giving. To be a lover is to be a personal creature who makes decisions and acts in terms of what I choose to give myself to—what I long for and desire and sacrifice for.

Whereas Smith (2016a, b) has drawn particular attention to the core dimension of desire and longing within students, I want to suggest that the reason this is true—the reason we have this nature as lovers—is because of our creation in the image of the triune God. This all comes together in one succinct phrase in 2 Peter 1:4, which speaks of human persons becoming ‘participants in the divine nature.’ When we give ourselves for the good of another, we participate in the love that God is.

Closely related to this is Lawrence’s (1982) idea that we can ‘practice the presence of God.’ (p. 34). God’s nature is the kind of thing that can be practiced—the kind of thing that can be participated in and embodied by a community whose members give themselves sacrificially to one another. If God’s nature is the dynamic relations of self-giving love, then it is fitting for such a God to ‘take place’ in our relationships of love to one another.

A practical result of this understanding is that schools hoping to foster deep learning—the kind that forms character and transforms lives—should focus on developing practices of life together. In other words, true education takes place not merely among desks arranged in front of a chalkboard or information conveyed

through an online course, but also among activities and opportunities for teachers and students to spend time face-to-face with one another. Educators who see themselves as teaching lovers should take concrete steps to cultivate a community of learning characterized by practices such as tutors watching the facial expressions of students to discern their level of understanding, peers turning to one another to ask questions or share insights, faculty members eating meals together and inviting students into their conversation, and staff and students worshipping side-by-side.

At the Millis Institute at Christian Heritage College, Brisbane, Australia, we also pursue this sort of community through micro practices such as singing the doxology before Christian worldview classes and serving one another food during Oxford-style formal halls. One of the benefits of such practices is that they build trust, which is crucial for education. It is primarily through cultivating such relationships that students develop the trust necessary to follow where teachers lead—i.e. to focus on what teachers ask them to focus on and to love what they encourage them to love. This is especially true of education in a Christian context, for here we see how the form matches the content: The God whose very nature is personal communion is known by a community of persons who embody His life and love.

The third point to emphasize about education concerns the unity of knowledge. Berry (1987) has argued that instead of unity, the modern university is characterized by fragmentation among disciplines. He writes:

The various disciplines have ceased to speak to each other; they have become too specialized [...] As a result, the modern university has grown, not according to any unifying principle, like an expanding universe, but according to the principle of miscellaneous accretion, like a furniture storage business. (p. 74)

Indeed, the late Postman (1992) suggests that:

Perhaps the most important contribution schools can make to the education of our youth is to give them a sense of coherence in their studies, a sense of purpose, meaning and interconnectedness in what they learn. (pp. 185-186)

Where are we to look for such unity and interconnectedness in learning? In Biblical times, the notion of the rational principal that ties all intelligible things together was captured in the Greek word *logos*. The *logos* is what gave coherence to all knowledge, but in the Christian tradition, this was interpreted not as an abstract principle of rationality but as a person. We read in the opening of John's Gospel that the *logos* 'became flesh' (Jn 1:14) in Jesus of Nazareth, and Paul wrote to the Colossians that 'all things were created through him and for him [...] he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.' (Col 1:17). The unity of knowledge—the rationality that holds together all things that can be known—lies in this *Logos*, the Word of God, the second person of the Trinity.

Another practical implication of my argument is that Christian educational institutions should take this claim seriously. In particular, they should devote explicit effort to demonstrating how all things hold together—the way different facts and fields and objects of knowledge relate to one other. Teachers should not just focus on the leaf at the far end of a single branch, but instead should foster

understanding of the common trunk—and even the root system—and how it grounds the various particular limbs.

To go even further, we need to take seriously the fact that the Logos who orders all that is able to be known is Love. Everything that was created and ordered by the Logos was created and ordered towards a particular purpose, and because that Logos is Love, the universe is ordered towards *shalom*.

The fact that the Logos and the human student are lovers—along with the fact that the world to be known is purposed for *shalom*—has significant implications for education. We need to understand the task of education in terms of shaping loves—of directing the attention and longings of students towards the true, the good and the beautiful. In the words of the nineteenth-century art critic and social thinker, Ruskin (1894):

The entire object of true education is to make people not merely do the right things, but enjoy the right things—not merely industrious, but to love industry—not merely learned, but to love knowledge—not merely pure, but to love purity—not merely just, but to hunger and thirst after justice. (p. 46)

The goal of helping students to love the right things in the right way leads into my final point about ‘enchanted’ learning.

4.1 *Enchanted Learning*

The language of enchantment is used heavily by Caldecott (2009), and it is echoed by Smith (2016a, b) as well. Both authors employ the term to connote that the world is infused by its Creator with order and purpose, and therefore possesses a level of inherent meaning and beauty. In the words of Hopkins (1985), ‘the world is charged with the grandeur of God’, (p. 27)—a grandeur that is given in the nature of things. This inherent beauty and order and meaning should evoke in us a sense of wonder and delight.

The view that the cosmic order is rooted in this sort of ‘Logos’ has been lost. Today many educators at both the secondary and tertiary level seem to place an almost religious confidence and devotion in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. Many teach these subjects not as orders of creation pointing to deeper truths about the nature of God and the universe, but rather as neutral instruments for utilitarian purposes. And thus, we see modern education separating these sciences from the arts, pitting reason against faith, and relegating the latter to private curiosities that can be studied as electives.

This represents an unfortunate departure from centuries of Western thought, which held faith and reason together and viewed even the so-called ‘hard sciences’ as a locus of wonder and awe. Ratzinger (2000), for example, writes of the Pythagorean spirit that influenced Western civilization—a sense that the universe contained a mathematical order that was identical with the essence of beauty itself. ‘The mathematics of the universe does not exist by itself’, explains Ratzinger

(p. 153). ‘It has a deeper foundation: the mind of the Creator. It comes from the Logos, in whom, so to speak, the archetypes of the world’s order are contained.’ (p. 153).

Because the Logos, through the Spirit, fashions the material world according to these archetypes, the cosmos is full of beauty, order and loveliness. It has certainly been marred by the Fall, and we need to take this seriously and help our students recognize—and even lament—that the world is not as it should be. Nevertheless, God’s creation is still the kind of reality that calls forth our curiosity and beckons our appreciation.

Indeed, when describing the process of knowledge, Meek (2014) claims that:

What starts the venture is notice and wonder. Something about reality catches our attention. To start to know is actually first a response to a dimly heard beckoning of the wonderful real. If we can see knowing as a relationship between knower and known, we can see that reality makes the first overture. (p. 19)

Such a claim requires the prior assumption that the world is enchanted—that it has a given order and meaning that catches our attention and provokes our delight. We need to teach in such a way that we convey this sense of delight to our students and inspire and attract them to the wonderful real. This claim also suggests what we might call a relational epistemology—that is, a view that knowing is a relationship between knower and known—that knowing is a personal endeavour undertaken by creatures able and willing to risk giving themselves and their attention to an ‘other’ (the object of knowledge). In other words, this is the kind of knowing undertaken by lovers. This is a relational epistemology that fits with a relational anthropology, all of which reflects and gives glory to the divine triune communion of Love.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, I have suggested that how we understand God shapes how we understand human persons, which, in turn, shapes how we approach education. Beginning with the claim that the nature of the Christian God is love, I noted how this presupposes a dimension of otherness or plurality in the Godhead. I also noted how the notion of divine personhood yielded by the Trinity grounds a relational understanding of human personhood, a notion of the human person as relationally constituted by what he chooses to give himself to—a notion of the human person as a lover.

I then argued that educators should take seriously the nature of students as lovers by helping to direct their students’ loves towards the right end. And this will entail recovering a sense that the object of study in each discipline is enchanted—that is, that the particular facet of reality being explored in a given academic field was created by the Logos who is Love—and therefore it is not neutral but has a purpose and a given meaning—and perhaps even beauty—that is worthy of appreciation.

Such learning—understood as the shaping of loves—will take place in the context of relationships. The question for each educational institution is, what kind of relationships does it subtly encourage? What kind of practices foster those relationships? And what kind of liturgy habituates those practices?

The thrust of my argument is that educational institutions that identify as Christian are most effective when serving as *communities of enchanted learning*. Moreover, such learning can be truly integrated and coherent if it is ordered towards the ultimate source of beauty, wonder and unity-in-diversity: The Trinity.

Therefore, this chapter calls Christian educators to return Trinitarian theology to her place as ‘Queen of the Sciences’. It also calls for a recovery in our curricula of the ‘lost tools of learning’ and the subjects that constituted the traditional ‘path to wisdom,’ which are required in order to contemplate how the Queen enlightens and informs all other disciplines. Finally, in the sort of communities of enchanted learning that I have in mind, education would ultimately be anchored in Trinitarian-shaped worship. This is the vision of education that inspires our work at the Millis Institute and the work of Christian Heritage College at large, and it is the vision that I encourage all of us to reflect upon.

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Chapter 4

Christian Theological, Hermeneutical and Eschatological Perspectives on Environmental Sustainability and Creation Care—The Role of Holistic Education



Johannes M. Luetz, Graham Buxton and Kurt Bangert

Abstract Education for environmental sustainability is increasingly highlighted as an important success factor for environmentally conscious and conscientious living, including the advancement of global poverty reduction and the attainment of developmental goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As such, education can be comprehended as a deeply ‘Christian’ endeavour, seeing that true Christian ‘religion’ seeks to improve the plight of the poor and needy (James 1:27), both physically and spiritually. The literature identifies some initiatives, where sustainability has been embedded within curricula in ways that have integrated the fundamentals of environmental science, spirituality and ethics. Even so, there is a paucity of initiatives that link the aforementioned foci with Christian theological, hermeneutical and eschatological perspectives. This theoretical chapter extends previous scholarship by means of a two-pronged approach, which links scientific and scriptural discursive reflections with arising opportunities for spirituality-shaped environmental sustainability. It does so with the intention of generating support for a more holistic Christian education agenda where scripturally shaped education for environmental sustainability and creation care does not remain side-lined as a fringe concern.

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Education

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

(Nelson Mandela, cited in Strauss 2013, para. 3)

I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else. (C.S. Lewis, "Is Theology Poetry?" Oxford Socratic Club, 6 November 1944)¹

1 Introduction

This chapter addresses itself to self-professed 'Christians',² namely people who would say of themselves that they follow or adhere to the Abrahamic and monotheistic religion Christianity, based on the life, example and teachings of Jesus Christ as the Messiah and 'expected or longed-for savior' (Sawyer 2001, p. 195). It follows that this chapter presumes the reality of a transcendent and immanent triune deity³ who this chapter will simply refer to as 'God' (Bangert 2015a). It also follows that this chapter accepts the existence of this God as the 'Creator' of 'Creation', albeit without necessarily negating corresponding processes of creational 'Evolution' (Alexander 2008). Moreover, this chapter uses the terms 'nature' and 'creation' interchangeably, and does not promote dichotomistic perspectives⁴

¹Later published in a collection of essays (Lewis 1962).

²According to Acts 11.26, Jesus' disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Elsewhere in the New Testament, the word "Christian" occurs in Acts 26.28 and 1 Peter 4.14–16. The origin of the term "Christian" is uncertain. It comprises the word "Christ," the Greek word meaning "anointed one" (See Messiah) with an ending meaning "followers of" or "partisans of." [...] Because followers of Jesus used "saints" (2 Cor. 1.1; Rom. 12.13; Acts 9.13, 32), "brothers" (1 Cor. 1.10; Rom. 1.13; Acts 1.16), "the Way" (Acts 9.2; 19.9), "disciples" (often in the Gospels; Acts 6.1–2; 11.26), and other designations when referring to themselves, it is unlikely that the term "Christian" originated among Christians.' (Freed 2001, p. 41).

³Houghton (2007) defines 'Transcendence' as 'God's presence outside of space and time', and 'the Trinity' as '[a] model of God developed in the first centuries AD in which God is described as a unity but involving three persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).' (p. 250).

⁴There are suggestions that even Albert Einstein may not have considered the existence of a philosophical creator god absurd, as the following quote suggests (translated from German): 'If this universe in all of its million-fold order and precision were to be seen as the result of blind chance, then that would be about as credible as if a printery were to explode, whereupon all the printing-letters would fall down again in the complete and faultless form of the Duden Lexikon [most exhaustive German Dictionary of many volumes]'—Orig.: 'Wenn dieses Universum in all seiner millionenfachen Ordnung und Präzision das Ergebnis eines blinden Zufalls sein sollte, so ist das so glaubwürdig, wie wenn eine Druckerei in die Luft geht, worauf alle Druckbuchstaben wieder herunterfallen in der fertigen und fehlerlosen Form des Duden-Lexikons.' (Albert Einstein, cited in Poortvliet 1985, p. 167).

that advocate science to the exclusion of scripture, or vice versa⁵ (Buxton 2014, pp. 173–191; Houghton 2007). Finally, this discussion occasionally accommodates the noun ‘man’ (in place of ‘humans’, ‘humanity’ or ‘humankind’) to expressly emphasise the individual or personal responsibility of members of the human species. This usage should not be read in a gendered manner. Moreover, occasional references to ‘God’ with the pronoun ‘His’ (as in ‘His creation’) are best understood in a broadly gender-inclusive way.⁶

Targeting a specifically ‘Christian’ readership offers the promise of influencing and engaging a large and potentially strategic group of people. Research on the size and geographic distribution of the world’s Christian population for the Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures project concluded:

A comprehensive demographic study of more than 200 countries finds that there are 2.18 billion Christians of all ages around the world, representing nearly a third of the estimated 2010 global population of 6.9 billion. Christians are also geographically widespread – so far-flung, in fact, that no single continent or region can indisputably claim to be the center of global Christianity. (Hackett and Grim 2011, p. 9).

According to that study, ‘Christians are by far the world’s largest religious group’⁷ (Hackett and Grim 2011, p. 11). Hence, given this group’s notable size, geographical dispersion and the historical precedent of scripture having been successfully engaged to advance past social justice concerns, such as the abolition of slavery (Wilberforce), and the end of racial segregation (Martin Luther King), to mention only two examples, it would seem that activating this group of people could constitute a timely opportunity to similarly further the cause of global environmental sustainability (Bell and White 2016; White 2010).

Given some of the known challenges surrounding sustainability education (McFarlane and Ogazon 2011; Walid and Luetz 2018), this theoretical chapter aims to enlist contributions from Christian theology, hermeneutics and eschatology to link social values and spirituality towards sustainability. In doing so, this discussion follows an impressive and growing list of advances where different Christian faith traditions have recently offered prodigious forays into the conservation of nature through such initiatives as the Emergency Synod Resolution of the United Church of Christ which urged to ‘view the current climate crisis as an opportunity for which

⁵cf. Albert Einstein’s famous aphorism that shows science and religion in an interdependent relationship to each other: ‘Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.’ (Randerson 2008, para. 1).

⁶The authors believe that if ‘God created man in His own image; [as] male and female’ (Gen 1:27, RSV), then God evidently comprises both feminine and masculine traits. See Johnson (2002) for a richer discussion on God and gendered perspectives and portrayals.

⁷As a caveat the report authors point out that readers are advised ‘to bear in mind that the definition of Christian in this report is very broad. The intent is sociological rather than theological: We are attempting to count groups and individuals who self-identify as Christian. This includes people who hold beliefs that may be viewed as unorthodox or heretical by other Christians. It also includes Christians who seldom pray or go to church.’ (Hackett and Grim 2011, p. 7).

the church was born' (United Church of Christ [UCC] 2017, para. 1; cf. Wangsness 2017); the influential 'Papal Encyclical *Laudato Si'* on 'Care for Our Common Home' (Vaticana 2015); or the 'largest ever faith-based divestment from fossil fuels [with] the volume of divesting groups [...] four times higher than a previous church record, [adding] to a global divestment movement, led by investors worth \$5.5tn' (Neslen 2017, para. 1–2; cf. Global Catholic Climate Movement [GCCM] 2017; Roewe 2017).

These examples of recent public advocacy are reflective 'of a growing effort by people of faith from across the religious spectrum to stop global warming from worsening' (Wangsness 2017, para. 5), and promote the basic idea of '[r]eligious environmentalism as a vital contribution to sustainability' (White 2010, p. 268; cf. Matlock and Jurin 2016). In this context, the development of more holistic curricula, which integrate the fundamentals of environmental science, spirituality and ethics, has been a growing focus of the Christian education agenda.⁸ Notwithstanding, there remains a paucity of initiatives that link the aforementioned foci more directly with discourses on Christian theological, hermeneutical and eschatological perspectives. Hence, this theoretical chapter argues for a more holistic Christian education agenda, where scripturally shaped education for environmental sustainability and creation care does not remain side-lined as a fringe concern (Luetz et al. 2018; Matlock and Jurin 2016). Moreover, the benefits of using 'knowledge, innovation and education to build up a culture of safety and resilience'⁹ (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction [UNISDR] 2007, p. 9) are well known in the humanitarian community, which has long recognised the important interdependent linkages between education and poverty reduction, disaster risk reduction, development outcomes and disaster preparedness (Luetz 2007, pp. 117–119, 2008, pp. 78–87, 2018; Luetz and Havea 2018; Luetz and Sultana 2018).

For the purposes of self-consistency, this chapter will use the term 'creation care' or 'care for creation' to denote the idea that humankind is chiefly responsible for the sustenance, maintenance, or simply the 'care' of God's creation.¹⁰ This includes accepting responsibility both in terms of the past and continuing carbonisation of the atmosphere, as well as in regard to supporting the progressive decarbonisation of the global economy, namely '[t]he process by which countries or other entities aim to achieve a low-carbon economy, or by which individuals aim to reduce their consumption of carbon' (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] 2014a, p. 121).

⁸See, e.g., Healing Earth (2018); International Jesuit Ecology Project (2017).

⁹See 'Hyogo Framework for Action' (Priority Area 3) (UNISDR 2007, pp. 9–10).

¹⁰For a powerful call to what she describes as 'ecoprophetic ministry' in the face of the current ecological crisis, see Morgan (2015, p. 174).

Expressed in simple language, care for creation¹¹ is prompted by a crisis of creation (Doran 2017; Moo and White 2014). That crisis includes a number of different phenomena such as the warming of Earth's global climate, the extinction of many species, all of which belong to God's creation, and the environmental degradation through deforestation, desertification and the depletion of vital resources such as freshwater or fresh air (Hansen 2009; IPCC 2014b; Moo and White 2014; White 2008; World Wildlife Fund [WWF] 2016). This creation crisis is, by all accounts, mostly anthropogenic, or 'man-made' (Cook et al. 2013; IPCC 2014b; Waters et al. 2016). From a theological–educational point of view, it is not sufficient to dwell exclusively on immediate causes such as carbon emissions or the exploitation of material and living resources. Rather, we should also recognise the deeper problems, which lie at the heart of the creation crisis, namely human deficiencies such as attitudinal values, materialism, consumerism, selfishness and greed (Klein 2007, 2014; Vaticana 2015; White 2014).

In view of the clear anthropogenic cause of this 'Ecological Crisis' (Moo and White 2014), which the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2014b) accepts as 'unequivocal' and 'unprecedented' (pp. 2, 40), this chapter has tolerated and accommodated without objection the 'first person' perspective 'we/us'. This literary narrative in first person plural gives due recognition to the reality that 'we' as humans are *individually* and *collectively* concerned as carers and curers of creation according to the American Indian 'borrowed earth' theorem: 'We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children'.¹²

The primary theological argument underlying care and respect for creation is that the natural world is to be treasured for what it *is*, rather than just for what it *does*; it has integrity and is therefore to be respected, cared for and cherished precisely because it is God's creation even before it is our environment. Tragically, pride and simplistic certainties have turned us away from our God-ordained communion with nature (Buxton 2014; Houghton 2007). But when we name the spatial reality in which we live 'creation,' we are expressing in the strongest possible way 'resistance to the transformation of nature into *human environment*' (Moltmann 1997, p. 121; emphasis added). This has important epistemological implications, which will be elaborated in Sect. 2 below.

These deeper causes constitute, in Biblical parlance, a 'sin problem'. If the term 'sin' simply signifies a ruptured relationship,¹³ then this distortion applies not only to man's relationship with God but also to man's relationship with creation. Humanity, who was previously much more embedded in nature, has increasingly

¹¹The phrase 'creation care' or 'care for creation' has been used primarily by evangelicals who prefer that terminology over 'environmentalism' which denotes concern for the protection of nature without implying its 'creation' aspect.

¹²The origins of this quote seem to be unclear and disputed; cf., Quote investigator (2013).

¹³An often cited reference for defining sin in the New Testament is Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), in which the son alienates himself from his father, until he returns to his father who embraces him with unrelenting love and forgiveness.

removed and estranged itself from creation and hence is in dire need of being reconciled with nature.

Importantly, if the creation crisis is a sin problem, then, according to scripture, there is also an appropriate solution to that problem—offered by Jesus himself in his Gospel message. In other words, if the creation crisis is a sin problem, then creation care is a Gospel issue. The Gospel¹⁴ invites humanity to be reconciled with the God of creation: ‘All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation’ (2 Cor 5:18 [NIV]¹⁵). Reconciliation, however, requires human repentance or—if we take the respective Greek term *metanoia* literally—a sharp ‘turnaround’ of attitude and behaviour (Mark 1:15). It may be that this is what Jesus meant when he invited his contemporaries ‘to be born again by the spirit’ (John 3:3-6 [NIV]). By making this turnaround and allowing ourselves to be reconciled with the God of creation, we as humans may experience, as it were, the burial of the old sinful nature of man (Rom 6:4)¹⁶ and the resurrection of a new spiritual nature (Rom 8:10-11).¹⁷ That spiritual nature makes possible the reconciliation of human beings with the whole of creation (which, incidentally, is also the object and objective of ‘faith’ and ‘religion’).¹⁸ In short, by accepting the invitation of the Gospel and agreeing to be reconciled with the whole of creation, humanity is put right again with God’s world and God’s work.

Hence, one can say that human repentance and reconciliation involve a vertical as well as a horizontal dimension. The vertical dimension concerns our relationship with God. The horizontal dimension touches upon our relationship with creation, as well as with other human beings, which requires new perspectives in two time directions. First, we need to look back to the beginnings and be concerned with our historical role as ‘stewards’ of creation. Second, we also need to look ahead to be aware of our role with respect to the possible ‘end of creation’. Importantly, creation ought to be understood not only in terms of an initial creative event (often referred to as Genesis or as *creatio ex nihilo*),¹⁹ but also in terms of a continued

¹⁴The term Gospel comes from old English *godspell* meaning ‘good news’ for Greek *euangelion* which means the same.

¹⁵Scripture quotations come from various versions of the Holy Bible: New International Version [NIV] (2011); King James Version [KJV] (1987); New King James Version [NKJV] (1982); English Standard Version [ESV] (2008); Revised Standard Version [RSV] (1971), New Living Translation [NLT] (2015), as indicated in text.

¹⁶‘We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.’ (Rom 6:4, NIV).

¹⁷‘But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.’ (Rom 8:10-11, NIV).

¹⁸The experience of the oneness of creation or, in other words, the identification of the individual with the whole of reality lies, in the view of scholars of religion, at the heart of all religious experience, cf. the chapter ‘Die Entstehung von Religionen’ in Bangert (2016, pp. 13–34).

¹⁹Latin: *creatio ex nihilo*: ‘creation out of nothing’.

creation (often referred to as *creatio continua*).²⁰ God remains Creator even in the post-Genesis era and throughout the long history of His creation. With regard to humanity, one could say, mythologically, that He not only created ‘Adam and Eve’ but likewise each and every one of us (see Ps 139:13-14 [NIV]): ‘For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well’.

This chapter extends previous scholarship by means of a two-pronged approach, which links scientific and scriptural discursive reflections (analytical reasonings) with arising opportunities for spirituality-shaped environmental sustainability (faith–practice integration). Given the need to both reflect on the past *and* on the future, this discourse will first explore past perspectives, including humanity’s historical stewardship responsibilities (Sect. 2), before envisaging future perspectives, including eschatological end-times scenarios (Sect. 3). The discussion will then offer reflections on implicational imperatives for responsible living (Sect. 4) and conclude with a short synthesis on opportunities for holistic Christian education (Sect. 5).

2 Past Perspectives: Creational Responsibility and Stewardship

According to scripture, care for God’s creation is not an optional extra for the Christian—it is a mandate grounded in a robust theology of the natural world (ecothology). Whilst the Christian Church, particularly in the West, cannot be absolved from its failure to adopt a more welcoming and holistic vision of creation in its theological formulations, the responsibility cannot be laid exclusively at its feet, as argued, for example, by White (1967). Deeper forces have been at work in Western culture, especially over the last few centuries of human history, as Enlightenment thinking ushered in the supremacy of human reason and progress, with its attendant anthropocentric emphasis on the instrumental value of nature.²¹ And in some Christian circles utilitarianism has been justified with reference to the Biblical command given to Adam to exercise dominion over the created order.²²

The Christian belief in the God of creation implies not only that each of us are ‘wonderfully made’ as individuals, as already alluded to above in the reference to

²⁰The idea of the *creatio continua* was developed by mediaeval theologians such as Bonaventura, Wilhelm von Ockham and Thomas of Aquinas (Summa contra Gentiles III, 65) and later reiterated by Descartes (AT VIII, 1,13).

²¹For a perceptive discussion of Enlightenment thinking, see Armstrong (2009, pp. 203–226).

²²On human dominion in Genesis 1-2, see Horrell (2010, pp. 23–36).

Psalm 139:13-14,²³ but also that the whole of creation was ‘wonderfully made’ as a collective,—and was ultimately assessed and pronounced by the Creator as ‘very good’ (Gen 1:31). That ‘wonderful’ and ‘very good’ creation was entrusted to man ‘to work it and take care of it’ (Gen 2:15 [NIV]), a scriptural reference which can be seen as the basis for human responsibility for and stewardship of God’s creation. It is only in hindsight, however, that we must recognise and admit that humans have not adequately lived up to that responsibility. Therefore, Christians today are called upon not only to reaffirm that responsibility for themselves but also to act upon it.

Man’s ‘creational responsibility’ or ‘creation care’ is usually extrapolated from Genesis 1:28: ‘Fill the Earth and *subdue it*. *Rule over* the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’ ([NIV], emphasis added). Could it be that, by virtue of this text, we have misunderstood the terms ‘subdue’ and ‘rule over’ and mistaken our creational responsibility for a *carte blanche* to exploit, plunder, manipulate and abuse²⁴ our creation (R. White 2008), rather than ‘to work it and take care of it’ (Gen 2:15, [NIV])? Further, it seems that God’s instruction to man to give names to all the animals (Gen 2:19-20)²⁵ signifies a kind of paternal relationship, a vicarious godparenthood, if you will, a spiritual fatherhood or *pater spiritualis*, and hence the taking on of a special responsibility for nurture and protection.²⁶

Importantly, God’s directing man to ‘have dominion over’ His creation (Gen 1:28, [KJV]) was only delegating to man what was in fact God’s own sovereign and innate right to exercise. Delegating that Divine right to man must not be [mis] understood as God’s disclaimer to relinquish that right—at least if we consider Psalm 24:1: ‘The Earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it’ [NIV]. Everything belongs to God, it is He who retains dominion over His creation, and man is only assigned to vicariously keep it and maintain it on His behalf, so to speak. As such, man is to treasure, protect and take care of God’s creation. Man is to live in harmony with nature and other species. Man is to till the

²³According to the Psalmist, God plays an immediate part in creating each one of us as individuals: ‘For thou didst form my inward parts, thou didst knit me together in my mother’s womb.’ (Ps 139:1 [RSV]). Hence creation is ongoing and includes every created being.

²⁴The abuse of creation was ironically expressed by columnist Coulter (2000) who wrote: ‘The ethic of conservation is the explicit abnegation of man’s dominion over the Earth. The lower species are here for our use. God said so: Go forth, be fruitful, multiply, and rape the planet—it’s yours. That’s our job: drilling, mining and stripping. Sweaters are the anti-Biblical view. Big gas-guzzling cars with phones and CD players and wet bars—that’s the Biblical view.’ (para. 4).

²⁵‘Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.’ (Gen 2:19-20 [NIV]).

²⁶‘The name—that by which the thing is summoned into the field of thought—belongs to the full existence of the thing itself’, says Skinner (1910), commenting on Genesis 1:5 (p. 20), a phrase which Walter Russell Bowie applies also to Genesis 2:19-20 in his exposition on the Book of Genesis in ‘The Interpreter’s Bible’ (Buttrick 1952, p. 498). According to ancient thinking, the naming of something is intricately interwoven with its coming into existence.

ground and eat from its fruits, but is not to pillage and destroy creation to the point where it becomes inhospitable, uninhabitable, unliveable and unrecognisable.

According to the Apostle Paul, both creation and mankind are in need of being redeemed: ‘Not only the creation, but we ourselves [...] groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for [...] redemption’ (Rom 8:23).²⁷ Redemption for creation implies the healing and wholeness of nature. What we must be concerned about is the wholeness and oneness of creation, rather than a continuous fight for the survival of the fittest and the most dominant, which in today’s age of the Anthropocene is undoubtedly man (Waters et al. 2016). Wholeness of creation requires the recognition of the interdependence and mutuality of creation, rather than dominance and supremacy. It means healing and wholeness for all. A wholesome relationship of man to creation implies recognition and respect for the holistic nature of creation (i.e. the mutual dependence of man and nature). Even the dichotomistic distinction between ‘nature’ and ‘man’ and the dissociation of man from nature is an unhelpful, faulty, or even sinful notion. Man ought rather to understand himself as an intricate part of nature. In short, there can be no redemption of humanity without nature also being redeemed and freed from the ‘slavery of destruction’ (Rom 8:21).

But it is not enough to recognise the oneness of nature. We must also appreciate God’s oneness with nature, in the sense that God’s very existence may be deduced and ‘understood from what has been made’ (Rom 1:20 [NIV]). Hence, God must not be [mis]understood as a reality entirely segregated from nature. Rather, God may best be comprehended as having identified Himself with His creation and having made Himself discoverable in creation (Houghton 2007).

Scripture says that God can be known through t/his ‘very good’ (Gen 1:31) creation: ‘For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse’ (Rom 1:20 [NIV]). This point has an important implication, for it signifies that whoever wants to learn about the Creator, may simply look to and learn about creation (Bangert 2012, 2015a, b). Expressed in simple language, if God can be known through creation, then creation has inherent worth in and of itself—apart from utilitarian value to humans. And importantly, if God can be ‘known’ through what He has made, then ‘creation care’ is an epistemological priority of the highest order. Following this argument, epistemologically speaking, God becomes progressively less ‘knowable’ from what He has created as the defacing and careless destruction of His creation continues.

A particularly sad and grievous example is the progressive destruction of one of the true marvels of God’s creation, the world’s largest living structure—the Great Barrier Reef—as warming of the oceans and concurrent bleaching events grow worse and worse. According to recent, recurring and worsening coral bleaching events, the Reef is in acute danger of being lost forever (Slezak 2016, 2017).

²⁷The concept of ‘redemption’ goes back to the ancient practice according to which slaves were redeemed by a ransom payment through which the slave (re)gained his or her freedom. Similarly, according to Pauline theology, the creation is yearning for freedom from the ‘slavery of destruction’ (Rom 8:21).

Hence, an important question begs to be asked: Can God still be known through the Great Barrier Reef 10, 20, or 50 years from now? Only God and time can tell. We are reminded of the scripture in Romans 8:22 which has taken on new and grim meaning in the era of progressive climate change: ‘For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now’ [KJV].

Therefore, it would seem that Christians cannot sincerely worship God without concurrently being good stewards of His creation. Calling for this kind of creational responsibility and creation care also requires a new kind of doctrine of God, namely of a God who has not dissociated Himself from nature. In this sense, creation theology and the doctrine of God are intertwined and dependent on each other. And because humans are created ‘in the image of God’ (Gen 1:27 [NIV]), one might also think of an adapted doctrine of humanity, which works from the assumption that we cannot live up to that image of God unless we are living up to our responsibility to God’s creation and to our assigned role of creational stewardship. In short, we cannot be said to be redeemed (and be truly free) unless we take seriously our creational responsibility.

In this regard, Christianity’s weakness has been not only its failure to present a much-needed prophetic challenge to secular humanism’s hubristic exploitation of nature, but also its historical slowness in promoting Scriptural ecological wisdom grounded in a carefully articulated and informed Biblical hermeneutic (Klein 2007, 2014; McKibben 2006, 2010; Morgan 2015; White 2008). Thankfully, the ecotheological vacuum is increasingly being filled with texts addressing the themes of creation care, ecological hermeneutics and environmental ethics (Buxton and Habel 2016; Horrell 2010; Horrell et al. 2010; Moo and White 2014; Snyder and Scandrett 2011).

These texts are not enough, though. Much more needs to be done on the educational front. If environmental justice and concern for the poor and vulnerable are to take a more central role in the life and witness of Christian communities, those who are studying in seminaries and other teaching institutions need to be equipped with a deeper and more theologically persuasive understanding of the importance of caring for God’s creation. Educators and church leaders are strategically placed to lead by example and teaching.

In Australia, a number of theological colleges have begun to connect under the umbrella of the US-based Seminary Stewardship Alliance (SSA)²⁸ with the following mandate: (1) to develop curriculum initiatives that will equip and inspire future leaders of the Church to participate in the Biblical mandate of creation care; (2) to advance research related to Biblical and theological aspects of creation care; (3) to engage in sustainable practices on-campus; and (4) to encourage dialogue and mutual accountability amongst partner colleges.

²⁸Blessed Earth (n.d.).

3 Future Perspectives: Eschatological End-times Scenarios

The SSA initiative (Sect. 2) is grounded in a desire to demolish the widespread dualism that pervades much Christian thinking about God and creation. In his fine historical study of the ambiguity of the Church's response to nature, the American ecological theologian Santmire (1985) invites us to imagine that we are climbing a mountain. There are two alternatives that we are asked to consider as we make our way up the mountain: Either we keep our gaze firmly fixed upwards, unaware of all around us as we journey towards the transcendent light above; or alternatively, we may choose to look around us as we make the journey, our eyes drinking in the beauty and glory of the mountain scenery. The first perspective—what Santmire (1985) calls the metaphor of *ascent*—is predicated on a form of spirituality that takes us not just towards God, but away from nature. The second metaphor, that of *fecundity*, invites us into an awareness and appreciation of the rich goodness of creation, which Santmire (1985) couples with his metaphor of migration to a good land, an eschatological vision of promise that offers inspiration and hope in the midst of nature. Santmire's (1985) metaphor of *fecundity* is echoed in Isaiah 35:5-6, where the promise of a restored humanity is framed by the promise of a restored world, in which the desert will rejoice as it blossoms like the crocus, the burning sand will become a pool and the thirsty ground bubbling springs: Then will the blind see and the deaf hear—the two promises are inextricably linked and are not to be pulled apart (Wainwright 2000). As it will be in God's new creation, so it is now in the genius and goodness of God's fecund creation.

Global warming, environmental degradation and the extinction of many species at times conjure up doomsday scenarios of an impending end-time apocalypse (Moo and White 2014, pp. 11–20). Some Christians interpret such apocalyptic end-time scenarios—precipitated by humanity's relentless exploitation of nature—as the fulfilment of Biblical eschatological prophecies about the end of the world and the beginning of a newly established divinely ordained kingdom. There are, indeed, such Biblical end-time prophecies as the Bible speaks of the prospect of heaven and earth passing away one day and of the recreation of the Earth: 'Heaven and earth will pass away.' (Matt 24:35 [ESV]); 'We are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.' (2 Pet 3:13 [NIV]; see also: Is 65:17 or Rev 21:1). Ecological end-time disasters seem to reinforce political strife and warmongering as forebodings of doomsday: 'For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.' (Matt 24:7 [ESV]). Climate change and environmental calamities seem to coincide with military conflicts, civil wars and other political crises (Butler 2017; Lovelock 2009). For today's end-time prophets the end of the world is imminent, doomsday is just around the corner, and God is about to establish his own kingdom (see, for example, Grey 2013). The creation crisis only seems to confirm the expectation of the world's annihilation and the second coming of Christ. Hallelujah, the end is near, and we humans are helping to speed up the coming of the final

judgment and the ‘restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.’ (Acts 3:21 [NKJV]).

In light of such eschatological expectations, some questions need to be asked: Does climate change herald the end of the world? Does environmental degradation constitute the beginning of the end? Is God about to create a new heaven and a new earth because we are on the verge of destroying the one He entrusted to us in the first place? Must the world really pass away before God’s kingdom can come? Did God expect humans to destroy creation so that He would replace it? What did Jesus actually mean when he spoke of the ‘Kingdom of God’?²⁹ Did he mean a future kingdom, or did he interpret the ‘Kingdom of God’ as something already begun in the here and now and that was and is to continue to expand through his disciples? Has God set a time when the world would come to an end? Or is He leaving it up to humans to determine the time when the Earth becomes uninhabitable? Does the progressive anthropogenic destruction of God’s creation in any way relieve humanity of the originally entrusted creational stewardship responsibility?

Further, could it be that some Bible-believing Christians have adopted a sort of apocalyptic fatalism? Could it be that doomsday Christians, although not necessarily yearning for the end of the world, still reckon with it, as it were, in a somewhat placid and unperturbed fatalistic expectation, hoping that when the end comes, God will then be able to finally establish His kingdom?—according to the dictum: ‘When the last tree has come down, Christ will come’.³⁰

Could it be that we are nurturing a fatal illusion if we assume that God will happily recreate a new earth after we have grossly neglected our stewardship to keep and maintain the old one of which God said, ‘it was very good’? (Gen 1:31 [NIV]). Could it even be that by neglecting what was entrusted to us, we are precipitating the end of the world long before God envisioned it? And could it not be that, after (and because) humans have brought about a premature end to the Earth, God might even lose interest in creating a better substitute?

These questions cannot all be answered—not only for lack of space but also because according to scripture we do not and cannot know the mind of God: ‘For who can know the LORD’s thoughts? Who knows enough to give him advice?’ (Rom 11:34 [NLT]).

Even so, we would like to unfold, in brief, three possible end-time scenarios which might perchance help us to deal responsibly with the Bible’s eschatological language, especially in light of global warming and the creation crisis. Further, these three models are also presented on the basis that what Christians believe about the end times may either *enable* or *disable* action on the committed care of creation. This is also important given that ‘[e]schatology is concerned not only with

²⁹The phrase ‘Kingdom of God’ (Greek: *basileia tou theou*) is used interchangeably (especially in the gospel of Matthew) with the phrase ‘Kingdom of heaven’ (Greek: *basileia ton ouranon*), both having the same meaning.

³⁰‘When the last tree is cut down, the last fish eaten, and the last stream poisoned, you will realize that you cannot eat money.’ (Native American saying, cited in Simpson and Speake 2009).

reasoning about the end, but also the psychological-phenomenological experience and ethical orientation of believers towards it.’ (Skrimshire 2014, p. 157).

3.1 *The Rainbow Model*

The first scenario we shall call the Rainbow Model. After Noah and his family survived the flood (seemingly as the only family), he offered a burnt offering in gratitude for their escape. And God promised: ‘Never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. As long as the Earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.’ (Gen 8:21-22 [NIV]). As a sign of this promise God reportedly created the rainbow: ‘Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the Earth.’ (Gen 9:16 [NIV]). According to the Rainbow Model, there will not be another worldwide apocalyptic catastrophe extinguishing virtually all life, because God has promised it. Relatedly and importantly, according to this model, there is no immediate need to take action on climate change and creation care because the Earth, all living creatures and the climate are essentially predestined to endure unharmed in perpetuity.

According to the literature, this model has some following in islands across the Pacific with some islanders apparently considering themselves immune to the effects of climate change in the sense that they cannot fathom a future scenario that might see their island homes submerged by rising sea levels—based on this rainbow promise of God. For example, research conducted in Tuvalu by Mortreux and Barnett (2009) found that:

[...] climate change was not an issue of concern due to the special relationship Tuvalu shares with God and due to the promises God made to Noah in the bible. The strength of this belief is reflected in the national motto *Tuvalu mo te Atua*, meaning ‘Tuvalu is for God, God is for Tuvalu’ (GoT, 2005, p. 49). In interviews people consistently referred to the story of Noah as evidence that God would not allow further flooding. There was a sense that Tuvalu was given by God to the Tuvaluan people and that God would ensure that this would remain the case into the future. (pp. 109-110)

Additionally and importantly, we might say that the Rainbow Model is also alive and well in political leaders who purport to find it inconceivable that climate change could possibly represent a threat, and thus fail to make more arduous efforts to usher in the scientifically mandated transition to a decarbonised economy and a more sustainable way of life. In point of fact, belief in this model manifests itself whenever duty bearers sacrifice the liveability of the Earth for the short-lived interests of immediate selfish economic gratification of special interest groups, serving the needs of the few at the expense of the many (e.g. Australian Broadcasting Corporation [ABC] 2014; Whitmore 2006; WWF 2016).³¹

³¹Resource use is very unevenly distributed in the world: Global Footprint Network (2017).

3.2 *The Apocalypse Model*

The second eschatological scenario works from the assumption that there actually will be such a worldwide apocalyptic doomsday one day—regardless and in spite of the Rainbow motif.³² This scenario is based on the end-time sermons of Jesus as reported in the New Testament. Jesus in fact drew a parallel to Noah’s flood: ‘For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.’ (Matt 24:38-39, NIV). At that time, some would be saved, many others would be destroyed. It is well known that in the days of Jesus and at the time of the Early Church, apocalyptic end-time expectations abounded,³³ and it appears that similar expectations are once more *en vogue* today (Grey 2013). It might be said that this model is broadly based on the idea that an apocalyptic future is predestined and that to fight climate change would be tantamount to opposing God’s preordained future order, given that ‘the present form of this world is passing away.’ (1 Cor 7:31, NIV).

According to this model, there is no need to take action on climate change because the Earth is destined to be doomed *anyway*, and all living creatures will ultimately be terminated by inescapable end-time disaster. This model is alive and well, whenever politicians either deny or make light of the enormous damage unmitigated anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions are inflicting on God’s creation (e.g. ABC 2014; Probyn 2017). This dismissal is despite stark imagery that has been employed by notable scientists to warn of the consequences of global warming. For example, expressed in Hiroshima atomic bombs, the energy trapped by man-made global warming pollution is now ‘equivalent to exploding 400,000 Hiroshima atomic bombs per day 365 days per year’ (Hansen 2012; cf. Braasch 2013; Cook 2013). Clearly, visualising yearly cumulative global warming energy as exploding 146 million Hiroshima atomic bombs annually makes it quite clear that anthropogenic climate change is likely to have severe long-term consequences that may well have some rather ‘apocalyptic’ end results. According to the Apocalypse Model, it is also too late to save the Planet, too hard and too futile to decarbonise the global economy, and perhaps even too ‘unspiritual’ to take action on climate change, because the Apocalypse is the preordained ‘Divine design’ in respect of the prophesied coming end (e.g. Maier 2010; Skrimshire 2014).

³²For a thorough review of 3,000 years of apocalyptic thought, see, Bull (1995); a succinct Christian comment on apocalyptic eschatology can be found in Bauckham (1999) and Skrimshire (2014).

³³The Greek term ‘apocalypse’ denotes a disclosure or revelation (hence the Book of Revelation or Apocalypse), but it also connotes various end-time scenarios. Apocalyptic literature is a late Jewish and early Christian genre of texts (of mostly pseudepigraphic and apocryphal nature) dealing with eschatological visions and end-time prophecies.

3.3 *The Nineveh Model*

The third scenario is based on the prophet Jonah who was sent by God to the city of Nineveh to preach doomsday judgment against it: ‘Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.’ (Jonah 1:2 [NIV]). Because Jonah had little inclination to act as a doomsday preacher, it took some dramatic detours before he eventually gave in and went to Nineveh to preach the message God had instructed him to deliver: ‘Yet forty days, and Nineveh will be overthrown.’ (Jonah 3:4 [KJV]). But then came the surprising turnabout: ‘The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.’ (Verse 5 [NIV]). Even the king of the city ‘took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust’ (Verse 6 [NIV]). ‘And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.’ (Verse 10 [KJV]). The lesson of the Nineveh Model is that apocalyptic announcements do not of necessity come to pass in every case but constitute first and foremost a call to repentance and behavioural transformation. According to the Nineveh Model, God could be giving humans—as the appointed stewards of His creation—another chance to repent and amend their ways.

In this model, we read of Jonah preaching a doomsday-framed call of repentance to the Ninevites in much the same way that climate scientists have been preaching to us for years (e.g. Hansen 2009, 2012; Kendall 1997; Ripple et al. 2017; Schellnhuber 2008), at times even offering timeframes for behaviour change:

There is a window of opportunity for avoiding the most damaging climate change impacts, but that window is closing: the world has *less than a decade* to change course. Actions taken – or not taken – in the years ahead will have a profound bearing on the future course of human development. The world lacks neither the financial resources nor the technological capabilities to act. What is missing is a sense of urgency, human solidarity and collective interest. (United Nations Development Program [UNDP] 2007, para. 3; emphasis added)

Relatedly and importantly, in the Nineveh Model, it is ‘repentance’ that staves off the coming calamity. Expressed in Biblical parlance, ‘repentance’ is defined as:

A turning away from sin, disobedience, or rebellion and a turning back to God (Matt 9:13; Luke 5:32). In a more general sense, repentance means a change of mind (Gen 6:6-7) or a feeling of remorse or regret for past conduct (Matt 27:3). True repentance is a ‘godly sorrow’ for sin, an act of turning around and going in the opposite direction. This type of repentance leads to a fundamental change in a person’s relationship to God. (Youngblood 1995, pp. 1077-1078)

Such repentance seems reminiscent of the oft-cited verse from 2 Chron 7:14: ‘If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and *turn from their wicked ways*; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will *heal their land*.’ ([NIV], emphasis added). Could it be that such heartfelt human repentance may prompt God to hear, forgive and *heal* the land?

In synthesis, while—in light of global warming and the general threat that humanity poses to the equilibrium of creation—we cannot categorically exclude the possibility of an end-time Armageddon (Apocalypse Model) as a contingency, we strongly favour the Nineveh Model. It invites us to take very seriously the warnings of today’s prophets, namely the thousands of scientific experts who advocate urgent change (e.g. Kendall 1997; Ripple et al. 2017), begin to cover ourselves (figuratively speaking) with sackcloth, and organise a dramatic turnabout of our thinking and behaviour. Accordingly, the discussion will now turn to an analysis on consequent implications for present living, including opportunities arising from considering the paramount question: How should we then live? The following discussion will also explore relevant implications and opportunities for a more holistic Christian education agenda.

4 Discussion: How Should We then Live?

Christians are not best understood as those who have somehow been ‘caught up’ by the Spirit, and transported out of this world and into some mystical, spiritual reality that has no bearing on the created order. Rather, Christians—as indeed *all* human beings—have been formed as grounded, landed creatures, created to live on this good earth, with the promise and perspective that they shall one day rejoice in the physicality and glory of God’s new creation. This insight lies at the core of what it means to be ‘saved’—our calling as Christians is to live redemptively in the world because we are looking forward to experiencing it in all its glorious physicality, beauty and fullness in the new creation of God’s promise.

Wright (2006) sums up the matter admirably: ‘God’s plan is not to abandon this world, the world which he said was ‘very good.’ Rather, he intends to remake it. And when he does he will raise all his people to new bodily life to live in it. That is the promise of the Christian gospel.’ (p. 186). God’s promise of a new creation is replete with references in the Biblical text to a redeemed humanity participating with joy in the renewed physical creation—not apart from it, but intimately in communion with it (cf. Is 35). Importantly,

God’s new creation is not discontinuous with the old: indeed, it ‘does not annihilate the old but gathers it up and creates it anew [...] The *creatio nova* is therefore the new creation of this, the creation which is perishing from sin and injustice.’ [Moltmann 1996, p. 29.] The new is recognizable in that it has some similarity to that which has gone before, but it contains more, something richer and deeper and more meaningful. This continuity in the midst of discontinuity speaks to us of the God who is faithful to his creation, from *creatio originalis* to *creatio nova*. (Buxton 2014, p. 210)

This then is a compelling call to care for creation now, given that our creation care activities will not be discontinuous or dissimilar from the future responsibilities of care in a new heaven and a new earth (Rev 21). Indeed, to live fully human lives today means that we are privileged to experience—at a deeply personal level—our own interconnectedness with all of creation. Just as we find our identity in the

context of a myriad human relationships, we are also ‘creatures of nature’ in a far more profound way than many of us realise. Psalm 8 may remind us that God has placed us as ‘rulers’ over nature (Verse 6), but it is more appropriate to replace the ‘technological’ model of human beings *above* nature with one that recognises that we are created to live *within* the natural order. Indeed, as many commentators have pointed out, to ‘rule’ (Gen 1; Ps 8) carries with it the idea of being aligned with God’s purpose for creation, ‘a thoughtful, caring dominion, a dominion expressing God’s goodness and care, and not a heartless, brutal, crushing dominion.’ (Poythress 2006, p. 150). The dominion granted by God ‘presupposes that humans bear the divine image, so that God can authorise them to use their superior power *in a way that reflects God’s own rule over his creation.*’ (Bauckham 2010, p. 18; emphasis added). Care and compassion, rather than violence and force, are therefore the more likely implications of the Hebrew word *radah* (‘rule’) in Genesis 1:26–28.

Even so, eschatological reflections also highlight death and the finality of the human condition as compelling reasons to focus attention on the ‘here and now’, rather than merely the ‘hereafter’:

Death still has some finality for the human individual, and it is our task to extend this emphasis to the crisis of climate change. The death of biodiversity, the passing of points of no return, the irreversible alteration of the earth’s capacity for sustaining human communities – these are scenarios whose finality theology must not dilute, as many Christian millennialists do, via anticipation of a ‘new heaven and a new earth’. The world is not eternal: this belief is fundamental to orthodox Christian thought. But if theology is to articulate this in a way that is meaningful to the activist, it may need to be through the lamenting – and resisting – of future *failures* within the time allotted to us, not the utopian, consoling vision of some future one. (Skrimshire 2014, p. 168)

Relatedly, biologists teach us that the millions of species that exist on planet Earth are not a haphazard jumble of animals and plants and other natural phenomena—rather, they share a nested relationship in the ‘tree of life’, each contributing to and drawing from unique ecosystems that are themselves interdependent (e.g. Alexander 2008, pp. 47–129). Called to live in communion with creation, not over and above it, human beings need to learn to respect creation in all its beauty, diversity, complexity, mystery, raw power and energy. And that respect embraces not only the imperative to care for creation—which critically involves acting responsibly so that poor communities and vulnerable species are not marginalised through environmentally reckless practices—but also the wisdom to respect the natural forces that shape the unfolding evolution of our planet and acknowledge that perhaps we are not as smart and in control as we sometimes think we are. It is also at this point where opportunities for a more holistic Christian education are most clearly revealed.

In his comments on Job 38–39, the longest passage in the Bible about the non-human creation, Bauckham (2010) observes:

We need the humility to recognise that our place in the world is a limited one [...] We need the humility to recognise the unforeseeable risks of technology before we ruin the world in pursuit of technological fixes to all our problems. (p. 46)

When we live on this planet imbued with a desire to care for it and do what we can to live in an ethical and sustainable way, caring for *all* of God's creation (i.e. other people, all animals, birds and fish, and the inanimate world of plants and land and water), then not only is creation more free to express its potential as 'good', but we will discover a new freedom to live what Sallie McFague (1997) calls 'super, natural' lives (p. 5).

For Bauckham (2010), 'the most profound and life-changing way in which we can recover our place in the world as creatures alongside our fellow-creatures is through the Biblical theme of the worship all creation offers to God.' (p. 76). To experience nature in this sacramental way is to experience transformation as we discover afresh our basic humanity in solidarity with God's created order. In Psalm 148 we see all creation joining in worshipping God, a 'cosmic choir' or orchestra, with each created being contributing in their own distinctive way to a symphony of praise to God simply by being themselves and fulfilling their divinely ordained role in creation. Moltmann (2003) insists that 'if nature and humanity are to survive on this earth, they must find the way to a new community with each other. Human beings must integrate themselves once more into the Earth's cosmic setting.' (pp. 168–169).³⁴ In this holistic, web-like 'creation-community' (cf. McKibben 2007), human beings are caught up with the whole of creation in the dynamic life of God. For God is not a deistic being, separate from His creation, nor is He in dualistic opposition to it. He is intimately involved *in* all that he has made, immanent as well as transcendent. And this 'creation-community' belongs to God ... not us!

5 Conclusion: The Role of Holistic Christian Education

While environmental sustainability has been broadly embedded within Christian education in ways that have integrated the fundamentals of science, spirituality and ethics, there remains a paucity of initiatives that link the aforementioned foci with Christian theological, hermeneutical and eschatological perspectives. This theoretical chapter extends previous scholarship by means of a two-pronged approach, which links scientific and scriptural discursive reflections to arising opportunities for spirituality-shaped environmental sustainability. This offers the promise of generating support for a more holistic Christian education agenda where scripturally shaped education for environmental sustainability and creation care does not remain side-lined as a fringe concern. The Nineveh Model (Sect. 3.3) concurrently encapsulates both the scientific imperative for sustainability (preserving and protecting God's creation in perpetuity), as well as the ubiquitous strategy for implementing it (generating far-reaching behavioural change through 'repentance' and 'turning from sin'). Relatedly and importantly, if God can be 'known' through what He has made

³⁴Previously published in Häring and Kuschel (1998).

(Rom 1:20), then ‘creation care’ is raised as an epistemological priority of the highest order. Following this argument, epistemologically speaking, God becomes progressively less ‘knowable’ from what He has created as the defacing of His creation continues. Or inversely, the knowledge of God can be preserved through the conservation of His creation. This makes spirituality-shaped environmental sustainability an important component and cornerstone of a more holistic Christian education agenda. If environmental justice, sustainability and concern for the poor and vulnerable are to take a more central role in the life and witness of Christian communities, those who are studying in universities, seminaries and other teaching institutions need to be equipped with a deeper and more theologically persuasive understanding of the importance of caring for God’s creation. Educators and church leaders are strategically placed to lead by example and teaching.

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Chapter 5

Reimagining Christian Schools as Revelatory Communities



Craig B. Murison and David M. Benson

Abstract This chapter argues the use of the phrase faith learning integration (FLI) as the main lexicon of Christian schools' approaches to being distinctively Christian is counterproductive to the goal of effectively integrating faith and learning. The phrase itself contributes to an emphasis being placed on the cognitive and theoretical work of these schools and substantively reinforces the separation of faith and academic learning. A language for revelatory classrooms and communities is proposed as an alternative vocabulary within which the challenge of being distinctive can be discussed.

Keywords Christian schooling · Education · Revelatory · Faith learning integration · Worldview · Social imaginary

1 Introduction

Christian schools in Australia have sought to differentiate themselves through efforts to effectively integrate faith and learning. Their implementation of faith learning integration (FLI) is how many Christian schools defend employment practices restricted to practicing Christians. This is evidenced in a recent article by Karp (2018) in the 'Guardian' newspaper, 'Christian Schools Australia warned that "removing the ability of Christian schools to employ staff who share the school's values and beliefs would undermine the essential nature of the school"' (para. 5). They argue only teachers who are Christians can bring together (integrate) the tenets and practices of the Christian faith and the academic learning required by regulatory authorities. Australia, as with much of Western civilisation, has taken

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a distinctly ‘secular’ turn. In our secular society, it is natural to separate what religious authority and transcendent beliefs remain from how our education institutions work and are framed. Faith and reason are seen, by many, as mutually exclusive viewpoints. This can result in a dualistic approach to faith and learning in our society rather than a cohesive view of learning and an expectation of God’s revelation to all within the community.

The continued emphasis of Christian schools on FLI, as their foundational approach to being distinctively Christian, reinforces the separation of faith and learning they are seeking to avoid. In this chapter, the authors seek to reimagine Christian education with an alternative lexicon and imaginary termed ‘revelatory communities’. As will be seen, school communities which operate as revelatory communities still seek to develop a framework of Biblical understandings to undergird curriculum development. They also join with each staff member and take collective responsibility for their ongoing spiritual development. Everything they do is practiced with an expectation the Holy Spirit will empower the incarnational nature of Christ within each believing staff member. The development of Biblical frameworks, spiritual formation and reliance on the Holy Spirit are undertaken in community. This intentional strategic approach to being revelatory communities involves knowing (cognitive and theoretical), becoming (spiritual formation) and being Christ-like (pneumatological, incarnational pedagogy). In this chapter, the terms ‘knowing’, ‘becoming’ and ‘being’ describe a holistic, developmental approach to moving between theory and practice in a fluid process. In this way, these schools work to facilitate connections between students and God. Of course, God is the only one who can reveal Himself to any person. Revelatory schools aim to establish and maintain a revelatory learning environment. This is a learning environment which maximises the opportunities for members of the school community to become more aware of the ways the Lord is revealing Himself to them as they participate in the school community.

2 Christian Schools and FLI

The term ‘Christian schools’ refers to the relatively low fee, faith-based, independent schools which have emerged in the last five decades in Australia. These schools share a conviction of the authority of the Bible and rely heavily on FLI as the frame of thinking within which they develop their Christian distinctives (Millis 2004). Badley (2009) claims Frank Gaebelein (1968) was the first person to coin the phrase ‘faith learning integration’ and discussions about the phrase have been continuing ever since (Valance et al. 2009). Agreeing on a definition of what FLI means has been problematic (Hall et al. 2006). Recognising that without a clear definition of FLI it is impossible to apply, Thomas (2012) provides the following:

the integration of faith and learning is about maintaining the wholeness or connection between learning new information and seeing a corresponding change in behavior because of this new information [...] The IFL is the intentional action of an individual to bring his

or her personal beliefs and faith into his or her classroom in a way that affects the behaviors and attitudes of the students. The behavior of the teacher influences the worldview of the students in such a way that the student experiences a paradigm shift in their thinking. (Thomas 2012, p. 18)

2.1 *The Faith/Reason Divide*

Our current Western world sees a divide between faith and reason, between religion and science. Thus, elements of our lives are seen as applicable either to faith or to reality. Our language describes knowledge and experiences as sacred or secular, to do with faith or not to do with faith. When these expressions are the way we think and talk about the world we reinforce the paradigm which divides faith and reason. This is a false dichotomy. God is the creator of everything. There is nothing that is not His. ‘There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!’ (Kuyper 1998, p. 488).

The Latin root of ‘integrity’¹ is the same as that of ‘integration’ (Bufford et al. 2004, p. 363). It refers to ‘the state of being whole’ (Oxford English dictionary 2018, n.p.). When something is integral to something else and is absent, the whole does not exist. A useful analogy in understanding this is that of a high-rise building. The steel in the building is integral to its structure. If the steel was removed the building would collapse. Without both the steel and the concrete the building lacks integrity. Applying this thinking to FLI the term takes a deeper meaning than it has in many Christian schools today. Faith and learning are integral to one another. Without faith, there can be no learning and without learning there can be no faith. This supports the Augustinian notion ‘all truth is God’s truth’, (Augustine 2010, p. 182). God does not have to be put back into knowledge. He is already there. He is revealing Himself to us through all aspects of our daily lives, including in the school. To interpret FLI in any other way is to reinforce the predominant view of today’s Western society within which faith and reason are separated.

It is one thing to take for ourselves the premise that all truth is God’s truth. It is another thing to build upon this premise an effective educational practice that shows a student the unity of truth and that brings alive in his heart and mind the grand ‘concept of a Christ who “is the image of the invisible God,” by whom “all things were created,” who “is before all things,” and by whom “all things consist, or hold together”’ (Gaebelein 1968, p. 23).

In applying the FLI approach, which dominates curriculum development in Christian schools, teachers are reinforcing the idea that faith and reason are separate in themselves and in their students. While seeking to give their students the building

¹According to ‘Integrity’ (2018) in the ‘Oxford English dictionary’, the Latin root for integrity is ‘integritas’ which, in turn, comes from the Latin word ‘integer’. It means intact.

blocks of a Christian worldview they are strengthening the existing paradigm. Requiring teachers to put God into what and how they teach is contrary to the fact He is already there. It strengthens a philosophical view that some knowledge and experiences are relevant to faith, to God and some are not. This approach reinforces the notion faith and reason are separated by focussing the teacher's attention on the cognitive and theoretical aspects of their task. It increases the likelihood the broader elements of life will be missed, preventing the development of a holistic Christian worldview, which we are calling a Christian social imaginary.

2.2 *Worldview and Social Imaginary*

As previously discussed, the dominant approach to FLI adopted in Australian Christian schools (and many in other countries as well) is the use of a core of worldview concepts to underpin curriculum development. Sire (2015) provides the following definition of worldview:

A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being. (p. 141)

Taylor (2004) uses the term social imaginary to encompass 'the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations' (p. 23). A social imaginary, claims Taylor (2004), goes beyond intellectual ideas people have about social relationships to explore how people develop their assumptions. Images, stories and legends contribute to how people interpret the world. Worldview is used so widely in Christian schools there is a risk it has lost some of the depth of its meaning. The concept of social imaginaries presents an opportunity to introduce an alternative terminology to be used in place of worldview.

What we're calling the social imaginary extends beyond the immediate background understanding that makes sense of our particular practices. This is not an arbitrary extension of the concept, because just as the practice without the understanding wouldn't make sense for us and thus wouldn't be possible, so this understanding supposes, if it is to make sense, a wider grasp of our whole predicament: How we stand to each other, how we got to where we are, how we relate to other groups, and so on. This wider grasp has no clear limits (Taylor 2004, p. 25).

As Taylor (2004) explains, theories operate within boundaries and can be expressed in terms of explicit doctrines. The worldview materials used in Christian schools to assist teachers have a theoretical structure. They are tightly bounded and present comparative worldview positions, with the Christian worldview as the right and only way to view the world. All else is wrong. Worldview involves 'thought,

cognition and intellection' (Wolterstorff 2002, p. 107) and is about content choice (Smith 2011). This presents worldview as already decided constructs. A social imaginary is not a predetermined social construct because of its unlimited and undefined nature (Taylor 2004, p. 25). A worldview approach represents a fixed mindset, whereas a social imaginary is a growth mindset allowing for new and deeper understandings to continue to emerge. Social imaginaries are never completed. They are the community story. They evolve over time as the community collectively debates, discusses and explores concepts. It is important that, through negotiation, the community discovers commonalities and comes to agreement on the facts, norms and feelings, in dialogue moving them towards coordinated action (Heitink 1999, p. 135). The school (and classes therein) is engaged as a community with real-life problems. It moves from explaining what's going on and why, to understanding what should be going on (from a range of perspectives, normative, situational and existential) and, finally, changing the situation aligned with the mission of God towards flourishing of all.

Shifting from worldview to social imaginary aligns with a shift from a top-down, linear model to a practical orientation. Such a model forms thinking doers, sensitive to how their beliefs are already embedded in their practices. This is about wisdom for the real stuff of everyday life. Social imaginaries are thus, by nature, transformative. The FLI approach, with a common core of Biblical worldview, is at odds with our communities which do not hold to a homogenous imaginary. We are not suggesting some form of relativistic engagement, rather one which embraces, encourages and celebrates the value of each individual's contribution to framing a social imaginary within a community.

2.3 *Revelation*

In place of an approach which seeks to put God back into the curriculum, Christian schools should focus on how God is revealing Himself to us. God's revelation of Himself is communicated in special revelation, through the Bible, in general revelation, through the world around us, and in experiential revelation, through our life experiences. Calvin (2009) points out that when we see God revealed in creation we must not form this into a new idolatry. Rather we must come back to his word. God reveals Himself in both the Bible and creation. Calvin (2009) argues, it is easier for us to see him in the Bible. He calls it 'a more sure way' (Calvin 2009, p. 116). What, then, is revelation? Frame (2017) helpfully defines it thus:

Theologians use the term 'revelation' to indicate the ways in which God enables us to incorporate his perspectives into ours. They distinguish: (1) 'General' or 'natural' revelation, God revealing himself through the created world (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:18-21). (2) 'Special' revelation, God speaking human language to, and then through, prophets (Deut. 18:15-22), apostles (John 14:25), and the written text of scripture (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21). (3) 'Existential' revelation, God revealing himself through human beings as his 'image' (Gen. 1:26-27). This includes his giving us ability to understand and apply

other forms of revelation and therefore to develop our own sense of right and wrong (the 'conscience', Rom. 2:15; 2 Cor. 4:2; 1 Tim. 1:5). (p. 9)

Revelation is the unveiling of a secret, bringing something out of the dark to where it can be seen. It is 'simply the process of reaching truth' (Moran 2009, p. 4). 'What is revealed is a secret and the result of the secret not being a secret anymore is called a revelation' (Moran 2009, p. 40).

Barth (1959) argues there is no pathway on which a person can travel to God, only a pathway God travels on to them. In other words, there is nothing a person can do, think or say to experience relationship with God. God has travelled the road to man through the incarnation of Christ. Revelation does not come from any effort of ours. Revelation only comes through God's grace. Penner (2015), commenting on Barth (1959), points out that both the reality and the possibility of God coming to man through revelation can only be an action of God Himself, especially of the Holy Spirit. O'Collins (2016) explains that revelation does not uncover facts or information about God. It is God revealing Himself, three divine persons. In exploring the meaning of 'faith' Moran (2009) states it is either referring to something historical or it is 'an act directed toward what is revelatory in the present' (p. 3). In doing so Moran (2009) is challenging the theological notion revelation is something which occurred in the past and is not something contemporary Christians experience. Revelation guides a person to salvation (Swinburne 2007). For Christian schools seeing their students grow into Christ, becoming effective contributors to the common good, is the greatest reward. If revelations of God are a key to achieving this end, it would seem logical Christian schools would seek to maximise the opportunities for students to receive such revelations. Thus, while the FLI approach is primarily cognitive and something we drive, revelatory communities are about receptivity to the God of grace who reveals/illuminates, that we may have unveiled how His presence and mission is integral to all of life, particularly what and how we learn.

While acknowledging both special and general revelation as key ways God reveals Himself to us, it is in the living of life Christians can interpret and understand scripture and tradition (Schillebeeckx 1968). In this way, life itself is a hermeneutic exercise, an exercise of God revealing Himself to us. Our individual and shared experiences, the actions which result from our choices as we live life, shine light on the interpretation of scripture and contribute to the ways in which God reveals Himself to us. This exceeds the task of connecting the dots between subject matter and a Biblical worldview towards faith and learning integration. It is a whole of life orientation that forms a community to recognise, be attentive to God's presence and wisely participate towards the flourishing of all things. Scripture, scholarship and personal experience fuse in a dance of thinking about the world and acting faithfully in our local context, as we are guided by the transcendent teacher who reveals—indeed, who is—truth. This is the heartbeat of interpersonal encounter, reimagining Christian schooling as a revelatory community. 'It is only in the sphere of action—of doing in the faith—that orthodox interpretation can be inwardly fulfilled [...] Interpretation becomes hermeneutics of

praxis' (Schillebeeckx 1968, p. 36). The lived experiences of students contribute to the ways God can reveal Himself to them. The relationships between students and teachers and the pedagogy of the teacher become of central interest here.

3 Reimagining the Role of the Teacher

"The divine spirit is always blowing; it is the sails of human listening that may or may not be raised (Moran 1997, p. 13)".

If God is revealing Himself to us continuously, why do we only recognise it occasionally? The above quote from Moran (1997) gives a very poetic explanation. While a radio station may be continuously transmitting, a radio receiver will only pick up what is being transmitted on the frequency to which it is tuned and will only be received by the listener if the listener is paying attention. Similarly, God's revelation to us at any specific moment in our lives, in fact across all moments of our lives, is only received by us if we are paying attention. Attention is a deliberate positioning of one's self to be alert to God's fingerprints on every moment—every interaction with another, every thought, every reaction, every comment or gesture (Weil 2001). God reveals Himself through all of creation. This revelation is not just constrained to the modern environmental definition of creation. God's creation includes everything in it. As we seek to make efforts to be attentive to God's revelation we may not see the results. However, claims Weil (2001), piece by piece we will discover truth (p. 51).

Jesus is a teacher who doesn't just inform our intellect but forms our very loves. He isn't content to simply deposit new ideas into your mind; He is after nothing less than your wants, your loves, your longings. His 'teaching' doesn't just touch the calm, cool, collected space of reflection and contemplation; He is a teacher who invades the heated, passionate regions of the heart. He is the Word who 'penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit'; He 'judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart' (Heb 4:12, New International Version²). To follow Jesus is to become a student of the Rabbi who teaches us how to love; to be a disciple of Jesus is to enrol in the school of charity (Smith 2016).

We cannot reveal God to anyone else. God reveals Himself to us. While God, as God, can choose how, where and when He reveals Himself, in the daily context of school life God reveals Himself through the subject matter of the curriculum (including co-curricular and hidden curricular), relationships, and in the ways teachers teach. In discussing the importance of attention Weil (2001) sees the role of the teacher less to focus on teaching in ways which keep the students' attention and more to model attention to the students. Teachers model exemplary attention

²All scripture quotations are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version* (2011).

through their passion for their teaching and content. They model attention which transcends themselves, transcends their own egos and generates a desire in students to learn how to be attentive themselves. In these ways, Christian schools can deliberately seek to provide the best possible conditions in which students might find themselves paying attention to God's frequency.

We must attend to how schools can grow as revelatory communities. Most scholars agree that teacher strategies, more so than curriculum details, are the determinative factor in educational outcomes for students. As a result of his meta-analysis, Hattie (2009) concluded the most important educational story is not the ideological negotiations and political wrangling in the boardrooms. Rather:

it is the power of passionate, accomplished teachers who focus on students' cognitive engagement with the content of what it is they are teaching. It is about teachers who focus their skills in developing a way of thinking, reasoning, and emphasizing problem solving and strategies in their teaching about the content they wish students to learn. It is about teachers enabling students to do more than what teachers do unto them; it is the focus on imparting new knowledge and understanding and then considering and monitoring how students gain fluency and appreciation in this new knowledge and build conceptions of this knowing and understanding. It is how teachers and students strategize, think about, play with, and build conceptions about worthwhile knowledge and understanding. (Hattie 2009, pp. 237-238)

Being revelatory is much more than just teaching from a Christian perspective. It is also reflected in the passion of the teachers. The passion of the teacher comes across as much in how they teach as it does in what they teach. How teachers teach has been referred to as pedagogy. A simple dictionary definition of pedagogy is that pedagogy involves the 'art, occupation, or practice of teaching' ('Pedagogy' 2018, no. 3). The word pedagogy developed from the term paidagōgus, a servant in Greek households who had the role of legal guardian of a young boy (Young 1987). The servant had responsibility for the moral development of the child and to prevent any harm befalling him before he reached adulthood.

The traditional pedagogical model might be described as 'sage on the stage'. In this model, the teacher has the knowledge and delivers it to the student. The teacher teaches and the student learns. A more recent pedagogical model describes the teacher as the facilitator of learning, 'the guide on the side'. However, as Hattie (2009) states, in an effective pedagogy, the model becomes teacher as activator instead of facilitator. The teacher makes the learning process visible through explicit goals, ongoing practice towards mastery, and immediate feedback. When applied in revelatory schools the teacher is activating the attention of the students in ways which, piece by piece, build their exposure to God's revelation of Himself.

3.1 Revelatory Communities

A number of reports and research papers propose education frameworks comprised of components. The UNESCO report, 'Learning: The Treasure Within' (Delors 1996), has had a large influence on policy development in education in recent years

(De Leo 2010). The report proposes four pillars as the foundations of education (Delors 1996, p. 20). The pillar ‘learning to live together’ receives the most emphasis. Learning to know, learning to do and learning to be, the other three pillars in the report, are presented as the basis for learning to live together. Pestalozzi’s (1927) ‘Head, Hearts and Hands’ framework as cited in Soëtard (1994, p. 6) of education emerged in the late 1890s. It has similarities to the three of the pillars of the UNESCO framework. Propositional, behavioural and heart orientation are identified by Schultz and Swezey (2013) in a three-dimensional conceptualisation of worldview. These frameworks echo the three pillars of the revelatory classroom model of knowing, becoming and being. Each of these frameworks, including the revelatory classroom model, create the possibility of an approach to education in which the proposed components are implemented as separate parts rather than a unified whole.

Treating faith and reason as separate kingdoms is something Gill (1979) identifies as a problem in the language of FLI. He suggests the use of the word ‘dimensions’ as an alternative. In making this suggestion, Gill (1979) is addressing the idea that kingdoms cannot exist in the same time and space, while dimensions can. ‘Kingdoms’, Gill (1979) claims, is the term most commonly used to distinguish between the physical and spiritual. He agrees with Hall et al. (2006) who maintain the use of the term integration has been problematic for Christian educators. The language used in FLI increases the likelihood of a dualistic approach being maintained. An approach which still presents faith and reason as separate. This makes the task of Christian teachers more difficult as they seek to integrate faith and learning in the classroom. While the revelatory approach presents a new model, there is a risk it will simply create a new separation of head, heart and hands, even of theory and practice. What is needed is a way of holding these together.

In revelatory school communities teachers consciously seek to help students make connections with God. Preparation for lessons is completed with an alertness to how God might be revealing Himself to students through the subject matter, the teaching strategies and the classroom environment. Prayer is central to the teacher’s work at every stage. An integrative approach seeks to establish explicit connections between the subject matter and Christian truth. A revelatory approach seeks to facilitate the movement of the student towards God, towards their neighbour in love and towards lovingly cultivating the world God loves. A teacher using a revelatory approach explores where God already is in the content, rather than looking for how He can be put into it. Schools conceptualised as revelatory communities seek to do this in all aspects of school life.

School communities which operate as revelatory communities develop a Biblical framework to undergird curriculum development through a shared social imaginary. The community will join with each staff member as they take responsibility for their ongoing spiritual development and do things with an expectation the Holy Spirit will empower the incarnational nature of Christ within each believing staff member. This intentional, strategic approach to being revelatory communities involves knowing (cognitive and theoretical), becoming (spiritual formation) and being Christ-like (pneumatological and incarnational pedagogy).

The work of a teacher involves developing and preparing lessons. For a Christian teacher in a revelatory community, this includes thinking through the curriculum and identifying how God might seek to reveal Himself to students. This is a cognitive and theoretical process. In using an FLI, schools are taking a deficit model in which God must be put into the curriculum. The revelatory approach, on the other hand, asks teachers to look for where God already is in the curriculum and where He might be seeking to reveal Himself to students. In the revelatory model, the cognitive and theoretical work (knowing) remains important.

Maximising the conditions within which God will reveal Himself to students involves an approach which includes intentional, deliberate strategies for spiritual formation of staff (becoming). This is best achieved when it is embedded in the culture of the school. The starting point is to bring to awareness one's own thinking and ways of working which have not yet been transformed and having a common language of educative discourse in the professional community of the school. While the vision and purpose (*telos*) of Christian schools may be expressed in different words, there is a very strong, unified ambition to see graduates disciplined into Christ and actively involved in discipling others.

A pneumatological, incarnational pedagogy (being) is one in which the teacher seeks to be the embodiment of Christ, imitating and modelling him (Iselin and Meteyard 2010, p. 35), and, in daily interactions with students, recognises 'the mystery of the Spirit's work' and allows 'room or space for that covert ministry in each phase of teaching itself as part of the implicit curriculum' (Pazmiño 2010, p. 358). The cognitive and theoretical work involved in preparing content and strategies through which God can reveal Himself to students is essential. It is also evident Christianity is intended to be a developmental faith journey through which we are becoming like Jesus. If teachers are strategically and intentionally engaged in these two elements they will begin to create the environment in which students might better connect to the ways God is seeking to reveal Himself to them. Revelatory teaching, however, goes beyond the formative to the transformative (Pazmiño 2010), a process in which the Holy Spirit's presence is essential.

In revelatory communities knowing, becoming and being are blended into one another so there is no beginning or end. They do not occur separately and each works to fulfil the purposes of the others. This further contributes to the development of a social imaginary. Unlike an approach which is tightly bound and comparative, revelatory communities allow the interplay of ideas, imagined social existence and social interactions enabling the deeper understandings to develop. The interplay of knowing, becoming and being creates a dynamic frame for discourse and exploration of what it means to be a Christian school community. There is unity in diversity, ways of looking at the world which present different perspectives but provide a comprehensive whole only when multiple perspectives are present. The simultaneous application of knowing, becoming and being illuminates and even resources, different ways of framing the relationship between them. We begin to discover a way towards faith and learning being a unity in diversity, rather than compartments artificially forced together. In the revelatory school community this is outworked as a range of angles are brought onto a subject

area (not just the Christian worldview perspective) and answers for real-life questions are explored, as a Christian social imaginary emerges.

3.2 Reformative Practices: Revelatory Communities in Practice

For the idea of revelatory communities to be a reality, they must be based in a practical frame which is concerned about changing and not merely interpreting, the world. Revelatory school communities seek to deliberately provide opportunities for students to respond to God's revelation of Himself to them. These responses can best be exemplified in the concept of love. Not the modern Hollywood version which waters it down to something emotional but rather the love of the Bible which, according to Packer (1993), is best evidenced in what he refers to as neighbour love: 'Neighbor-love seeks the neighbor's good, and the true measure of it is how much it gives to that end' (p. 182). Packer (1993) further describes this love as:

deeds of mercy and compassion, a thoroughgoing neighbor-love that responds unstintingly to all forms of human need as they present themselves (Luke 10:25-27; Rom. 12:20-21). Compassion was the inward aspect of the neighbour-love that led Jesus to heal the sick, feed the hungry, and teach the ignorant (Matt. 9:36; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41; Luke 7:13) [...] Good works should be visible to back up good words. (p. 224)

Thus, students might visit the elderly, do chores for those who cannot do them for themselves, run events to contribute to the broader community, and so on. Through such practical activities, revelatory communities can practically express God's love towards others. These practical experiences, in turn, stimulate further learning and theoretical/theological reflection, a dance between theory, reflection and action. The major theme of the Bible is 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind; and love your neighbour as yourself' (Matt 22:37). Christian theology is a theology of love, modelled by Jesus Christ.

Knowing, becoming and being need to be able to be implemented in practical ways. If the application of the revelatory classroom model is not practical it will simply increase the workload of teachers and make very little difference to what happens in a school. Knowing, becoming and being, as explained earlier, are not intended to be separate parts of a whole. They are intended to be in simultaneous, continuous action in a school, a part of the emerging social imaginary. Teachers do not need to undertake their professional work in isolation. Even in small schools, they can prepare what and how they are going to teach in community. The ideas and suggestions of the members of the community form a part of the process of spiritual formation. At the same time, teachers are able to better see God revealing Himself in the curriculum and lean into the Holy Spirit to help in the delivery of the lessons.

4 Conclusion

The revelatory approach does not reject the efforts of FLI. It argues use of the term ‘integration’ is problematic in that it contributes to the adoption of methodologies which, unintentionally, reinforce a separation between faith and reason, between academic and spiritual. The revelatory model adds to existing integrative processes. It creates an opportunity for a new lexicon in which worldview is broadened to be a social imaginary, removing limitations which have emerged over time. A revelatory school community engages in knowing (cognitive and theoretical work), becoming (an individual and corporate responsibility for spiritual formation) and being (a pneumatological, incarnational pedagogy) which result in the continuous development of a Christian social imaginary.

Revelatory communities focus on growing a culture in which members of the community are given the best possible opportunities for their sails to be set to the wind of the Holy Spirit—to become attentive to God’s revelation of Himself to them. The simultaneous, continuous interplay of knowing, becoming and being, within community, activates an attentiveness which draws the members of the community to God’s revelation. Thankfully, Christian teachers never walk into their classrooms alone. They walk in in the company of the Holy Spirit.

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Part II
Holistic Pedagogical Perspectives:
Integrating Spiritual and Practical
Approaches

Chapter 6

Transformative Learning: Insights from First Year Students' Experience



Beverley Norsworthy

Abstract Drawing on a small qualitative study, this chapter provides insights into how four first year undergraduate students' perceptions of themselves as learners changed throughout their first year of a Bachelor of Counselling degree. The changes identified by students include growth in confidence and awareness of the need to take responsibility and ownership for their own learning. The focus of the study was deemed important as the ways students understand the learning process influences the way they approach learning. A transformative, relational approach to learning as embodied knowing often brings disequilibrium and doubt for students who expect an accumulation of knowledge and skills (Mezirow J, Transformative dimensions of adult learning, 1991 Mezirow 1991). Acknowledging that one's choice of research methodology is itself reflective of one's ontological, anthropological and epistemological assumptions, the visual methodology known as PhotoVoice was chosen for its ability to honour the participant's voice, respect human beings as interpreters of the world and encompass research as a tool for storytelling. The chapter includes a brief outline of PhotoVoice methodology as well as how participants engaged with their chosen visual images to communicate their responses to questions such as if their perceptions of being a learner had changed, what characteristics of the learning journey had been particularly helpful and how they knew if they had learned something. In conclusion, the chapter identifies possible ramifications for tertiary teaching as well as the potential within a PhotoVoice experience for transformative learning.

Keywords Transformative learning • Tertiary learning • Photo elicitation research

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1 Introduction

The ways students understand the learning process influences the way they approach and perceive their tertiary study (Blackie et al. 2010; Norsworthy 2008). While tertiary educators typically assume that students enter their tertiary journey as committed learners, this can be an erroneous starting point. Most students emerge from secondary education with the love of learning and seeking of wisdom replaced with the desire to complete tasks or courses and acquire credits. When Christian tertiary educators seek transformative learning, it is important that they be cognisant of the different expectations for learning which emerge from the different views of learning.

The setting for the study is Bethlehem Tertiary Institute (BTI), a non-denominational, independent tertiary institution within Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ). BTI offers undergraduate professional preparation degrees shaped by Biblical priorities in counselling, social work and teaching. It also offers a Masters of Professional Practice for existing professionals, who wish to explore their professional practice through a Biblical lens. Bethlehem Tertiary Institute's undergraduate programmes are informed by a developmental, transformative or autobiographical approach to adult education (Biesta and Miedema 2002; Cranton 2002; Mezirow 1991; Taylor 1998, 2001). Such an approach views learning from a whole person perspective noting the influence of affective, relational, cognitive, behavioural and spiritual factors in that process (Gallego et al. 2001; Palmer 1993, 1998; Shortt 2014). *'Transformational learning is about change—dramatic, fundamental change in the way we see ourselves and the world in which we live'* (Merriam et al. 2007, p. 130).

2 Methodology

The selection of research method is not irrelevant. It reveals one's assumptions about the nature of the world (ontology) and human beings (anthropology) as well as how we come to know (epistemology) and make meaning (Hamilton 2002; Norsworthy 2008). PhotoVoice, the visual methodology utilised within this research project is a form of qualitative research that accepts research as interpretation (Alvesson and Sköldbberg 2000; Kincheloe and McLaren 2003) and is exemplary of narrative methodologies. These research approaches retain the disciplined 'way of knowing' (Bouma 2004) while capturing 'the interplay between experience, storying practices, descriptive resources, purposes at hand, audiences, and the environments that condition storytelling' (Gubrium and Holstein 2008, p. 250). They seek to make one's meaning-making and interpretive process 'accessible and investigable' (Sfard and Prusak 2005 cited in Leibowitz 2009, p. 262). Each participant's experience in and of the world is not understood in objective, distant terms, but rather as integral to their very being:

Interpreting the world is what human beings do as they seek to live with purpose and meaning [...] Individual experiences are not seen as objective snap shots of events, but rather as interpretations and constructions in the process of meaning making, a process holistically connected with who they are. (Norsworthy 2008, pp. 86–87)

Within such research, the concept of validity is based on the notion of trustworthiness or believability (Hamilton and Pinnegar 2000) such that its public reporting should 'ring true and enable connection' (Bullough and Pinnegar 2001, p. 16) with others in the same field and, particularly, with participants.

PhotoVoice methodology was introduced by Carolyn Wang, who invited some Chinese women who worked in rice fields to use visual images as tools to give voice to their own insights and meaning-making processes and contribute to improvement for community or institutional policies and processes (Rose 2007; Wang 1999). Key to PhotoVoice methodology is that the storyteller maintains control of their own story (Kellock 2011). It has subsequently been used in a wide range of settings, including education, health, counselling and multicultural studies. It recognises that 'visual images are never innocent; they are wrapped up in many layers of meaning and interpretation' (Rose 2007, p. 26), and the use of such needs to include an ethic of care.

2.1 *The Study*

After gaining ethical approval, students enrolled in first year programmes in which I did not teach were invited by email to participate in the research. Four counselling students (one male, three female) participated in the study. The participants, referred to as Bex, Martin, Sarah and Viv were invited to a short (20 min) conversation with myself. Participants prepared for this by choosing an image that captured their response to each of four questions which focused on an aspect of their perception and experience of self as learner and writing a short caption to go with each chosen image. The researcher positioned herself as a listener and learner, seeking to benefit from participants' insight and knowledge. Images included photographs taken by Viv, screen beans, postcards and pictures from the web. In fact, the participant-led conversations only took between 12 and 15 min and generated deep rich material for further consideration, highlighting several possible follow up projects. Remaining in a listening role required significant self-control for myself as researcher, but was important as part of honouring the student.

3 Findings

Woven through each participant's conversation was a theme or overarching metaphor for how they viewed themselves as a learner. Viv, Sarah and Bex's view of themselves as learners changed—but remained inside the overarching metaphor.

For Viv, this metaphor was captured through photographs she had taken of a tui (NZ native bird) and a kowhai tree (NZ native tree). The tui she had in mind was described as *'a proactive choosy, hungry feeder'*. She noted that she was not looking for *'packaged knowledge'* or *'nuggets of truth'*, but rather she was *'like the tui, seeking the finest nectar'*.

Sarah's overarching theme was one of being a traveller. To capture her view of being a learner at the beginning of her journey she chose straight railway tracks *'because I always considered it [learning] to be a straight journey'*. However, by the end of the year, the straight tracks were replaced by ones bending out of view and learning was *'walking forward one step at a time, not quite sure what's around the corner'*. Her chosen image captured the nature of her perception of the learning process as sequential but mysterious due to the fact that she was *'not able to see what is round corner. You are going towards something [...] even though you might not necessarily be able to see it at the moment'*. For her metaphor related to being a learner, Bex chose an image of a screen bean holding a pneumatic drill, and spoke passionately about:

It's the digging away, the drilling away at all that hard stuff [...] when I say hard stuff I mean my beliefs about education and learning. I used to believe that it was the teacher's or tutor's responsibility to provide me all the resources and information [...] and I would only limit myself to what materials were provided [...] So, then I realized with that drilling [...] it's hard doing that [...] but it's breaking away to get at the nuggets or the oil of learning.

Martin's metaphor was tied to an Irish myth from his childhood, 'The Salmon of Knowledge'. In the myth, the salmon symbolise knowledge. For Martin the changed view of being a learner related to which part of the myth was emphasised. Initially, he perceived himself *'as an empty brain inviting the salmon into my head to fill it with knowledge [...] I go as an empty vessel and welcome the information in'*. This changed to the myth's focus on wisdom and the idea of exploring learning experiences deeply to gain that wisdom.

All descriptions of how their perception of self as learner had changed included the sense of moving from a reliance on educators to taking responsibility and ownership for their learning. This sense of responsibility was to themselves, others and God and was linked to a willingness for *'digging deeper'*.

In describing changes in her perception of learning and its implications for the way she learns, Bex talked about her increased questioning:

I question a lot of stuff which is great because I never used to [...] so I question a lot of things [...] another thing I've learnt about myself is that the old me [...] was too embarrassed to ask outright someone [...] because it's I used to feel that I was dumb if I asked [...] but of course I've learnt that's not the case [...] I've begun to benefit from that. I've become more confident - not only in my learning area, but also outside in my personal and other life.

Viv chose an image of a pruned cherry tree:

Being willing for that deep pruning [...] like the little cherry tree [...] that very aggressive pruning [...] I think I've been ok with that, I've allowed myself to have huge limbs cut off [...] change who I am and how I perceive the world, though all the time maintaining my

deep faith in God, I have never compromised that [...] that little green shoot represents to me the new life that's come through [...] the inner work in the winter [...] the deeper work that's happening as I've given myself to the learning journey [...] there's been a pruning that's allowed the new growth that I hope will be more fruitful than the old growth that has been cut off.

Participants' emerging views of themselves as learners included descriptions of how they had grown in self-awareness which typically resulted in a willingness to embrace states of disequilibrium and questioning of existing beliefs and assumptions. Being reflective was identified as an important part of this process.

For Sarah, the change indicated learning with a sense of mystery and inquiry; a willingness to embrace the paradoxes, questions and unknown components of the journey. She likened managing the disequilibrium involved in the learning process to finding the right place for a jigsaw piece. Instead of panicking that you don't know where it goes, *'you put it to the side and you come back later and it does work once you've got some other pieces put in place'*.

Viv's perspective of learning had moved from a superficial *'putting more knowledge on top'* to the notion of learning as

A vehicle for a deeper resolution of who I am [...] more understanding of who I am [such that the] perception of myself as learner has become more like a surrendering to that deeper inner work while my knowledge expands [...] the whole God breathed thing [...] which I think has really helped me into it.

Bex's growing self-awareness and confidence resulted in changes in how she engaged with course material and where she sat in class.

This new-found confidence was not limited to their studies but had an impact elsewhere—including having the confidence to ask more questions, take the time to be reflective and being better listeners in their familial and friendship roles.

Participants highlighted two common factors in response to the question, 'What characteristics are helpful to you as learners?' The first can be understood in terms of 'connectedness'—participating in a learning community and having a support network. For this focus, Martin chose a postcard with four construction men having 'smoko'. He commented:

I really enjoyed discussing the material with a small group of like-minded classmates [...] all part of the Get Set¹ programme so from day one we were in a little group [...] with a similar work ethic, and we became friends.

Referring to the visual image, he continued:

There are four friends, on a building site - and one is talking - maybe going through a struggle - they're telling a story, and you can tell the others are listening and [...] that would be ideal for our little conversations [...] We kick around things [...] and the fact that we can share things I think that has made the learning journey that much easier. I may think I know what it means but someone else has a different slant on it [...] we have already seen the benefit of that in a couple of assignments.

¹An optional tertiary preparation programme offered before formal programmes commence.

It was not just connection with students that was identified as important. Viv noted the influence of one educator who *'really understood me as a learner'*. In fact, Viv reports that without this relational connection:

the learning is dead [if] there is no life in the relationship with the person who is teaching, it actually sucks the life out of the whole experience and it becomes very unsatisfying, even sad.

Another educator was described as *'very humble before God. In what they bring to the environment of the classroom, there's no defensiveness, there's no "I've got to get this across"'*.

Students did not feel compelled to learn in one particular way but described learning as *'an invitation [...] a creating of a place [...] to work [...] to operate, to function, to experience'* deep, holistic learning which included effort and *'grappling'* but where the educator was:

just trusting the process [...] they create a place where the process can happen and they're totally trusting and ok with that, but there's a confidence because you know they've been there [...] and so you know they can take you there too [...] you don't feel like you are being conformed to anything [...] it's actually about you finding out who you are, and how you relate to the subject [...] so it's really been a gift.

When describing how she knows she has learned something, Bex referred to similar ideas. She made connections to the relational nature of this process and how it links the past, present and future:

It's also the revelation that I've been receiving from God, but also from other people who are learning or who are teaching and I'm hearing that they're experiencing [...] I just remember when I get the little nuggets of learning from others.

Sarah represented this relational connectedness metaphorically by the banks to the side of the railway track. *'it's kind of sheltered, you've got that shelter on [...] the sides'*. She identified, lecturers, classmates, family back home, people she lived with as *'different support systems around me, [...] they are on the sides, cheering me on [...] if I fall off the tracks they see that and they are there to help me up'*.

The second characteristic identified as helpful to growing as learners was BTI's pedagogical approach, known as PIFI (Personal integration and Professional inquiry). This approach reflects BTI's understanding that professions such as teaching, counselling and social work are autobiographical. It reflects the Biblical understanding that what we say and do emanates from our inner being. For this reason, educators highlight the importance of particular dispositions such as humility, commitment to mercy and justice, being teachable, gracious and secure, and having professional practice which is informed by faith, inspired by hope and motivated by love (Mic 6:8; 1 Cor 3:13, New International Version²). An emphasis on reflexivity challenges students to explore the consequences for their practice of their own way of being and seeks transformative and incarnational learning.

²All scripture verses are from the Holy Bible, New International Version (2011).

It was this approach and its focus on his inner person which Martin highlighted as a key contributor to his changed perception of being a learner. He noted that courses:

challenged and asked me questions and asked me to explore things that I had locked away for a bit [...] The actual depth, the challenge of self awareness was not something I had done before. I keep referring to PIPI because it is huge, big picture.

Sarah captures a common perception in that participants:

didn't initially think it would be helpful - but now can see value [...] It's only now that I've been able to get to know myself more I just really see with my eyes [...] not necessarily relying on what, say, my parents, teachers or peers have said [...] I always relied on that a lot more and that influenced my academics.

For Viv, it was the focus of reflection in order to make the learning your own that was most helpful because *'learning is just information if it actually doesn't become part of me'*.

At the end of our conversation, Sarah commented that she would not have been able to participate in this research at the beginning of the year because *'I was too concerned with what is the 'right' answer. Do I have to do a certain thing?' and, 'not being clear of myself or what I thought or of the parameters around my own freedom'*. She credited the institute's commitment to its PIPI approach for *'it really makes you think creatively and think about your emotions and think about it all'*.

"How do you know you have learned something?" was the final question for participants. While they made mention of marks, assessment feedback and enjoyment of learning, the idea that dominated their comments is exemplified by Viv who said *"when it becomes part of me and starts to live naturally out of me then I know I've learnt something. I don't want to be regurgitating information, I want to be embodying the new understanding"*.

Martin noted that he knew:

it 'has 'sunk in' when it makes enough sense to me so I can paraphrase it, directly paraphrase it - I know when I can take it on my own and I can arrange it [...] Being able to explain it [...] not just verbalizing it, but actually explaining it in a way, and if they ask a question, then you can answer the question, not parrot back.

Participants noted this incarnational learning had a major effect in terms of:

The way it's changed my personal life [...] I guess what I have learnt I've taken on board [...] I think [it] makes sense [...] and it's because it's Christ centred, so it can't be a bad thing [...] I question a lot of stuff which is great because I never used to.

Bex continued with an example about:

my communication with my family [...] definitely has changed my communication [...] I tend to listen more - really do listen to what they are saying but I take into account the environment [...] the changes are notable - the way I talk with my husband.

Sarah returns to her jigsaw puzzle metaphor to explain:

The piece of the puzzle fits [...] you first have this idea and you try and figure out what is on the one individual piece [...] like what are all the little details that are going to help it

connect with the other ones [...] So, I guess for me, realising that I know something is when I am able to put it together with a different idea and say, 'Oh these two fit [...] now this one makes sense because I can see a little bit more of what was on that piece'.

3.1 *Implications for Future Practice*

Participant insights have implications for Christian educators in terms of increasing connectedness with students and their learning. In a time of fiscal restraint and the temptation to see 'efficiency' at the cost of effectiveness, insights from the students confirm the importance of developing a learning environment that honours and enables relational connectedness—with God, with peers, with educators and with the self as learner. This resonates with literature that suggests tertiary educators focus on motivational factors such as the will to learn, to persevere and to entertain a range of perspectives (Barnett 2009; Entwistle 2010).

This study provided the participants and researcher insights into the 'conceptions of learning each student brings to the learning environment' (McLean 2001, p. 408). Understanding such conceptions would enable Christian educators to make better learning-focussed connections with their students while at the same time enabling their students to make more helpful connections to course materials and learning experiences. It is clear that the development of one's learner identity has implications for persistence and success as a tertiary student. The findings from this study suggest that making this identity explicit has implications for the student's motivation and self-awareness about how they might maximise their own learning opportunities. For this reason, it appears that it would be beneficial for Christian tertiary educators to build into their courses the use of a similar experience as is discussed here as a reflective tool which enables students to appreciate and gain insights into their learning journey. The students' insights from this research experience motivated me to explore the use of the process as a pedagogical tool towards the end of a course to scaffold and enrich students' understanding of themselves as learners, scholars or researchers with a particular focus on how their formal learning has been transformative and embodied.

The participants' insights into the research process itself were 'ah ha' moments for me. Though the visual images chosen by the participants were so different in nature, they appear to have fulfilled all of the roles Meek and Buckley (2011) identified: 'acting as a memory stimulant for the storyteller, the image may have symbolic significance representing part of the otherwise unseen context, or the photo may simply illustrate a key aspect of the student teacher's story' (p. 420). The images invited internal dialogue, increasing self-awareness and 'new ways of knowing' (McIntosh 2011, p. 93). Participants were invited to make comment about their engagement in the research project. Martin saw the process as '*easy and rewarding*'; Viv drew attention to the fact that the '*process was effortless*' and '*deeply honouring of the one invited to share*'. These comments suggest that the use of visual research methods such as PhotoVoice or Photo Elicitation have much

potential for the Christian researcher who seeks to research in ways that are deeply honouring of the participants. This approach is both time efficient and authentic. Even more, it has shown itself to be empowering for all. As Meek and Buckley (2011) note, 'One advantage of this approach was that it required each student to take an active role in interpreting and telling their stories' and that it is a 'natural, easy and motivating experience for students' (p. 426). It appears that there is much within this methodology, which enables Christian educators to investigate their own practice in ways which are 'constructed ethically for human flourishing' (McIntosh 2011, p. 92).

4 Conclusion

Findings from the study speak positively to the fact that 'Images portray a depth of information and allow participants to "speak" in ways perhaps not otherwise possible' (Kellock 2011, p. 45). Participants appreciated the active role they could take in crafting and telling their stories: Stories which confirm that transformative learning is ontological as well as epistemological in nature. There appears to be encouragement for the idea that supporting adult students to identify and develop their concepts of learning and what it means to be a learner leads to increased clarity of that learning and the understanding that 'their own efforts are vitally important in the learning process' (Cheng 2011, p. 14). Findings suggest that key factors in transformative learning include students taking responsibility for learning, a learner stance, the willingness to embrace uncertainty and disequilibrium and a learning culture which upholds relational connectedness together with a commitment to pedagogy which aims for embodied knowledge or wisdom rather than knowledge and skills accumulation alone. Findings also confirm the critical importance during the first year of tertiary study enabling students to develop and sustain a wide range of relational connections (Astin et al. 2011; Zepke and Leach 2010). The study also suggests that visual research methods have the potential for exploring and enabling transformative Christian education.

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Chapter 7

Teaching Counselling from a Christian Worldview: Why and How Do We Do This?



Barbara Bulkeley

Abstract This chapter draws on one Christian tertiary provider's experience, over the past 20 years, preparing Christians for the field of professional counselling. The programme has a particular focus on working with families and several modalities are taught during the 3 years of the programme. The chapter will draw on a range of authors with different theological and faith perspectives to explore the difference between teaching Christian counselling and counselling informed and shaped by a Christian Worldview. It aims to show how this engagement has influenced the current approach. Educators are increasingly confident in articulating this approach both to students and in the professional counselling field. Drawing on the belief that 'we counsel out of who we are', the chapter will discuss how students are encouraged and supported to participate in personal transformation as it 'seeks to prepare relational practitioners whose theory-informed work with individuals, whanau and groups is reflective, ethical, and responsive to cultural and other diversity, so as to participate in the holistic, transformative work of Jesus towards shalom' (Cook 2015b, p. 2).

Keywords Counselling · Counselling education · Christian worldview
Counselling students · Transformation · Faith · Spirituality

'Bethlehem Tertiary Institute is a non-denominational Christian institution that encourages critical reflection and discernment, equipping tertiary students in the light of Christian values and beliefs' (Bethlehem Tertiary Institute 2007, Sect. 1). It has provided counselling education from a Christian Worldview for almost 25 years. Bethlehem Tertiary Institute (BTI) counselling graduates are well respected and almost all are employed shortly after graduation. The programme continues to receive many applicants, delivers the programme both on-site and to distance students, and student evaluations are generally excellent.

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When interviewing prospective students for the programme, there are sometimes comments about how applicants want to come to BTI to learn how to be a 'Christian counsellor'. It is this type of comment that has led to an investigation of the meaning of this term, as well as some critique of how it has been used in different contexts over time. Finally in this chapter, I will explore how BTI's education of trainee counsellors is expressed through what the educators believe are key points as we speak of counselling out of who we are. This is adapted from Palmer (1998) 'We Teach Who We Are' (p. 1).

This chapter, based closely on my presentation at the 'Learning and Loves: Reimagining Christian Education Research Symposium' in July 2016, will firstly have a brief foray into the terminology and understanding of what is 'Christian counselling' and then share some aspects of the counsellor education programme at BTI. I will finish by discussing how students are supported in the transforming process of counsellor education from a Christian stance.

Tan (2011) writes that 'christian counseling can be simply defined as counselling or psychotherapy that is Christ-centred, biblically-based, and spirit-filled.' (p. 15). He goes on to state that it is also primarily concerned with character, in particular the personal godliness of the counsellor. Elements of this are similar to Crabb, writing four decades earlier in 1977, who believed that Christian psychologists should spend as much time in regular and systematic Bible study as in the study of psychology. Crabb (1977) further stated that there needed to be a general understanding of both structure and content of Scripture and Bible doctrine, as well as membership in a Bible-believing fellowship.

In 1987, Crabb wrote of the Bible speaking meaningfully to every area of life. He further stated that the Bible is sufficient for providing a framework that is able to direct the counsellor in working with every problem brought to counselling. This is an aspect with which many Christians working as counsellors, psychologists or psychotherapists would not be in full agreement. I cannot see how a Biblical framework by itself would enable a counsellor to deal with any problem, such as in the complex area of abuse or trauma counselling, for example.

Collins (1993) concluded that many attempts to define or describe a Christian counsellor tended to emphasise the person of the counsellor. He widened this to include the techniques and skills used and the goals that are set. I find his definition to be one with which I could agree:

The Christian counselor is a deeply committed, spirit-guided (and Spirit-filled) servant of Jesus Christ who applies his or her God-given abilities, skill, training, knowledge and insights to the task of helping others move to personal wholeness, interpersonal competence, mental stability, and spiritual maturity. (Collins 1993, p. 21)

Coming closer to home and moving on by 15 years, in 2008 the New Zealand Association of Counsellors held a seminar in association with the Counsellor Education Programme at the University of Auckland. The keynote speaker was Philip Culbertson, an American, Anglican priest who worked as both a theology lecturer and a psychotherapist.

Culbertson (2009) set out to address the question of ‘Is there an agreed definition of Christian counselling?’ (p. 2). He asked could it ‘begin with the client and stay with the client, or should it begin with the client and end with the Bible?’ (p. 12). While acknowledging that this is oversimplified and presents two conflicting positions, Culbertson (2009) stated that it was an important distinction that pointed to the place of God, the Bible and also the many different interpretations of both Christian faith and tradition, in dealing not only with Christian but also other spiritual issues.

He talked of the problem that arose when a potential client phoned to ask if he was a Christian counsellor. Culbertson (2009) mentioned that he used to say ‘I am a psychotherapist and I am a Christian’ (p. 3), and believed that left open the opportunity for face-face exploration of all possible areas of spiritual belief. Culbertson (2009) was clear that Christian believers may interpret texts and teachings in very different ways and that within the Church there are divisions over many issues. This led him to conclude that he was ‘in one sense’ (p. 3) a Christian counsellor, but possibly not the kind of Christian counsellor that a client might be expecting.

Culbertson (2009) suggests that to answer the initial question ‘are you a Christian counsellor?’ (p. 10), we each need to explore our understandings of the purpose of counselling, whether it is seen as helping towards liberation, freedom and new hope, or support in the call to discipline and submission to God’s will, however that is perceived. He sees this dilemma being for him at the heart of the definition of Christian counselling, as he openly says that his theology would probably lead him to discipline and disciple rather than liberate.

Culbertson (2009) then suggested that there was some kind of a gulf between Christian or Biblical counselling and pastoral counselling. Furthermore, it becomes increasingly complex if secular counselling is seen as the opposite of Christian counselling, and Christian counselling itself is somehow polarised into Biblical counselling versus Pastoral counselling.

One of the responders to Culbertson’s (2009) presentation was McAlpine (2009), who stated that he would say ‘I am a counsellor/psychotherapist and I am a Christian. And I work with people in ways that meet them and their spirituality’ (p. 14). McAlpine (2009) replies directly to another question that he is often asked about whether he follows the Bible as he counsels. His reply is that he did not see the Bible as a rule book to be followed, and prefers to talk of trusting God in his work and remaining true to his Christian calling.

My friend Ruth Penny who was an experienced counsellor studying towards her Masters in Counselling at Auckland University at that time was the second responder. I would like to honour Ruth, a friend and colleague from the executive of the New Zealand Christian Counsellors Association (NZCCA) for many years, who was already battling a recurrence of the cancer that claimed her life soon after. Re-reading her response while preparing this presentation reminded me of the person of integrity that she was and the impact she made on many. Her key point was not so much around the definition of a Christian counsellor but rather ‘What sort of Christian counsellor am I?’.

Penny (2009) talked of the debate within the NZCCA about what it meant to be a Christian counsellor as being a familiar and ongoing question. She believed that members joined this Christian association because they saw their faith and counselling practice as linked in some way. She was very definite that different members might describe that link in very different ways. There could be ‘strongly opposing ideas of what it means to bring Christian faith into the counselling room’ (Penny 2009, p. 19). She suggested these could be described as ‘bringing it in by an attitude of grace and acceptance’ or by ‘conscious reference to scripture and theology’ (Penny 2009, p. 19).

One of the points that Penny (2009) made strongly was that with her Jewish heritage as well as her background as a pastor, she found it increasingly difficult to separate sacred from secular. She espoused the ideas of David Benner (1998) that the dividing line between sacred and secular may lead to a sense that God is seen as more interested in certain parts of us than others. And so she finished by saying that for her, perhaps being a Christian counsellor is less about what she promotes and ‘more about what I am willing to hear and see—a willingness to hear and value spiritual longings and to see the sacred in those whose lives I am privileged to share’ (Penny 2009, p. 21).

I believe that the Counselling programme of Bethlehem Tertiary Institute (BTI) takes a similar stance to that of Penny (2009). BTI is overtly a tertiary institute with a Biblical, Christian Worldview. However, BTI is not always perceived as we would wish it to be. An article in the ‘New Zealand Journal of Counselling’ that reviewed New Zealand counselling training mentioned BTI by name and stated that BTI did not educate ‘general counsellors but offer(ed) instead, quite specialised programmes [...] for example the Christian approaches of [...] Bethlehem Tertiary Institute.’ (Campbell et al. 2011, p. 113).

I would wish to contest this, in that BTI does educate general counsellors, skilled to work with a variety of people in different contexts. The survey of graduates from April 2015 showed that 81% of Bachelor of Counselling graduates and 81% of Diploma of Counselling graduates had found work in a field allied to counselling (this percentage is very similar to results from previous years). The vast majority of these graduates were employed in secular settings, such as schools, agencies, and prisons. The BTI counselling educators believe this is a positive outcome in regard to the employment of our graduates given the decline in government funding of counselling agencies.

However, BTI makes its values and beliefs transparent so that students can identify and examine the assumptions that underlie the institution as well as those underlying their own words and actions. While over 90% of students in the programme would say they were committed Christians there is always considerable interest from applicants with a variety of beliefs, background and geographical locations.

The programme rationale for the BTI Counselling programme is as follows:

The Bachelor of Counselling seeks to prepare relational practitioners whose theory-informed work with individuals, *whānau*¹ and groups is reflective, ethical, and responsive to cultural and other diversity, so as to participate in the holistic, transformative work of Jesus towards shalom. (Cook 2015b, p. 2)

The team of counselling educators speaks of being intentional not just in using the different counselling modalities and skills that are taught, but also intentional that Biblical Jesus-following worldview perspectives shape all aspects of our programme. Cook (2015a) writes in the ‘Conceptual Framework’ that these perspectives are our answers to the key questions of Walsh and Middleton (Walsh and Middleton 1984): Where are we? Who are we? What is wrong in the world? And what is the remedy? The programme rationale makes it clear that BTI is educating counsellors who will play a part in the restorative work of Jesus toward shalom, this being ‘God’s vision for complete well-being, flourishing, harmony or peace in relations with him with self, with our neighbour and the earth’ (Vanderwoerd 2008, p. 135).

The way this is carried out is explained by the belief that counsellors nurture the transformative processes in people’s lives and relationships (Cook 2015a, p. 2). One key verse that expresses this is Romans 12:2: ‘Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will’ (New International Version²).

For some time BTI has referred to the transformation of all students as they experience the ‘head’, the ‘heart’ and the ‘hands’ components of their learning. These three dimensions permeate the teaching of degree courses across the BTI programmes, a character dimension, a knowledge and understanding dimension, and a skills dimension. Cook (2015b) explains that these dimensions of ‘heart’, ‘head’ and ‘hands’ correspond to Sergiovanni’s (1992) discussion of developing ‘heart’, ‘head’ and ‘hands’.

In the counselling programme, the educators endeavour to have both experiential courses on counselling as relational connection, and a clear emphasis on journeying with clients. However with a strong belief that ‘we counsel out of who we are’, there is also considerable emphasis on personal integration to enable students to process their own lives so that they may better work with clients. The key year-long first year paper is ‘Personal Inquiry and Professional Integration 1’. This gives ample opportunity for new students to undertake personal reflection, individually, in supportive small groups and with staff. Also in Year One is ‘Vision and Vocation: A Call to the Profession’, a course that relates the personal faith journey to the Biblical call to formation and its practical outworking in social and professional life. However, there are not simply elements of faith that are included, as students also reflect on how a vision of God’s character and mission informs and

¹*whānau* is a Māori word meaning extended family, based on whakapapa (genealogy). It is widely used in Aotearoa New Zealand.

²All scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, New International Version (2011).

inspires their vocational call. ‘Human Lifespan: Influences and Identity’ continues to encourage students to reflect on how the concept of *imago dei* affects the way in which they see themselves, family and *whānau*, as well as future clients.

I believe that living in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Māori concept of the importance of *wairua* (spirit) in all of life, makes it easier for BTI to include a spiritual dimension in our teaching. One Māori student explained that this one word can cover what some people might call intuition, gut feeling, spiritual discernment and much more (I. Davis, personal communication 8 March 2016). Our bicultural paper ‘Tāngata Whenua, Tāngata Tiriti’ aims to develop an understanding of Māori as *tāngata whenua* (people of the land—indigenous people) of Aotearoa New Zealand. This paper covers aspects of the Māori world (Te Ao Māori), tikanga (culture) and Māori language (Te Reo Māori) as well as Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi). The course description clearly indicates that integral to these aims will be an exploration of the relationship between Biblical perspectives, the ‘story of the Treaty’, Māori relations and what that means for emerging counsellors in the Aotearoa New Zealand context. Thus, in a variety of papers, the foundation of the programme encourages reflection on these ‘heart’ characteristics.

The second dimension, the ‘head’, has as its objectives to cover understanding of bodies of knowledge that underpin professional counselling practice. These are demonstrated in a variety of papers that encourage reflection on embedded assumptions and worldviews as well as current issues in society and counselling models, principles and practice. For an example of how this can happen from a faith perspective, I will mention an aspect of the first year ‘Families and Whānau’ paper, one of three papers that build to give the families strand in the programme a clear focus.

As a family therapist, I have responsibility for these papers. Two key theological ideas are introduced in ‘Families and Whānau’. Firstly, there is the concept of the importance of the family virtue of *hesed* (*chesed*)—loving kindness/faithfulness/solidarity—as the central tenet for marriage, rather than romantic love (Bulkeley 2008). The second idea introduced is the trinitarian model of *perichoresis* (Volf 1998) that mutual indwelling in complete unity. Balswick and Balswick (2014) build on the concept of *perichoresis* as a covenantal relationship at the centre of family life—with this principle of unconditional love. Many students have found this idea to be life-changing, and so the ‘head’ aspects in this case, along with reflection on their embedded assumptions and worldviews, continue to impact long after their counselling studies are completed (Paul Julian, personal communication 2013).

As well as ‘head’ and ‘heart’, the BTI counselling programme has a strong practitioner focus and the teaching of the skills dimension is central. This includes the use of a variety of Cognitive, Narrative and Strengths-based strategies that are woven into their therapeutic work, as well as the ability to assess client safety, emotional and psychological well-being and explore their goals and hopes. However, BTI educators also wish to enable graduates to trace Biblical views of personal and relational transformation and be able to explain how these relate into actual helping roles and activities in modern Aotearoa New Zealand. Throughout

the course of the 3 years of study counselling educators seek consistently to ensure that the faith perspective is real and is not lost.

The ‘Working with Practice Issues’ paper is an example of how the theme of spirituality continues in the final year of the programme. One of the learning intentions is for students to ‘explore and deconstruct a contextual consideration of their faith and critically reflect on what it means to journey with clients’ sense of spirituality and faith’ (Barthow 2016, p. 1). Students read, discuss and reflect on writings on topics such as metaphor and spirituality (Griffith and Griffith 2002), honouring symptoms as a voice of the soul (Moore 1994) as well as Benner’s (1998) ideas of dialogue in soul care. The counsellor education team is intentional about this, hoping that this will be an aspect of the practice of BTI’s graduates that will continue over the years.

In an article written to assist applicant members of the Christian Counsellors Association of Australia, Alexander (n.d.) makes the key point that there needs to be integration of behaviour, beliefs and being as well as explicit faith practices and behaviour, and implicit spirituality. Alexander (n.d.) maintains that Christians must locate their thinking and practice in the wider context of the integration of counselling and faith. The BTI Counselling educators are sure that the education of professional counsellors within an institute that has an overtly Christian basis enables this integration to be something that develops throughout their training and does not need to be something which is forced to occur once the graduate emerges as a professional counsellor.

At BTI, we aim to show that we do indeed work towards what we express in our programme rationale that we prepare ‘relational practitioners whose theory-informed work with individuals, whanau and groups is reflective, ethical, and responsive to cultural and other diversity, so as to participate in the holistic, transformative work of Jesus towards shalom’. I will close with a comment from the Dean, Dr Andrew Smith (2015) who wrote in the BTI Magazine ‘Forward’ that:

In the face of global crisis and trauma, small stories of hope and transformation can easily get lost. But we need to remind ourselves of what our Heavenly Father spoke through the prophet Zechariah – “Does anyone dare despise this day of small beginnings?” (Zech 4:10). (p. 4)

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Chapter 8

Modelling Our Teaching on the Jesus of the Gospels



Irene Alexander

Abstract What would it have been like to walk the paths of Palestine hearing Jesus' stories, asking him for explanations, being challenged by him? What if truth is only truth if it is embodied in my life and my relationships? Can I really take his way of being as a model for my university teaching? Newbigin (1994) suggests that our society is the most culturally captive. How are we to rediscover the way of Jesus in our tertiary institutions—places that should be centres of wisdom and incarnational living? Themes I will explore are the humble heart, hospitality, the power of descent, relationality, collegiality, transformation vs transaction and diverse ways of knowing. In exploring this topic, I am drawing on 30 years of tertiary education in both university and discipleship contexts, living in community, being part of overseas missions contexts, and in all of this seeking to live the kingdom in all of life. In the School of Social Sciences at Christian Heritage College (CHC), we intentionally sought to bring this understanding of *living the kingdom* into our classrooms and relationships with students. After 10 years, I conducted numbers of research interviews asking past students about their experience of and understanding about their learning at CHC. I have reported this story in 'A Glimpse of the Kingdom in Academia' (2013). My books also include 'Dancing with God: Transformation through Relationship' (2007), in which I explore living the true self, which we understood as part of our calling as lecturers in a Christian tertiary context.

Keywords Christian pedagogy • Jesus model • Christian education
Christian formation • Ways-of-knowing • Epistemology

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1 Introduction

This paper explores the possibility that the Jesus who walked the paths of Palestine is as relevant today in challenging our institutional patterns of learning and teaching; in calling us back to relational formation of our students; inviting us to eschew hierarchy and power-over; and to find authenticity, vulnerability and humility as our educational milieu. New Testament scholar, deSilva (2004), comments that it is our encountering of the risen Lord that is the basis of our life, rather than an historical investigation. I will begin then, as Jesus often did, with a story.

A New Zealand friend of mine tells the story of how he began to awaken to the Maori indigenous worldview. He tells how they were developing a story for the NZ Geographic magazine and had beautiful photographs of the landscape around the very north of the country, the place where the spirits are said to depart, but they had no story to go with it. A well-known Maori woman, Saana Murray, agreed to write the story, but when she was asked for a timeline she answered, “I cannot write anything here [...] I will have to go to the land.” She said it as if it she were stating the obvious’ (Warne 2016, para. 6–7). My friend continued. What she told me I have never forgotten:

Yet it was the first time I had heard such a thing: that words about the land required the presence of the land. That knowledge was inseparable from its context. For someone steeped in scientific thinking—a mindset in which knowledge is a commodity, endlessly transferable—it was a challenging thought. For a moment, the fabric of my fact-based worldview started to fray, and I caught a glimpse of another country [...] Knowledge is not disembodied information but part of a living matrix of encounters and relationships, past and present, natural and spiritual. (Warne 2016, para. 7-9)

This story reminded me of the words of a visiting speaker 25 years ago. He told us that truth was not disembodied. When Jesus said ‘I am [...] the Truth’ (Jn 14:6, Revised Standard Version¹), he was pointing to the reality that Truth is always embodied in a person. He commented that if, for example, we try and impart a Christian doctrine in a legalistic way we are not speaking truth. Jesus himself said ‘Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice’ (Jn 18:37). What is it to be ‘of the truth’? Truth has to do with relationship, with the openness of our hearts. ‘Truth in love’ (Eph 4:15), Paul said. ‘Truth in love’, Jesus lived, embodied, the Word become flesh. Understanding the concept of embodiment meant truth changed its meaning for me. What we meant by absolute truth, shifted. I began to see, in the same way that my kiwi friend saw that knowledge had to be in context, that truth had to be in the context of relationship.

Parker Palmer, the Quaker author and educator, explored the effect of this understanding of truth:

scholars now understand that knowing is a profoundly communal act. Nothing could possibly be known by the solitary self, since the self is inherently communal in nature. In

¹All scripture quotations are from the *Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*.

order to know something, we depend on the consensus of the community in which we are rooted—a consensus so deep that we often draw upon it unconsciously. (1993, p. xv)

Palmer (1993) was not saying that solitary people know nothing, but rather, was balancing the overemphasis on individualistic learning, and truth as propositional rather than embodied in a community. The New Testament Church recognized in Jesus, the incarnated image of God, the communal nature of God (McMillan 2017). Hauerwas (2001), the Christian theologian and ethicist, explains this understanding:

What was most original about the first Christians was [...] their special inventiveness in creating a community whose like had not been seen before [...] the God they encountered in Jesus required the formation of a community distinct from the world exactly because of the kind of God he was. (p. 72)

Thus if we are to be true to the God who we discover in the face of Jesus (Col 1:15), we create a communal space for learning. And this relational community is typified by what Buber (1947) named as *I-Thou*, a deep connection of openness and vulnerability. In this place, we come to know ourselves and others truly:

I come to know who I truly am by being known by God. I come to know others by seeing in them the reflected image of God, the Other. I come to know this Other when meeting God in others, sister, brother, neighbour, stranger, friend, or enemy. (Augsburger 2006, p. 22)

1.1 Communal Learning

Before quoting explicitly an experience of communal learning, it is relevant to note the importance of a focus on actual practice. In their book ‘Teaching and Christian Practices: Reshaping Faith and Learning’, Smith and Smith (2011) note:

Under the banner of ‘integrating faith and learning’ (or some alternative nomenclature), Christian faculty engage in research, advocacy, and service rooted in Christian intellectual perspectives. But [...] it seems fair to observe that our commitment to scholarship has been significantly more articulate than our commitment to Christian pedagogy [...] Only a tiny percentage of the scholarly writing that emerges from Christian higher education is devoted to the development of equally nuanced accounts of how teaching and learning are supposed to work in a Christian setting [...] the discussion remains distanced from what happens in classrooms. (p. 3)

This paper seeks to report on actual classroom practices and therefore to quote from students’ experiences and observations. A central focus of our classroom practice was to create a place of communal learning. This was noted by one of our Masters students, Esther, as she looked back at her Christian Heritage College experience:

for me it was actually the experience of being in a learning environment where there wasn’t an end result that was expected [...] it was like my purpose wasn’t [...] to learn a bunch of facts, [but] to have an open space where I could actually engage with the material that was being presented [...] all the lecturers, actively allowed open discussion, where there wasn’t ‘You’re right or you’re wrong’ or ‘This is what you’ve got to think’. But that we got to [...]

discuss it and then we did a lot of that with my fellow students, before class, after class, and in breaks [...] That was transformational for me, to actually, nitty gritty, have arguments in class or discussion and not agree with other people and be vocal about it. (research interview 2008 cited in Alexander 2013, p. 50)

2 Formation and Transformation

Esther's reflection highlights the value that our courses placed on formation and transformation. Formation is a word used in the religious community to identify the forming of the person to his or her vocation, as opposed to a career. In the monasteries for centuries, a person was 'formed' for service to others, and the purpose of this formation was wisdom, not knowledge for its own sake (Leclercq 1974, p. 3). Each vocation needs formation in the essence of that particular discipline, and it is the responsibility therefore for educators to see who the *formed* graduate is, and the process of formation in that vocation (Higton 2012). As Smith (2009), says 'education is most fundamentally a matter of *formation*, a task of shaping and creating a certain kind of people' (p. 26).

Transformation is a continuation of this process, an intentional joining with the journey each student is travelling with God. Over the decades, our universities have become more and more places of information rather than formation, transformation and wisdom (Charry 1997; Ford 2007; Ford and Stanton 2003; Maxwell 2007). Lesslie Newbigin (1994) suggests that our churches in the West are the most culturally captive to the society in which we live (p. x). Our Christian universities and schools are also in danger of following the example of many of the secular universities around us, setting information above wisdom, disregarding the importance of relationship, tying assessment to regulatory practices, seeing individual learning and online learning as no different from the communal context of the classroom or the mentoring relationship.

It is easy to think of our academic teaching, our counselling—or whatever our discipline—to be somehow separate from the Jesus of Galilee. The one who walked by the shore or in the hills, and taught his disciples or the crowds who followed. What if we took his teaching style, his way of relating as a model for our own? What if he, 'the image of the invisible God' (Col 1:15), was also the exemplar for our teaching? What difference would it make if we thought in terms of stories and parables, of stopping mid-sentence to respond to the need of a human heart? Could it be that Jesus' words 'Learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart' (Matt 11:29) apply to us as academics in the classroom?

I have wondered sometimes what it would be like if I lived with my students—as Jesus did with his. The disciples' learning was most deep, where it was copied from the one they ate with, slept with, walked and talked with daily. This vulnerability is at the heart of the gospel. 'The heart of Christianity is the self-emptying, kenotic humility of God expressed in Jesus the Christ [...] At the heart of God's humility is this: God willingly is wounded' (Ross 1988, p. xvi). The closest I have been to the

humility of teachers living vulnerably with students was when I was leading Discipleship Training Schools in Youth With A Mission (YWAM). It was living in community in YWAM that taught me the importance of the Matthew 18 principle of going to each other in apology and forgiveness. I remember once teaching in a YWAM school about grace and legalism. Afterwards, the leaders of the school stood before the students in tears and asked forgiveness for their legalism. Students are changed by that level of humility and transparency. Usually in our universities we would frown on a lecturer who would behave in that way.

In ‘A Glimpse of the Kingdom in Academia’, I recounted that I tried to carry across into academic teaching:

what I had learned in my YWAM years and relationships. I determined that I would be honest and transparent with students, embodying what I had learned in my YWAM years of ‘openness and brokenness’—the willingness to be seen as one of God’s children at the foot of the cross, on my own journey, but subject to life’s difficulties and crises. (Alexander 2013, p. 4)

Amanda Sinclair (2007) speaks of *liberating leadership* which is removed from the trap of ego and includes spirituality. One of the students, Elva, responded to this style of leadership by recalling: ‘I was invited to go on journeys that I never imagined in conjunction with my studies to become a counsellor. I became involved in a process of self-searching and insight that has deeply impacted my life’ (personal communication 2011 cited in Alexander 2013, p. 6). This transformational journey happens when a safe place is created, a liminal space, a time between times, when education is conceived as inner transformation (Alexander et al. 2004).

3 A Hermeneutic for Tertiary Education

The challenge to reimagine Christian education sends us back to the New Testament. Jesus is our Master teacher and we take seriously his exemplar for our own teaching. While this will unfold in diverse ways across different disciplines, Jesus himself models teaching in an extraordinary way—of all the questions asked of him in the gospels he only answers three directly; more often questioning the question, reframing the question, seeking the questioner’s deepest heart longing, telling a story and having the questioner answer their own question (Copenhaver 2014). Each of these responses has the potential to shift the questioner’s perspective. For example, when the rich young ruler asked what he must do to inherit eternal life, Jesus asked him about his understanding of goodness and of God, and then challenged him about how to live with his wealth.

In my discipline then, how am I to respond to questions? How am I to teach my students to form their questions and learn to seek answers? Questions are frequently not about information alone, but about other ways of knowing—relational knowing, embodiment and inner knowing. When the Samaritan woman asked Jesus about living to the full, he answered by naming the centre of her woundedness, her

relationships with men. The students' questions are sometimes asking about my stance, my way of being in the world in the light of this question; sometimes asking how they are to live out what they are learning about; sometimes asking what to do with the pain or fears that the material raises. When a lawyer asked him what was the overarching law, Jesus spoke of relationship with God and relationship with those we live amongst. When pressed further about relating to those around us, Jesus told the story of the good Samaritan, asked the questioner to interpret it and told him to go and live in a way that reflected what he himself had just articulated. Answers are both 'philosophical' and grounded, and Jesus embodies the application.

As we take seriously the reality that Jesus is our true Guide in all of life, we search the scriptures to understand his way of being, his way of teaching and his way of living out the truth. As Christian educators, we can learn to dialogue with Jesus by using the tools of *lectio divina*—slow, meditative reading of the scripture, and the *Ignation composition of place*—imaginatively entering the story as a participant and experiencing Jesus' response (Benner 2010). As I have entered one of the stories of a Pharisee, I discover the Pharisee in myself—my responses to judgement, legalism and condescension. I am challenged as an educator, to surrender my Phariseeism, and to come alongside the student in a power-with position; I am challenged to demonstrate my own counselling style with its mistakes and weaknesses. I am learning to form a hermeneutic of counselling education where our dialogue with the living Jesus helps us find his way of being, relevant to our counselling in the twenty-first century.

This way of Jesus, of humility and transparency, means he remains forever our brother.

Galilea (1989) explains:

God's historical integration with the human race through Jesus, the son of Mary, is neither a myth nor an abstract idea. It means [...] establishing between each one of us a new interpersonal relationship. In other words, we are brothers and sisters because Jesus is brother to each one of us. (pp. 111-112)

While we agree with this as a proposition, our institutions, our university context, pull us back into hierarchy, either subtly or not so subtly—we are always living within relations of power (Foucault 1980). When Jesus told his disciples to let no-one call us father for, he said, you all have one father (Matt 23:9), he was reminding us not to take positions of power-over, but to remain as brothers and sisters, equal before God.

This does not mean that we refuse responsibility and roles of leadership, but rather we step into these in the footsteps of Jesus, as a servant. Jesus is intentionally transformational in the way he leads, even while in a society which is transactional—focusing on hierarchy, legalism and power-over (Burns 1978). As our society becomes more and more regulatory, we can be drawn into emphasis on fulfilling all the requirements of the system instead of holding to the way of Jesus in all our interactions. There are numbers of stories throughout the Bible which highlight the transformational *servant power* of God, and the transactional nature of the

adversary's ways of relationship. Too often our society, and even our Christian institutions, has taken the way of transaction, making a contract, using power-over, instead of seeking the transformational way of invitation to relationship.

3.1 Power-Over—Transaction or Transformation

Biblical stories contrast the transformational way of God with the transactional way of the world (Alexander 2017; Bloomer 1999). When the serpent in Genesis 3 tempts Adam and Eve by saying their eyes will be opened and they will be like God knowing good and evil, he is offering a 'better contract', questioning the character of the God who offers relationship and transformation. Similarly, the adversary interprets Job's commitment to God as a transaction—God's protection and blessing seen only as reward for good behaviour. The implication of the adversary's accusation is that the nature of the human–divine relationship is a transactional one: Humans only serve God for what they can get.

Again the devil tempts Jesus to take a shortcut to redeeming the kingdoms of the world, offering a deal 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me' (Matt 4:8-9). Jesus chooses instead the way of the cross, whereby the heart of each individual is won, and the life of each transformed: 'Christ crucified [...] Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God' (1 Cor 1:23-24). Finally, in Revelation 5 John weeps because no-one is worthy to open God's scroll. He is told that the Lion of Judah 'has conquered, so that he can open the scroll' (Rev 5:5). Our imaginations can conjure an Aslan-like lion who will bound in taking power, but instead John turns and sees '[...] a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain' (Rev 5:6). Gordon Cosby (1999) states:

It was that figure dying on a cross [...] the Lamb of God [...] which] broke my hard heart of stone [...] ended my captivity and delivered my spirit, why do I think that the expression of authority or power or success or efficiency is going to break anybody's heart? (p. 30)

Our calling as followers of Christ who teach others is to model Christ in our humility, our openness, our servanthood, our trust that God is present wooing the hearts of our students, whom we see as brothers and sisters, companions in the way of the cross (Greenleaf 2002; Penwarden 2017; Sims 1997). As Parker Palmer (1993) says, 'In humility we allow ourselves to know and be known in relationship, and in that allowing we draw our students into the community of truth' (pp. 108–109). A former student, Elva, remarked on the effect of the modelling of her lecturers:

they not only taught but modelled authenticity and I was deeply touched by the vulnerability with which they lived out their own stories while I studied under them. An outcome of this influence is that I have proven for myself both in my personal and counselling relationships that the congruency, authenticity and appropriate vulnerability as a person that was shown to me during those years of study, are qualities that enrich all my relationships when I apply them in my own way. I aim to undergird my counselling practice with being

real, to provide a platform for those I counsel to be real if they choose to be. I am on a journey of living my life in a way that is as authentically human as I can be—what I learned has enabled me to have the freedom to be me. (personal communication cited in Alexander 2013, p. 168)

Elva names authenticity as an important characteristic she saw in her lecturers. Authenticity has been named as an important aspect of postmodern leadership (Cooper et al. 2005). At CHC, this was modelled on the authenticity of the Jesus we meet in the gospel stories (Baker 2009). This humility and authenticity Elva was experiencing was also typified by a dialogical process—an openness to real dialogue, an acceptance of difference, a respect of other voices and other ways of knowing (Crawley 2017; White and Epston 1990).

4 Ways of Knowing

Our call to reimagine Christian education invites us to look back at our Christian history as well as to look at what is developing in the society around us and to review teaching practices in the light of Jesus' precedent. For example, the research finding that interactive teaching strategies are the most effective reminds us of Socrates, the Oxford mentoring system, and the questioning and answering of Jesus' interactions. These findings call us to both profound and simple changes such as setting up our classrooms in circles instead of rows; making ourselves vulnerable with classroom demonstrations; drawing on the prior knowledge of the students; and writing in the first person rather than the third, so as not to distance our writing and to separate knower and known.

Another focus is the different ways of knowing. Academic knowing emphasizes the analytic way of evidence-based research (Perry 1999). Jesus, as the Master teacher, also demonstrated other ways of knowing which can be interwoven into our teaching. For example, he demonstrated relational knowing in his discipling of his followers, as well as the experiential knowing of their being sent out and then returning to debrief (Mk 6:30-31). Relational knowing (or 'Connected knowing' as the feminist researchers in 'Women's Ways of Knowing' [Belenky et al. 1986], named it), is where the lecturer is the midwife, drawing out both the tacit and implicit knowledge of the students in the context of relationship (Clinchy 2007–2008). Experiential knowing requires the student to practice both in the presence of a mentor and in the field before bringing back their experience to reflection in the classroom or group. Both of these fit into the practitioner–apprentice model (Brandt et al. 1993).

Jesus also exemplified the way of inner knowing and contemplative knowing (Bourgeault 2003). Contemplative knowing is the way of being present, waiting on God, receiving in stillness and silence; while inner knowing involves intuition, self-reflection and experimentation in response. Here the student learns to search what David, in the Psalms, called his 'secret heart' (Ps 51:6), his inner motivations, self-deception and embodiment. Michael Polanyi (1958), scientist and

philosopher, spoke similarly of ‘indwelling’ which is an embodying of one’s personal knowledge, a commitment to self-reflection, alongside the humility to change, an allegiance to the truth one is discovering. Polanyi (1958) notes, ‘Such granting of one’s personal allegiance is—like an act of heuristic conjecture—a passionate pouring of oneself into untried forms of existence’ (p. 209). Polanyi (1958) is following in the way of Jesus, and his invitation to walk in the narrow way of transformation (Matt 7:14). Inner knowing is a necessary part of incarnational living, the Spirit of God writing on the human heart (2 Cor 3:3). Where our secular universities have narrowed to academic ways of knowing, the way of Jesus calls us to formation of the person with diverse ways of knowing—intuitive, experiential, relational as well as reasoned—loving God with heart and soul and mind.

Responding to this awareness of different ways of knowing Esther talks about the way she has learned to use all of her knowing in the counselling room:

how I know about what happens in that room is actually through my body and through my spirit. Not just through my head. But it hasn’t been a dishonoring of my head. Like at college, I have continued to respect my head knowledge, and, but be able to actually go— What is my body and what are my experiences in my emotions and what my spirit says, and when all of those are in alignment and agreement, that’s the place that I can live out of. (research interview 2008 cited in Alexander 2013, p. 59)

Students were thus explicitly taught to be aware of different ways of knowing and to use these intentionally in their learning as well as in their profession.

5 Conclusion

If we are to reimagine Christian education, following Jesus as our Master teacher, there are a number of important foci. We are invited to follow the way of Jesus in humility and the path of descent, of power-with rather than power-over. We explore different ways of knowing and how these may be evidenced in the classroom, teaching relationships and in the field. And we follow Jesus’ way in living in authenticity and transparency, recognizing in the students our sisters and brothers, called to live the kingdom in a society which is increasingly consumerist, individualistic and regulatory. As both lecturers and administrators, we seek to live intentionally in the way of the cross, of the love which forms others into life-giving freedom.

This paper has included specific quotes from students concerning communal learning, formation and transformation, authenticity and vulnerability of lecturers, as well as different ways of knowing in order to bring nearer the reality of a Christian pedagogy, to give examples of following Jesus in a contemporary classroom and to demonstrate ‘how teaching and learning are supposed to work in a Christian setting’ (Smith and Smith 2011, p. 3). It is hoped that this provides encouragement to others to experiment with these ideas and to articulate their pedagogy as examples of the kingdom way.

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Chapter 9

Teaching as Relationship



Ann Crawford

Abstract Loder (The Transforming Moment, 1989) remarks on the paradox that, although conventional science values knowing that is grounded in demonstrable facts, history testifies that deep and transforming truths are inexorably conceived through human imagination. This understanding presents all teachers with a challenge, a challenge to fashion an environment of learning where not only is content and process valued but where students are encouraged to ‘draw deeply on personal intuition and the creative unconscious’ (The Transforming Moment, p 49, 1989). Such an environment speaks of a relationship between teacher and learner that transcends the idea of a teacher containing the knowledge the student needs and imparting that knowledge to the student. Therefore, rather than focusing on teaching and learning from a theoretical stance, this chapter endeavours to address (The Transforming Moment, 1989) challenge by examining the elements of teaching as a relationship that has the capacity to conceive deep, transforming knowing. Core to this relationship is the Trinitarian concept of *perichoresis*, the divine dance that embraces all truth. This core is surrounded by such relational concepts as *shalom* and *agape* that create a covenantal space where the learner may not only flourish but also experience the joy of transformational knowing.

Keywords Teaching · Learning · Relationship · Trinity · Transformation

1 Introduction

Conventional science emphasizes demonstration and so tends to reduce all knowing to the shape of what can be demonstrated in terms of current facts and theory. However, the most significant knowing in the history of the sciences takes place in a way that draws deeply on personal intuition and the creative unconscious (Pétervári et al. 2016). It is as if the history of science (where rational demonstration

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is so important) testifies that what is known in and through personal being, imaginatively and transformingly conceived, is the deepest and most comprehensive truth. Yet, it does not exclude but contains as an element, which is rationally demonstrable (Loder 1989, pp. 48–49). In this passage, Loder (1989) presents all teachers everywhere with a challenge to fashion an environment of learning where not only are the conventional educational elements of content and process valued but where students are also encouraged to ‘draw deeply on personal intuition and the creative unconscious’ (p. 49) and where imaginative and transformative knowing are nurtured. Such an environment speaks of a unique relationship between teacher and learner.

This chapter endeavours to address Loder’s (1989) challenge by first examining the ‘what’ of teaching as a relationship. Second, the setting of this relationship will be explored and the elements of a safe place where the learner may flourish will be examined. Finally, the ‘why’ of teaching will lead us to an investigation of the deep and transformative learning that nurtures vocation, as the ‘emerging thread in the developing pattern of human life’ (McIntosh 2004, p. 149). Although this concept of teaching as relationship is relevant to all teaching situations, for the purposes of this chapter, references to higher education settings will be used as illustrations.

2 What Is the Relationship?

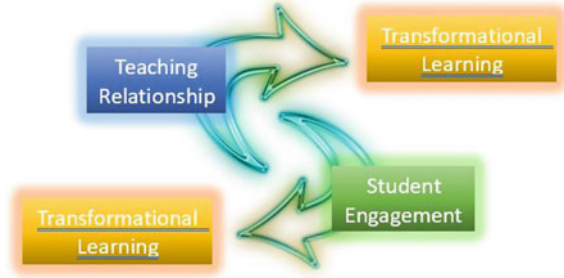
That the human person cannot thrive, and therefore learn, outside of relationship is fundamental knowledge that has been well researched by scholars of theology, psychology, sociology, anthropology and, more recently, by neuroscience. From the creation narrative of Genesis (Chaps. 1–3) where God proclaims, ‘it is not good for man to be alone’ (Gen 2:18 [KJV]¹), the human story has been about community. Bowlby’s (1988) research into attachment, Bandura’s (1971) understandings of social learning, Erikson’s (1980) work on the psychosocial stages of human development and many others have been strong influences in the shaping of the understandings we have today of how human beings need relationship to grow, learn, develop and flourish. These concepts have been further applied by educational constructivists who support discovery learning (Hunt and Chalmers 2012, pp. 10–11) which necessarily involves a teacher/student relationship conducive to the kind of learning that transforms from the inside out (Whitaker 2012).

Marzano and Marzano (2003) contextualizes this for us by writing:

Teacher-student relationships provide an essential foundation for effective classroom management—and classroom management is a key to high student achievement. Teacher-student relationships should not be left to chance or dictated by the personalities of those involved. Instead, by using strategies supported by research, teachers can influence the dynamics of their classrooms and build strong teacher-student relationships that will support student learning. (p. 6)

¹All scripture quotations are from the *Holy Bible, King James Version [KJV]* (2010).

Fig. 1 The inside-out model of teaching as relationship (Adapted from Crawford 2015)



Therefore, in order to make sense of the diversity of elements that contribute to a teaching relationship (Hattie and Yates 2013), I shall develop a ‘inside-out’ model of teaching as relationship, that is, I will begin at the relational foundations of the ‘what’, examine ‘where’ this relationship happens then explore the crucial ‘why’ teaching needs to incorporate relationship (Fig. 1).

2.1 The ‘What’ of Teaching as Relationship

2.1.1 The Vertical Relationship

At the core of all things is the Triune God. He is revealed in the scriptures as the Creator, Sustainer, Saviour and Sanctifier of all things. However, as Kelly (1989) reminds us, ‘[T]he life of God is not a life of impervious transcendence from the world, but an actual self-transcendence towards the world [...] the divine mystery, as incarnate in Jesus Christ and manifest in the gift of the Spirit, is “Be-ing-in-Love”. As such, it draws believers into its own dynamics’ (p. 147). This interaction among the three Persons of the Trinity in the affairs of each other and of mankind, unlike any human relationship, is characterized by the perfect giving and receiving of love. The Greek word *perichoresis*, meaning ‘dance’, is a metaphor that is often used to illustrate the dynamic intimacy of the Trinitarian relationship. Just as dancers seem to move as one, so too is the intimacy of the Father, Son and Spirit expressed as a graceful ‘dance’.

It would seem though, that the divine mystery Kelly (1989) alludes to, is not an exclusive relationship but that God’s people, made in His image, are also drawn into the very life of God and enfolded in His grace. This enfolding grace is seen in the prayer of Jesus in the Gospel of John, Chap. 17 where Jesus invites us into a conversation between the Father and the Son. Not only does this dialogue give insight to the intimacy of the relationship Jesus has with the Father but it also expresses the longing He has that all would experience the oneness that is represented by the Trinitarian relationship. The depth of meaning that this holds for a Christian is simply expressed by St Paul as he seeks to convince the philosophers of

Athens of the nearness and relationality of God: ‘In Him I live and move and have my being’ (Acts 17:28).

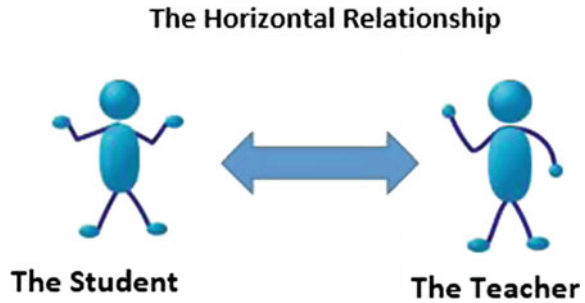
Another aspect of God’s desire for relationship with His people is ‘the purpose of drawing us out of ourselves, away from our own self-preoccupation, self-absorption, self-fixation, so as to participate in the divine life’ (Downey 2000, p. 79). Jesus taught the Pharisees this principle when he responded to their question regarding the greatest commandment: ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself’ (Matt 22:37-39). Therefore, divine life is not just our relationship with God but also includes an awareness of the relationships we have with ourselves and those in our sphere of influence.

But what, may you ask, does this divine relationship have to do with what happens in our classrooms? In answer to that question, I return to the ‘inside-out’ concept already mentioned here. If, as previously quoted by Paul, the Christian teacher lives, moves and has his being in God, this divine relationship represents the foundation of our lives in general and our vocation as a teacher in particular. Whether working in a Christian or secular workplace, the teacher who is a Christian lives, moves and teaches within her relationship with God. To continue the *perichoresis* metaphor, the teacher who is Christian brings her dynamic dance relationship with God with her into her classroom, represented as the ‘vertical relationship’ diagrammed (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2 The vertical teaching relationship (Adapted from Crawford 2015)



Fig. 3 The horizontal teaching relationship (Adapted from Crawford 2015)



2.1.2 The Horizontal Relationship

The horizontal relationship in this ‘teaching as relationship’ model is the relationship between the teacher and the student. This relationship has changed dramatically from the traditional ‘power-over’ and ‘fear-based’ understandings of teaching from a by-gone era, where the expert teacher sought to impart knowledge to the passive-receptor student (Samuelowicz and Bain 2001). This change has been stimulated by knowledge gained from attachment researchers (Bowlby 1988; Geddes 2006), developmental scholars (Bandura 1971; Erikson 1980), teaching and learning theorists (Kember and Kwan 2000; Prosser and Trigwell 1999; Trigwell and Prosser 2004) and, more recently, from neuroscientists (Cozolino 2013; Rossouw 2014). The twenty-first century classroom sees the teacher and the student ‘mutually involved in a process of coming to new knowledge – or a rediscovery of old knowledge’ (Loder 1989, p. 57) that the student experiences from the inside out and the teacher sees from the outside in (Hunt and Chalmers 2012, pp. 114, 184, 185). This relationship between teacher and student is diagrammed here (Fig. 3).

3 Where Does This Relationship Happen?

This then brings us to the concept of a teaching environment. In the twenty-first century, especially in the higher education field, this can take many forms, all presenting their own unique challenges for the teacher (Fisher et al. 2018; Hunt and Chalmers 2012). Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine all the various forms of teaching environments offered through contemporary teaching institutions, our emerging model seeks to embody the concept of ‘a teaching space’. It is therefore suggested that, no matter what the physical (or virtual) classroom looks like, this ‘teaching space’ becomes the ‘container’ of the teaching relationship. As with all relationships, there is a certain vulnerability about the vertical/horizontal teaching relationship. For any relationship to be safe, there must be boundaries put in place to protect both the people involved and the relationship itself. Cloud and Townsend (1992) have been telling us for many years about healthy relationship boundaries: What they look like, what they do and how to be

intentional about setting them—all based on the Word of God. The exciting aspect of neuroscience is that it is now scientifically showing us what the Word of God—and Cloud and Townsend (1992)—have been saying all along: Healthy boundaries, intentionally set, provide relationships with the safe place essential for them to foster psychological, emotional, spiritual and cognitive flourishing.

The teaching relationship is no different. It also needs such healthy boundaries. The implications are that, for the teacher who desires his students to experience deep learning, the teaching environment needs to have intentional boundaries to make it a safe place. This concept is supported by the work of neuroscientists such as Grawe (2007), and Rossouw (2014) who defines a ‘safe place’ as one that decreases the anxiety generated in the ‘impulsive brain’ (the limbic system), where survival strategies preoccupy the brain’s functioning, in order to allow the ‘smart brain’ (the pre-frontal cortex) to engage so that learning can take place. The needs of the learner that must be satisfied for this to occur are for safety, control and connection (Rossouw 2014, p. 12). Therefore, to establish intentional boundaries in any teaching environment requires these needs to be addressed.

3.1 *The Teaching Relationship Is a Sacred Space*

In the teaching relationship unfolding here, the core of the relationship is the teacher’s willingness to live and move and have her being in the purposes of God. From the beginning, God has always surrounded his purposes with the safe boundaries of covenants, despite the constant violation of these by God’s chosen people. However, as people of the New Covenant, we can once again be assured of the safety of a covenantal relationship with God whose thoughts towards us are thoughts of peace and not of evil, and whose plans will give us a future and a hope (Jer 29:11). According to Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians:

We have such trust through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the law but of the Spirit; for the law kills, but the Spirit gives life. (2 Cor 3:4-6)

Several significant elements are involved in the intentional building of this sacred learning space and I will use examples from my tertiary education experience to illustrate these. The first is *agape*, the unconditional love of God that is the source of our love for Him and our ability to trust His faithfulness. Nygren (1998) identifies four aspects of *agape* that faithfully reflect who God is and give insight into the transcendent power that resides in this love:

- *Agape* is spontaneous and unmotivated—in Jesus this love was clearly demonstrated as He refused to be controlled by the value of the objects of His love, freely ministering to the righteous and sinner alike;
- *Agape* is indifferent to value—it is only when all thought of worthiness of the object is abandoned that we can understand what *agape* is;

- *Agape* is creative—*agape* does not recognize value, but creates it. *Agape* loves and imparts value by loving; and
- *Agape* is the initiator of fellowship with God—not only does *agape* determine the essential and characteristic content of Christian fellowship with God, but in virtue of its creative nature it is also important for initiation of that fellowship (pp. 85–89).

In the course I teach, many of the students who enrol are mature aged students (30–60 years old), the majority of whom are women. Many of these women have had no previous tertiary education, and some are the first in their families to engage in tertiary study. Consequently, the university environment for them is a foreign and unsafe place when they first arrive. One such student had lived in the country all her life and struggled with the academic aspects of the course as well as having to travel large distances to come to class. Recognizing her determination and being inspired by her courage, her teachers, through active empathy and by drawing on the love of God, began to deconstruct the walls of fear and inadequacy that surrounded this student and intentionally construct a safe place for her to learn and flourish. Gradually, she learned to accept our encouragement and respect and she began to see herself as valuable and loved. This student went on to gain not only her degree but a confidence in herself and in the goodness of God that she is now using to inspire those she works with.

The second element seen as vital to the construction of a safe learning space is *shalom*. Often translated as ‘peace’, the Hebrew concept of *shalom* goes beyond the passive picture conjured up by this English word. The English understanding of peace is an absence of civil disturbance or hostilities, or a personality-free from internal and external strife, but the Biblical concept of *shalom* holds a deeper meaning. ‘Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary’ (Elwell 1997), from the Hebrew roots, defines *shalom* as ‘wholeness of life or body’ and as ‘right relationship or harmony between two parties or people’ (para. 1).

In Biblical terms, *shalom* is established by a covenant, described in scripture as a ‘covenant of peace’ (Ezek 34:25-26; Is 54:10; Num 25:12-13) that signifies completeness and safety. However, in keeping with the Hebrew theistic worldview (Deut 6:24), God alone is the source of peace, for He is ‘*Yahweh Shalom*’ (Is 26:3; 2 Thess 3:16).

Hence, *shalom* is an expression of the mission of God. Jesus Christ became the incarnation of ‘*Yahweh Shalom*’. As the prophesied ‘Prince of Peace’ (Is 9:6, 7), Jesus introduced mankind to the Kingdom of God, instilling the hope of reconciliation into a world fractured by broken relationships with God, self and others. As He walked the streets, reaching out to the poor, the sick and the captives, Jesus demonstrated the true meaning of *shalom* as, in His public ministry, people were healed, delivered and set free (Is 61:1; Luke 4:18). However, the Gospels also give us a glimpse of the deeper meaning of *shalom*. For example, in Jesus’ encounter with the woman caught in adultery (John 8), the grace and unconditional acceptance that He extended to this outcast not only brought resolution to the immediate situation but also transforming goodness was released to all involved in the

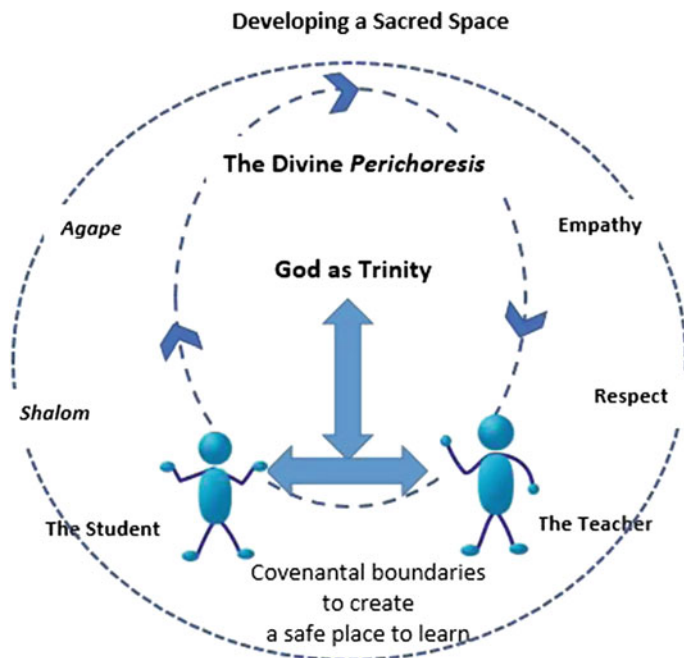


Fig. 4 A sacred space for a teaching relationship (Adapted from Crawford 2015)

encounter that day. Applying this concept of *shalom* to the relationship of teaching requires the teacher to not only design a curriculum that allows students to discover, experience and accept *shalom* as a gift from God (Roux 2007, p. 137) but also to make such *shalom* principles as forgiveness and peacekeeping rather than peace-making explicit so they, as practitioners working with their own clients, will learn to create their own *shalom* presence.

It is into this sacred space, surrounded by the Spirit of life, that the Christian teacher can confidently bring his students. In such a space, the core conditions of a relationship that fosters flourishing and learning, those of safety, control and connection (Rossouw 2014), represented by the concepts of *agape*, empathy, *shalom* and respect, are all encompassed through trust in a covenant-keeping, all-powerful yet loving God. This diagram begins to illustrate these boundaries (Fig. 4).

4 Why Is Teaching a Relationship?

Having explored the ‘what’ and the ‘where’ of teaching as relationship, we come to the essence of this thesis, the ‘why’. As all good teachers know, the ‘why’ question seeks deeper understandings and, in doing so, raises more questions. Why do we teach? Why do we seek relationship with our students? Why do we not simply

impart knowledge? To answer these questions, we will explore the concept of ‘vocation’, not just that of the student but of the teacher also. In the definition quoted from McIntosh (2004) earlier in this chapter, vocation was described as ‘an emerging thread in the developing pattern of human life’ (p. 149), giving ‘vocation’ past, present and future connotations. My definition of vocation would probably include the fulfilment of a lifelong desire to teach or the result of my decision to leave a legacy for the future; my students often express their concept of vocation in terms of a passion to see others flourish. By revisiting the students’ personal goals relating to vocation at different times throughout their course, they are able to see a maturing of their purpose. This deeper ‘why’ is explained by McIntosh (2004) who observes that pursuing one’s vocation means becoming more ‘real’, and ‘[E]mbracing the call to relationship with others who stretch us beyond the limits even of what we thought of as ourselves, and on into a deeper truthfulness of being’ (p. 150).

In such an understanding of vocation, the mutuality of the teaching relationship is highlighted. Not only is the student responding to his vocational call but the teacher is also heeding the call to accompany the student on this part of his life’s journey. In this process, both are stretched in diverse ways—some expected and some beyond comprehension. This stretching becomes transforming as intuition, creativity and imagination lead both student and teacher on into deep and comprehensive truth.

4.1 The Teaching Relationship that is Transformational

Throughout this chapter, it has been alluded to that teaching as relationship offers both student and teacher more than just the giving and receiving of knowledge and skills that this particular relationship, while valuing the imparting of facts and understandings, reaches higher towards the awakening of a sense of vocation and the facilitating of flourishing. We have been playing with words like ‘personal intuition’, ‘the creative unconscious’, ‘imaginatively and transformingly conceived’ and ‘*perichoresis*’. But what have such musings to do with what happens every day in the classroom? Whether conscious of it or not, our students are looking to us, the teacher to provide the safety, connection and control needed for them to learn while the teacher is always seeking the ‘ah ha’ moment that marks a transforming experience.

However, this transforming experience is not ‘happenstance’ nor is it ‘more of the same [...] Transformation always involves a perceptual shift [...]’ (Barker 1995, p. 160). This concept of ‘perceptual shift’ of a student’s understanding, although maybe not explicitly so, would be the goal of a teacher’s lesson preparation. However, while teacher training provides the tools for the cognitive aspects of teaching, it is an awareness of the dynamics of the relationship that intentionally draws the student into the power of the Trinitarian *perichoresis* that adds the transformational dimension. It is in this sacred place (as diagrammed below

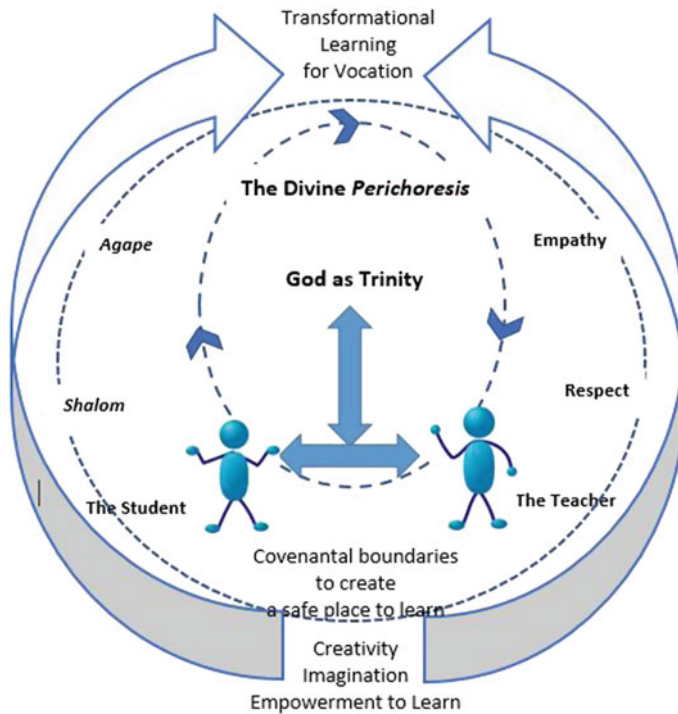


Fig. 5 Teaching as relationship model (Adapted from Crawford 2015)

in Fig. 5) that the student will find the safety, connection and control so essential for the transformative learning experience that accomplishes learning and nourishes the soul.

5 Limitations

There are several limitations to this study that need to be acknowledged here. The first is the strong theological foundation on which it is constructed. There are only a relatively small number of us (teachers and lecturers) who are privileged to work in explicitly Christian settings where both students and teachers can share an understanding of the place of God in their lives. However, for the Christian teacher who works in a secular school or college, an adaptation of this model may still underpin good teaching and learning practice. Although it has been beyond the scope of this chapter to consider the secular setting, further research that specifically addresses this topic of teaching as relationship in situations that are not explicitly Christian, or even hostile to a Christian worldview, could prove to be enlightening.

The second limitation to be acknowledged is that the tertiary teaching and learning, although constructed on the same pedagogical foundations as teaching

primary or high school children, does differ in the teaching delivery. Again, the length and purpose of this chapter precluded discussion on the theory associated with the differences between adult and adolescent or child learners but further investigation into these pedagogical issues could be very helpful for school teachers seeking deeper engagement with their students. It is here sufficient to say that a discussion has begun.

6 Conclusion

In summary, the inside-out model explored here began with the core relationship of the vertical synergy of the Triune God's willingness to enfold his children with his grace. The horizontal relationship looked at how the teacher/student relationship was drawn into this loving communion. The next element of the model highlighted the boundaries that surround and protect the vertical/horizontal, teacher/student relationship. This covenantal protection provides the all-important safety, through trust in an all-powerful God; the vertical and horizontal connections with God and the other that gives life meaning and satisfies the soul; and the empowerment required for the learning to take place. The final aspect of the model looked at the transforming learning experience that flows from a relational environment that is intentionally constructed.

Therefore, the learning gained through connection with another human being who has the capacity to inspire intuition, imagination and creativity will not only result in meaningful understanding of a particular knowledge area but it will provide opportunity for the student and teacher to share transformational moments—thus fulfilling God's vocational purpose in both of their lives.

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Chapter 10

Making Sense of the World: Reimagining Bible Engagement in Christian Education with Teenagers in Light of Maxine Greene's Aesthetic Pedagogy



Graham D. Stanton

Abstract A pedagogy of Bible engagement in contemporary secondary education must take account of the pluralistic cultural context as well as the developmental challenges of mid-adolescence. Both contexts require teachers to honour the freedom of young people to make their own spiritual choices. This chapter explores the possibilities that open up by engaging with the Bible as a 'work of art' in the manner proposed in the aesthetic pedagogy of educational philosopher Dr. Maxine Greene, and how this perspective might be correlated with a theological commitment to the normative authority of scripture. Christian educators lead students in the task of meaning-making by offering the Bible as an example of how human beings have made sense of their experience. The practices of Christian education focus on reading the text and sharing in dialogue about how the Bible can be used for meaning-making. Such classrooms are characterised by trust and hope recognising the sovereign freedom of the Spirit of God to be at work in young people.

Keywords Bible engagement · Adolescence · Teenagers · Maxine Greene Pedagogy · Dialogue

1 Meaning-Making in Christian Education

Both the cultural and the developmental contexts of Christian education with teenagers present the need to engage young people in open dialogue around questions of meaning. All educators should consider how they might help young people make sense of their lived experience, equipping them to choose how they would construct their world and their place in it. This may be challenging for

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Christian educators as they attempt to balance how to grant young people freedom to construct their own sense of meaning with how to proclaim the meaning found in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our present cultural context underlines the need for Christian education to be equipping young people to take on the personal challenge and responsibility of meaning-making in the world. We no longer live in a world where belief in God is regarded as self-evident but, ‘one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace’ (Taylor 2007, p. 3). Not only does culture make it difficult for Christian believers, teachers and students alike, to sustain their faith in the face of alternatives, the same is true for those of other faiths, or of (purportedly) no faith. As Smith (2014) observes, ‘believers are beset by doubt and doubters, every once in a while, find themselves tempted by belief’ (p. 3). Preparing young people to negotiate this cultural landscape calls for more than just mastering biblical content. Christian educators need to equip young people to make sense of their world.

Overladen with the cultural challenge to engage in open dialogue around belief and unbelief, Christian educators among teenagers also face the challenges inherent in adolescent identity formation. While there is more to say about identity formation than meaning-making (cf. Côté 2006; Vignoles et al. 2011), the challenge to make sense of one’s lived experience picks up on a significant dimension of contemporary identity studies (Frankl 2006; Kegan 1982). In terms of James Marcia’s neo-Eriksonian identity status paradigm (Kroger 2000; Marcia 1966, 1967), Christian educators need to challenge young people to take on the burden of identity moratorium to explore meaningful alternatives to the narratives inherited from childhood. Meaning-making is integral to the processes of adolescent identity formation.

Approaching the Bible as a source of theological content without regard for the existential processes of meaning-making may inhibit dialogue around how young people themselves make sense of their lived experience. When the Bible is regarded as providing a particular set of answers to the questions asked by the modern secular age, Bible engagement has the potential to focus on understanding content and defending such content against alternatives. Further, if the ‘answers’ the Bible offers are controlled by the imposition of a particular theological system, Bible engagement becomes less about exploring the meaning of the text and more about identifying how a theological tradition is demonstrated by the text. Consequently, open dialogue about meaning-making would be lost. When young people and teachers are willing to take on the task of meaning-making and are prepared to explore the possible answers the Bible offers, Bible engagement holds great promise for transformative learning.

The work of educational philosopher Maxine Greene (1988, 1995, 2001), provides a helpful lens through which we might re-imagine Bible engagement in Christian education. Greene’s (2001) aesthetic pedagogy aims to promote a society in which individuals come together in their freedom to pursue individual constructions of meaning. Teachers aim to awaken students to the social constructs that shape their experience and constrain their freedom. The goal of education is to

enable students to break from the ‘taken-for-granted’ and construct their own meaning of their world and their place in it. At the heart of curriculum in Greene’s (2001) philosophy is engagement with the creative arts. What Greene (2001) says of the use of creative art in aesthetic education could equally be said of Bible engagement in Christian education:

Aesthetic education [...] is an intentional undertaking designed to nurture appreciative, reflective, cultural, participatory engagements with the arts by enabling learners to notice what is there to be noticed, and to lend works of art their lives in such a way that they can achieve them as variously meaningful. When this happens, new connections are made in experience: new patterns formed, new vistas are opened. Persons *see* differently, resonate differently. (p. 6)

In aesthetic education teachers enable learners to notice, so that they might nurture participatory engagement with the arts, to promote meaning-making, in order for learners to imagine how things could be otherwise. This chapter explores how the Bible can be used in Christian education in the same way the various arts are used in aesthetic education to stimulate critical awareness and prompt personal construction of meaning.

2 Aesthetic Pedagogy and the Potency of Creative Art

The challenge Greene (1995) places before teachers is to awaken their students to the realisation that there is always more in our experience of the world than what we know or can predict. Drawing on Austrian social phenomenologist Schütz (1962), Greene (1995) describes this sense of awareness as ‘wide-awakeness’ (p. 35). To be wide awake is to take an interest in things, to replace conventionality and indifference with exploration and amazement; it requires thinking about what we are doing and taking responsibility for our choices.

Greene (2001) regards works of art to be specially suited to stimulate wide-awakeness in the world. Works of art are examples of how fellow human beings construct their understandings of the world, and demonstrations that our perceptions of the world are personally constructed. The potency of art lies in transforming the natural form into a newly meaningful whole. By ‘offering us new vantage points’, art ‘has made us hear as never before; it has enabled us to see’ (Greene 2001, p. 35).

Coming into contact with a work of art is like meeting another human being. Encountering the other always holds the promise of opening wider perspectives on our shared experience. ‘[I]f we are open, if we take the time. If we attend from our own centers [sic], if we are present as living, perceiving beings, there is always, always more’ (Greene 2001, p. 16). Greene’s (2001) thinking prompts us to ask whether we could approach the Bible with the same kind of openness to complexity and surprise that she finds in works of creative art?

2.1 *Reimagining Bible Engagement*

University of Chicago theologian Tracy (1981) has pursued the link between the arts and the Bible through the concept of the religious ‘classic’. A classic is a cultural artefact that comes to be recognised as disclosing a degree of ‘truth’ about human life such that it is given some kind of normative status. ‘What we mean by naming certain texts, events, images, rituals, symbols and persons ‘classics’ is that here we recognize nothing less than the disclosure of a reality we cannot but name truth’ (Tracy 1981, p. 108). Tracy (1981) connects the experience of encountering a classic with encountering works of art:

we find ourselves ‘caught up’ in its world, we are shocked, surprised, challenged by its startling beauty and its recognizable truth, its instinct for the essential [...] we recognise the truth of the work’s disclosure of a world of reality transforming, if only for a moment, ourselves: our lives, our sense for possibilities and actuality, our destiny. (p. 110)

Approaching the Bible as a religious classic,¹ while not adequate as a foundation for divine revelation,² can still provide a useful opening for Bible engagement with young people. Tracy’s (1981) proposal reminds us that the Bible resists simplification and rewards ongoing meditation and study. Like other great literature, the Bible ‘defies any single explanatory reading that is eventually exhausted’ (Brueggemann and Linafelt 2012, p. 15). Griffiths (1999) offers a similar characterisation of the Bible as ‘a stable and vastly rich resource, one that yields meaning, suggestions (or imperatives) for action, matter for aesthetic wonder, and much else’ (p. 41).

A reimagined Bible engagement in Christian education can connect the richness of this text with the educational goal of meaning-making by approaching the Biblical texts as examples of how various human beings have sought to make sense of their own experience. The various genres of scripture expose young people to a vast range of human questions and experiences and offer a plurality of ways of making meaning within those contexts. The Bible could therefore be offered to young people as a demonstration that it is possible to see things differently. The imperatives and patterns of life contained in the Bible give young people an example of how one could go about pursuing a new way of life—a way of life that gives full recognition to the spiritual dimension of human experience.

Christian educators can therefore shift from ‘declaring what is’ to ‘offering what could be’. This is a pedagogical move not a doctrinal one. Adult mentors do not need to back-pedal on their personal convictions about the authority of the Bible, but in order to honour and to engage young peoples’ agency in spiritual life, the Biblical world is offered as one way of naming and constructing their experience.

¹Tracy (1981) regards ‘the event and person of Jesus Christ’ as *the* Christian classic (p. 233). The New Testament preserves the memory of this event through its confessions and forms of expression.

²Tracy’s (1981) theory of the classic ultimately grounds Christian revelation in something other than itself. For a critique of Tracy from a reformed perspective, see Vissers (1990).

Indeed, as teachers enter a dialogue around meaning-making together with their students, the Christian teacher is not only free, but obligated to bring the scriptures into the conversation as their personal contribution of how they make sense of the world. While theologically we recognise the proclamation of the gospel as God's word and the primary means of grace, phenomenologically, the teacher's voice is 'just another voice in the human conversation'.

Christian teachers eschew any desire for to manipulate or coerce students into particular outcomes because of their confidence in the power of God's word to be at work in God's people (Is 55:10-11; 1 Thess 2:13, *Holman Christian Standard Bible*³). With Paul, we renounce 'shameful secret things, not walking in deceit or distorting God's message, but commending ourselves to every person's conscience in God's sight by an open display of the truth' (2 Cor 4:2). With Joshua, we challenge young people to 'choose for yourselves today the one you will worship', while declaring with humility and boldness, 'as for me and my family, we will worship Yahweh' (Josh 24:15). In doing so, we grant young people the same freedom and dignity to choose as God gives to his people in Psalm 81:13, where God pleads, 'If only My people would listen to Me, and Israel would follow My ways'. God lets his people exercise their freedom, make their own decisions and live with the consequences (Goldingay 2014).

2.2 *The Practices and Qualities of the Christian Classroom*

The foundational practice of Bible engagement in the Christian classroom therefore is to read the Biblical text. While it is not possible to present to young people the Bible in its entirety in any one sitting, recognising this text as a meaningful whole requires that it be presented in total, rather than being dissected to be received piecemeal. Attempting to make the gospel more readily accessible to young people by disseminating it as a more manageable collection of short verses does not provide young people with the text as a whole and thereby deprives them of the resource by which they might go about constructing their own interpretation of the text and their world. Christian educators invite young people to engage with the Bible as a sacred text that offers resources for aesthetic wonder, challenging readers to make sense of this text, and of the world in light of its message.

As young people are exposed to all that the Bible has to offer, emphasis remains on the way young people use the Bible rather than on the content that adult mentors might seek to present. Conversations around the actual use of scripture will be more open-ended, calling on adult mentors to have the skills to shepherd a genuine dialogue with young people and to have the confidence that such open-ended conversation will be spiritually productive. Hughes (2013) draws a similar conclusion regarding the 'microclimate' for effective Bible engagement among young

³All scripture quotations are from the *Holman Christian Standard Bible* (2009).

Australians: ‘Space must be given for young people to find the relevance of faith for themselves if they are to own it, and this means placing some trust in them and the Holy Spirit in the process of exploration’ (p. 23).

Christian education therefore will draw attention to the practices of ordinary readers (cf. Village 2007, 2013), particularly of young readers.⁴ Recognising young people as competent to make their own choices in their spiritual lives, Christian teachers have a responsibility to be champions of young people, affirming and celebrating even the smallest sign of the movement of the Spirit of God in their lives. Young people not only need adults to model to them practices of Bible engagement, they need adults who will champion young people and their own attempts at Bible engagement.

The kind of dialogue I am proposing is therefore different to a traditional ‘discussion group’. Dialogue is not just a means of engagement with content generated in other sources, but is in itself a source of content that is valuable for spiritual formation. As young people and adult mentors engage together in dialogue, their various perspectives demonstrate that alternative ways of constructing meaning are available to each member. Dialogue challenges each participant to consider their own choices as they are confronted with the choices of others. Dialogue provides content that can move young people to wide-awakeness. Dialogue can also provide resources for meaning-making. In dialogue, young people have the opportunity to pool their resources from their individual explorations of meaning.

When Bible engagement is reimaged in this way, Christian classrooms will be characterised by trust and hope. Volf (2010) speaks of pursuing a hermeneutics of trust where we approach scripture with an ‘attitude of receptivity appropriate to the presumption—maybe always only a provisional assumption—that it is a site of God’s self-revelation’ (p. 34). By recognising that it is God’s work to reveal himself to young people teachers have no need to make scripture more accessible or relevant, whether by dumbing it down, stitching it up, or keeping to the safe paths. Rather than avoiding those parts of scripture that seem to make no sense, we will be open to embrace them as places that not only invite dialogue and exploration with young people but also as those through which God makes himself known. Volf’s (2010) conclusion is apt:

If we practice a hermeneutic of respect [...] we can continue to engage the text without suppressing puzzlement or even negative judgment, while patiently waiting for the sense to emerge, either as a result of a new insight or a personal transformation. In our encounter with the Bible, tarrying in persistent non-understanding is often the condition of possibility of genuine disclosure, in which we hear more than just the echo of our own internal voice. (p. 35)

Not only will Christian educators trust the promise that God will speak through his word (Is 55:10-11; 1 Thess 2:13), they also trust young people to be able to make choices of meaning. And we do so in hope that it might even be through the

⁴Perrin (2016) has examined the ordinary hermeneutics of young adults in evangelical churches in the UK. A parallel project could be usefully pursued among mid-adolescents.

imagination of young people that God will bring fresh, or even new, disclosures of truth.

Bible engagement that opens places of dialogue with young people in order to pursue questions of meaning-making offers both challenge and opportunity to Christian education. We are challenged to recognise the freedom and ability of young people to make their own spiritual choices. We are also reminded to trust the work of the Spirit of God to lead young people into the personal constructions of truth that will be meaningful for their own lives. With that confidence, we are free to invite young people to imagine together how the gospel makes sense of our shared experience. The opportunity before us is to learn from the visions God grants to young men and women as is fitting in this new age of the Spirit (Acts 2:17).

3 Now Is the Time to Wake from Slumber

In the same way that Paul challenges his hearers in Rome to ‘wake [up] from sleep’ (Rom 13:11), so also Christian educators urge their students to be wide-awake in the world. For Greene (1988, 1995, 2001), that wide-awakeness is necessary so that young people might be able to break free from the constraining mystifications of their taken-for-granted world. For Paul, the need to be awake is grounded in eschatology—the ‘night’ of ‘this present evil age’ (Gal 1:4) is nearly over because the ‘daylight’ of the new age will soon be ushered in at the coming of Christ (Kruse 2012). Bringing Greene’s (1988, 1995, 2001) perspective together with Paul’s, young people need to be awake to the structures of meaning that keep them from the kingdom of God, and face a heightened urgency in that task because of the impending return of Christ.

The ‘night’ is the time in which we are left with the question of determining how we will make sense of our experience. Night is a time for faith, not sight, and therefore is a time for competing claims to meaningfulness. Living in the night is an eschatological denotation not a moral judgement, but in that eschatological challenge, we face moral choices.

Paul places two alternatives before us: To ‘put on the Lord Jesus Christ’, or to ‘satisfy the fleshly desires’ (Rom 13:14). Pedagogically, these can be read as alternative frameworks of meaning, alternative ways of making sense of the world we experience—whether to make meaning according to the pattern of Christ as presented in the Bible, or to adopt some other interpretation on offer.

Ephesians 5:15 expresses the alternatives as walking as wise people or as unwise. Wise people recognise that though we live in a world marked by death and suffering, it is not a world entirely made up of death and suffering. The days are evil but they are not bereft of goodness. Our experience is not only of death and suffering but also of life and joy. Therein lies all the more challenge to make sense of all of this—how can we account for the sunrise over the ocean, blue cheese and single-malt whisky, at the same time as devastating tsunami, environmental decay and alcoholism?

The alternative to pursuing wisdom is to escape; in the words of Ephesians 5:18, to ‘get drunk with wine’; from Romans 13:13 to engage in ‘carousing and drunkenness, sexual impurity and promiscuity, quarrelling and jealousy’. Rather than make the effort to make sense of the world, it is simpler to ‘satisfy the fleshly desires’ (Rom 13:14). The same temptation to escape is evident among young people today. Some seek the oblivion offered by drugs and alcohol; others give themselves over to the pursuit of pleasure and experience; others make do with the taken-for-granted world they have inherited. Young people brought up in the Church on a diet of gospel-lite platitudes simply shut their eyes and ears to what does not make sense and sing another worship song.

Christian education lures young people towards wisdom. Wise people ‘make the most of the time’, literally, redeeming the time.⁵ There is a way that we might approach this time, to set it free, at least to some extent, from its bondage to decay (Rom 8:21). In Ephesians 5:17 we do so by coming to understand the will of the Lord. In Romans 13:14 we put on the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the goal of Christian education, to adopt the pattern of life offered in Jesus in the scriptures as the framework in which we might make meaning in the world. This is the path on which Christian educators invite their students—to work together to make sense of life in all its ambiguous complexity in company with Jesus.

So now is the hour for Christian educators to wake from sleep so that we in turn might wake students from their sleep. Now is the hour for Christian educators to move young people to be wideawake in the world. As we come to Jesus revealed in scripture we have a rich resource with which to do this.

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Chapter 11

The Wesleyan Quadrilateral as an Aid to Formation in Tertiary Education



Sam Hey

Abstract The opportunities for formation are particularly acute for Christian students as they undertake tertiary education and transition from a strong alignment with external institutional constructed faith propositions of their family and Church traditions and move to a more individualized faith that typically develops during transition into adulthood. This chapter considers the ways tertiary educators can assist students as they face the challenges and opportunities for spiritual growth and the liminal experiences of vulnerability in tertiary education, where they begin to address a plurality of viewpoints and more diverse sources of knowledge. It considers the ways a conceptual framework of four sources of revelation in reason, tradition, Bible and experience can be more fully understood in ways that promote a holistic engagement with a living faith. It also considers some of the challenges faced as they consider academic insights into each source, and the ways efforts to address these challenges can contribute to formation.

Keywords Education · Formation · Liminal · Quadrilateral · Reason
Tradition · Experience

1 Introduction

As students enter tertiary study, they frequently face challenges arising from an increased engagement with the complexities of sources of knowledge, diversity of viewpoints, a wider range of backgrounds of students and faculty and methods of study. Some struggle to reconcile this increased range of insights with the more conservative and traditional viewpoints of their earlier upbringing. A tension can arise between newer insights gained in tertiary education and earlier external constructed faith propositions that are dependent on family members, Church and other social institutions and various authority figures. Given the wider range of

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viewpoints engaged in tertiary study, some may feel pressured to either ‘remain faithful’ to narrower perspectives, or to ‘lose their faith’ by adopting an agnostic acceptance of diverse views. These pressures can be confusing, leading to anxiety and fear, and presenting challenges to mental and physical health. Like many of life’s challenges, when people are insufficiently resourced or the challenges poorly handled, regression may occur. The opportunities for formation and growth are increased when students are encouraged to reflect more deeply on the nature of their beliefs, values and practices, and the nature of academic knowledge. When the challenges are well handled, they can promote deeper engagement with the big questions of life, wider relational interactions, and greater authenticity and promote formation into Christ-likeness and growth towards a more holistic and complete person.

The following chapter considers the ways an increased understanding of the four prominent sources of revelation and knowledge for Christians—through experience, tradition, Bible and reason—can aid academic and spiritual formation. It looks at the challenges that tertiary study poses for understanding the nature and complexity of these sources. While tertiary academic engagement with these sources poses challenges, well-handled engagement can promote a more holistic engagement with life and God and thereby contribute to inner spiritual growth and a living revitalized faith. This chapter concludes by considering the findings of a North American study into ways in which spiritual qualities such as Spiritual Quest, Equanimity, Ethic of Caring, Charitable Involvement and an Ecumenical Worldview can contribute to academic growth and spiritual formation. It argues that the integration of academic and spiritual formation is most likely to occur when students are given sufficient support and guidance from teachers and peers, and resources that help them to better understand various forms of knowledge, and the ways academic understandings can be integrated with a living faith.

2 Liminal Spaces

The term ‘liminal space’ describes well the dangers and opportunities that the transitional stages of life often bring. The French anthropologist, Arnold van Gennep is said to have coined the term ‘liminal’ in his 1906 book ‘The Rites of Passage’ to describe changes in social status, position and age grouping in a person’s life journey. He identified rituals that assisted the ‘rites of separation’, leaving, loss, and death of previous beliefs, status, practices and relationships. van Gennep (1906) also examined the transitional tests, ceremonies and threshold boundaries that mark a passing from one stage to the next, as well as the constructive post liminal rites that promoted acceptance into new states, beliefs, statuses and relationships. The British anthropologist Turner (1967) built on these insights to further describe the ways liminal experiences of disorientation, change and reorientation influenced thinking, personality, sense of agency and the opening up of new perspectives, not only for individuals but also for groups and societies.

These transitions in mental perspectives can be likened to the metamorphosis stages in which growth for an animal with an exoskeleton requires the shedding of its outer protective layer if it is to grow larger. A soft-bodied animal is highly vulnerable during these growth stages until it gradually develops a new protective outer skin that is suited to its enlarged and transformed body. Carl Jung used the term 'individuation' to describe the ways such periods of disorientation and disconnection free people from socially imposed external collective expectations and group consciousness, promoting reorientation and reintegration of one's thinking and the development of a stronger and more authentic core identity (1978, 2014, p. 441). During these change processes, inner conflicts over the nature of reality often expose conscious and unconscious perspectives that need to change if transformation and growth is to occur. Hofer and Pintrich (1997) note that the change from one stage to another '[...] is brought about through cognitive disequilibrium; individuals interact with the environment and respond to new experiences by either assimilating to existing cognitive frameworks or accommodating the framework itself.' (p. 91).

Chickering and Reisser (1993) propose that significant educational and developmental growth often requires disruption and disequilibrium if pre-existing beliefs are to be replaced by more mature ways of thinking. They identify tertiary colleges as places that offer considerable opportunity for personal growth, since these are places where 'powerful forces for student development are at work, turmoil will also be found; temporary dislocation and disorientation is part of the process' (Chickering and Reisser 1993, p. 366).

Holcomb and Nonneman (2004) identify categories of crisis and potential for growth in their study of 360 undergraduate students being: Exposure to diverse perspectives and thinking; substantial exposure to multicultural perspectives; and emotional crises that promote deep reflection. They found that the crises that promoted the most growth required 'a prolonged period of active engagement with, and exploration of, competing roles and ideologies [...] For development to occur, other beliefs and viewpoints must be not only recognized but also engaged, with a period of critical analysis ensuing.' (Holcomb and Nonneman 2004, p. 100). These crises included events that challenged people to examine what they believe and why. They found that well-developed responses to such crises often encouraged transitions toward a more complex and reflective faith. At the same time, growth usually only occurred when the challenges were balanced by the provision of sufficient support to encourage a deepening faith commitment (Holcomb and Nonneman 2004). Palmer (1993) offered similar insights, saying that the ability to accept and work with contradictions is an important part of personal growth. Each of these scholars argues that these life crises can be opportunities for academic and spiritual growth, particularly when the participants are well supported and given the skills needed to handle the crises well.

2.1 Faith Development Insights

In her 2000 book, *‘Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith.’*, Sharon Parks describes a sense of being shipwrecked when young adult lives first face questioning of earlier world-views and faith positions, challenges in their approaches to thinking and feeling, trials in relationships, increased awareness of social injustices and suffering, that promote a need to rethink previous understandings of their life, self and world. Parks (2000) argues that while these challenges pose dangers if left unresolved, the provision of supportive people, spaces and settings can help promote transitions through disequilibrium to new ‘equilibriums’ that characterize growth (p. 154). Parks (2000) says that access to strong, supportive, mentoring environments is often the most important factor in the development of a student’s faith. She suggests that growth is more likely to occur when students find support from student organizations, mentoring relationships with teachers, senior students or peers and supportive communities who listen and who are open to conversation, promoting critical reflection and offering consolation.

Drawing on several hundred ‘faith development interviews’, Fowler (1981) identified six commonly observed transitions in the faith journey over one’s life time. Stages One to Four follow Piaget’s (1967) model of development from disordered thinking to more concrete, inferential, reasoning, followed by more abstract ordered logic, and then by greater acceptance of holistic, integrated thinking. Fowler (1981) argued that for mature faith to develop, each individual needs ‘to take seriously the burden of responsibility for his or her own commitments, lifestyle, beliefs and attitudes’ and to pursue a faith that is self-chosen and where the final authority resides in the individual’s own judgment rather than in the leader or Church (pp. 161, 170, 243). His approach assumes that as people mature, they need to develop the skills required to engage with a wider range of perspectives and diversity of people and viewpoints. Fowler (1981, 2004) said that for the spiritual health of participants and their organizations, higher levels of faith development need to be encouraged that involve dialectic and dialogic thinking, as well as recognition of the limits of rational and experiential knowledge, acceptance of the polarities and opposites in life, the valuing of post-critical faith positions and a willingness to spend and be spent for the transformation of present reality towards a transcendent actuality (pp. 187, 200; p. 418).

Fowler (1981) uses the term ‘faith’ to not only describe trust in God but also for commitment to the wider range of values and ideals to which a person is devoted. For Fowler (1981), faith is the ‘generic consequence of the universal human burden of finding and making meaning’ (p. 33). The opposite of faith was not doubt, but fear and ‘nihilism [...] and despair about the possibility of even negative meaning’ (Fowler 1981, p. 31). According to Fowler (1981), human development transitions contribute to changes in the content, ideas and values that relate to faith as these are ‘reworked’ at each new stage of development (p. 285ff). Fowler (1981) says that growth requires an adjustment and reorientation of the strengths and virtues

acquired at earlier faith development stages so as to promote deeper and more authentic understandings of faith that address the realities and insights of later stages (pp. 285, 287–291).

Fowler (1981) sees the need for growth in all areas of faith, including religious commitments, relationships and all sources of meaning and purpose in life.

For many younger tertiary students, the transition from the Synthetic-Conventional Faith of 11 to 18 year olds to Individuative-Reflective Faith in adulthood is particularly important. Fowler (1981) acknowledges that this transition is often difficult, as the tensions between different viewpoints become more apparent, at the time in life when the young adult is seeking to form their own internal autonomous worldview and commitments.

While weaknesses in Fowler's (1981) theory can be identified, particularly in its heavy reliance on cognitive developmental models such as those of Piaget (1967) and limited consideration of the complex, multifaceted nature and roles of spiritual, social, affective, cultural and other dimensions in the context of human development, Fowler's models offer valuable insights into some of the ways young people change as they face challenges and the ways challenges and changes can promote growth.

More recent faith development scholars like Streib (1991, 2003) have sought to give greater consideration to the diversity of content, practices and narratives of faith development and greater recognition to distinct styles, life histories and types of faith. Streib (1991, 2003) identifies the transition from adolescence to adulthood as continuing the changes from the instrumental faith styles of childhood to the mutual faith styles of adolescence. This is typically followed by transition to individuative-systemic religious styles that focus on reasoned reflection and critical distance, blended with intimacy and relatedness; followed by a more dialogical religious style that is more open to different beliefs and less concerned with defending the 'self'.

Parks (1986) goes further, distinguishing distinct stages within Fowler's (1981) Stage Four category. The first is a post-adolescent, young adult stage that is wary and tentative in its 'probing commitment' before second stage commitments of later adulthood are reached (Parks 1986, p. 76.). Young adult faith often begins as wary, exploratory, tentative and dependent faith that grows as the person becomes more self-aware, and aware of a diversity of views and characteristics of others (Parks 1986, p. 85). She also argues that education and growth require a freedom to imagine and explore deeper understandings of reality, self, others and wholeness.

3 Four Sources of Knowledge

Many Christian students have found a model of four sources of learning and revelation through which God makes truth known—through scripture, reason, tradition and experience—to be useful for helping understand the challenges faced as they encounter complex and diverse views. A close study of each of the sources can

promote an increased awareness of the nature and value of different sources, the skills that aid understanding of each source and its contexts, and the relationships between the sources. Students who arrive at tertiary colleges with a narrow emphasis on the experientialism, rationalism, Biblicism or traditionalism from their earlier upbringing often testify of the benefits from finding a well-supported introduction to the four source model. The recognition of a variety of complementary, interdependent sources helps a transition from over reliance on a single dominant competing source to recognition of the nature, diversity and interrelationships between different sources of knowledge.

This four source model is frequently called the Wesleyan Quadrilateral with reference to Wesley's (1872) apparent use of these four sources. Albert Outler (1985) coined this term 'Wesleyan Quadrilateral' (p. 7ff), in the 1970s, arguing that, while Wesley never used the term quadrilateral, his writings appear to show that he added the source of experience to the Anglican triad of revelation through Scripture, Tradition and Reason in his theological thinking. The use of the four sources in contemporary theological writings by authors such as Buschart (2006), McGrath (2011), and others, suggests that these four sources reflect general approaches to theological and religious knowledge that transcend the Wesleyan historical contexts (p. 43; p. 120).

3.1 Student Feedback on the Four Sources

Since 2012, annual surveys at Christian Heritage College, School of Ministries where I teach have been used to monitor student responses to the four source approach. The survey results indicate that the students gain support from this model. After introducing this model, a student said, 'the quadrilateral helps clarify and identify thought patterns already in place.' Another said, 'I didn't realise there were theories about the different ways [of knowing], it was initially tempting to only consider the Bible but now I see other ways, lenses, that filter knowledge.' One student said, 'It has helped deal with practical pastoral ministry to people who come up with divergent views, who follow ideas from the internet, or reading a verse out of context, or place too high an emphasis on experience by being able to point out the need to be reliant not only on one source such as scripture.' One wrote '[I] recognise that there are other views other than my own and [my] application is more realistic.' A student said, 'I recognise that not everyone has the same understanding.' Another wrote '[I am now] more careful in interpretation, looking for more application, challenging previous perceptions.' Another wrote 'My view towards tradition has improved. I see it can be a valuable source of relation to God.'

The value of the four source model can be seen in the ways it encourages deeper reflection and understanding, and many students speak of the ways they have grown in their recognition that experience, traditions, communities and culture can contribute considerably to their understandings of each source and its relationship to the beliefs and viewpoints that they hold. One student said 'a couple of things

I thought were from the Bible and were true, I now realize are traditions that I picked up.’ Another said, ‘It made me realise it’s so important to research the Bible and other sources to work out what is true.’

This feedback shows how the four source model tends to encourage students to broaden their appreciation of a wider range of theological sources and to increase their tolerance of other view points, while also allowing students to place greater emphasis on one or more sources.

Other Australian colleges have also reflected on the implications of their use of the four source model. The Academic Dean at Nazarene Theological College in Brisbane observed that many in the Wesleyan tradition have used these four sources as their dominant methodological grid for Wesleyan theological interpretation. He says that these four elements, however, should not just be viewed as four distinct sources, but as complementary activities of the Holy Spirit required in pastoral ministry and mission (personal correspondence). This openness to revelation by the Spirit of God and emphasis on application in particularly cultural settings led Macquarrie (1966) to add these two additional sources of revelation and culture to the four source model. He reminds us of the importance of thinking more broadly about sources of knowledge.

At a Brisbane college in the Anglican tradition, it was reported that a variation of this approach tended to emphasize an Anglican triad of three sources, with a stronger emphasis on tradition as a dynamic, evolving source of God’s revelation. This approach has promoted a richer understanding of the importance of historical study and greater understanding of the contribution that our traditions make to faith in this college.

The next section of this chapter examines some of the challenges faced by students as they study each source from academic perspectives, and ways in which formation can be promoted through addressing these challenges.

3.1.1 Experience

Many Christian students from contemporary charismatic churches enter tertiary study with an initial high level of dependence on the intuitive, experiential revelation that is promoted in these churches. Pietistic and spirit-oriented movements are found within many religious traditions, particularly those that encourage an openness to inner intuitive capacities to hear and discern God’s voice. Like romanticism before it, the twenty-first-century postmodern culture has also placed considerable emphasis on feelings, emotions and self-awareness that has further elevated the valuing of personal experience in the lives of many students. An emphasis on beauty, truth, love, ethics, relationships and non-rational oriented realities has also encouraged openness to less rational, more mystical and intuitive understandings of God and the world. This emphasis on intuition and experience is often challenged by a more academic emphasis on scientific methods and the gathering of evidence, logical reasoning, the use of the five senses and emphasis on temporal and material realities.

Berger (1967) famously used the terms ‘methodological atheism’ and ‘methodological agnosticism’ to describe the tendency for academic approaches to leave God, intuition and spiritual senses out of scholarly studies (p. 100). Even study of religion courses tends to downplay these approaches. Professor Berger (1967) recognizes the need to integrate scholarly study with lived experience. Berger (1967), who is a highly regarded sociologist as well as a practicing Lutheran, recognized that modernity, pluralism and anomy pose a challenge to the norms that hold most people’s lives together. In *‘The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion’* (Berger 1967), he argued that religion and a sense of transcendence are invaluable for providing a ‘plausibility structure’ or ‘canopy of understanding’ that gives a sense of order and continuity to our lives (pp. 45, 192). In his 1969 book, *‘A Rumor of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural’*, he showed that most people in a modern society continue to have an interest in the supernatural. At the same time, he said that it was important for the formation and growth of people that they develop a strong sense of autonomy, independence, self-awareness and choice, which he describes as the defining characteristics of modern orthodoxy. Singer (1993), quotes Berger (1992) as warning of the need to avoid a wimpish ‘cognitive surrender’ to secular thinking, or tuggish ‘cognitive retrenchment’ in unquestioning emphasis on traditional religious teachings (para. 10). Instead, Berger (1992) advocates the importance of cognitive dialogue that encourages personal growth.

Berger’s (1967) research shows that personal and spiritual experiences are important realities in most lives and communities. However, there are dangers in a student’s over dependence on subjective personal experiences. Christian tertiary education and the use of models such as the four source ‘Wesleyan quadrilateral’ can help students to recognize the value of balancing inner lived experiences with outer every day and relational life. Christian colleges can make a valuable contribution to student development by incorporating strategies for integrating academic study and reasoning with opportunities to practice and reflect on the roles of spiritual experiences.

3.1.2 Tradition

Knowledge and revelation rarely occur in isolation, but within the contexts, meanings, resources and language established by past and present communities. Tertiary study can provide a valuable opportunity for students to engage with a wider range of traditions, and develop skills in understanding the influences that different schools of thought have, and ways different sources of revelation are understood. Tertiary study can help students to grow in their understanding of the ways traditions, cultures, texts and institutions contribute to their beliefs, practices, knowledge and understanding of how different ways of knowing give their life meaning and direction. The term ‘tradition’ can include the rich resources of written records of the past, the experiences, insights and statements of doctrine and faith of

the present, and community described in hopes passed on from generation to generation. Traditions can include the practices, rituals, creeds and statements of belief, and the ways these are understood and passed on to others. The study of the humanities, including history and culture, gives insights into the ways people, events and traditions are situated within particular social, historical and cultural contexts and the opportunities that flow from these settings. The study of the great writings and councils of the past, including the Church fathers, major historical leaders and various communities can provide invaluable insights. At the same time, an accurate understanding of the original settings of these writings requires an informed consideration of the original historical, cultural and other contexts and consideration of the ways our understandings of these resources have changed over time. Traditions also describe the beliefs, practices of contemporary communities and processes by which communities seek to preserve and communicate their most valued teachings.

Students will benefit from developing skills in understanding the ways traditions form and change. They will also benefit from being given opportunities to reflect on the ways these influences and the flow of the history of ideas has influenced their lives and communities. It is important that students recognize the ways traditions can change over time, the challenges of institutionalization, over dependence on the past, and disconnection from contemporary settings, as well as the value of renewal movements that encourage an enlivened faith engages with the needs of life in the contemporary world. As students dialogue and wrestle with the benefits and limitations of various traditions, and the problems that arise when traditions become too superficial, institutionalized and aligned with dead rituals, they can develop skills to help to discern ways of preserving that which is valuable from the past, integrating this with transformed understandings of the present, and developing a greater understanding of likely future scenarios and the roles traditions will play in these. These reflections can help students to be more intentional about the communities that they align with and the ways they engage with them. Humanities disciplines including history, sociology and cultural studies can provide insights into how Christians can be active agents in shaping their own destinies and making a contribution to the ongoing development of wider communities.

These studies have many benefits, helping promote greater self-understanding and the development of higher levels of awareness, thinking and formation.

Many of the rituals associated with tertiary education, such as entrance, assessment, feedback and graduation, emphasize academic reasoning and writing as markers of progress rather than inner formational concerns. If Christian education is to be known for its contribution to the formation of the whole person, greater recognition and celebration needs to be given to the other sources of experience, Bible and tradition, and less visible, affective, moral, relational and spiritual domains and the ways these are reinforced by the personal and communal traditions in which we engage and participate.

Smith (2009) reminds us that our traditions, what we love, and our visions of the good life, play important roles in personal growth, formation and understanding of the world. Smith (2009) says our 'liturgies make us certain kinds of people' (p. 25).

In his 2016 book, *'You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit'*, Smith observes that people can benefit from developing skills in reading and understanding the everyday liturgies in which they participate (p. 83). Christian students can also benefit from developing 'liberating' (Smith 2016, p. 83), personal liturgies that engage with Biblical writings and Christian narratives and worship that encourage the development of life giving liturgies, practices and traditions. In his book, *'Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation'*, Smith (2009) invited his readers to revision Christian education as formative rather than just informative, saying that education is largely about what we love (p. 17). He argues that true education involves passing on habits that 'shape and constitute our identities by forming our most fundamental desires and our most basic attunement to the world.' (Smith 2009, p. 17).

3.1.3 The Bible

The evangelical college and church where I teach, place a strong emphasis on the importance of scripture as the main source through which God's revelation is made known to us. As in many evangelical colleges, most of our students continue to hold the Bible as the central source of revelation about God and His ways, and the means by which people regularly engage with the presence of God and His purposes for people and society. At the same time, many students come to college with limited knowledge of the background settings or literary contexts of the Biblical texts. Through systematic tertiary level study of the Bible, the students learn the historical, geographical, cultural and literary contexts of these writings and they develop skills in understanding the original intended meaning of the Biblical writers. They develop a greater understanding of the message of the whole of scripture, and gain a holistic and well-rounded view of God's revelation in the Bible together with an understanding of the diversity of settings, times and genres in which this revelation is expressed. This emphasis on a well-informed, scholarly study of scripture helps to promote a more accurate and well-informed interpretation of the Biblical writings. Students soon become aware that none of the Biblical books were originally written to be modern textbooks on science, politics or counselling or even systematic textbooks on theology. They discover that each Biblical passage reflects the particular genres, contexts and messages of a place and time, and ways these insights are woven into the overall message of the Biblical canon. Students also learn to recognize the dangers of over selectivity of particular verses and passages and ways this can distort Biblical revelation by ignoring other counter balancing truths that are also contained in scripture. These strategies help to avoid Biblicism and Bibliolatry that can arise when students ignore wider contexts and sources of knowledge outside of the Bible, or read individual Bible verses in isolation from these contexts, and the chapters and Biblical books in which verses are set. Students also benefit from being introduced to different ways of reading and engaging with the Biblical texts, and training to appreciate the strengths and limitations of different approaches to reading, understanding and applying scripture.

The value of interaction with a diversity of viewpoints as an aid to inner growth is not a new concept. The Old Testament scholar, Brueggemann (2012) observed that the Biblical authors included a diversity of viewpoints in scripture, using rhetorical methods and a range of perspectives to promote the growth of their readers and hearers. Brueggemann (2012) identified a tension between different dialectic themes in Old Testament writings, including core testimony and counter testimony; sin, purity and cleansing; and justice and grace that encourage engagement with the big questions of life and faith. These tensions are at times left unresolved in the Biblical texts, encouraging the recipients to seek resolution through openness to the work of God in their lives. Tertiary educators can use these insights to encourage reading and reflection on relevant Biblical passages that help the students to recognize that they are not alone in facing the challenges that life presents. Relevant passages from scripture can thus be used to help students to recognize the presence of God in the crises they face in their tertiary study journey.

However, as students engage with the academic study of the Bible within its historical and literary contexts, or from a diversity of viewpoints, they may find that earlier and simpler approaches to reading, understanding and 'believing in' the Bible fade. Scholarly pressures towards historical contextualization, consideration of a diversity of views and the academic importance of objective neutrality can further lessen a commitment to scripture as a living agent for personal and social revelation and transformation. While more academic approaches to the Bible have benefits, this emphasis on historical contextualization, Biblical criticism and questions of authorship, dating, historicity and literalism can weaken a student's commitment to a personal, communal and contemporary revelation and application of scripture.

Care is needed to avoid losing the sense that scripture is a living, God inspired and faith enlarging book. Wink (2010), writing in 'The Bible in Human Transformation: Toward a New Paradigm for Biblical Study' warns against this emphasis on suspicion, objectivism and historical critical methods where this overemphasizes the distance between the Biblical records and our personal and contemporary settings and application to spiritual and social development. Wink (2010) proposes a dialectical hermeneutic in which God's revelation through the Biblical texts is integrated with and applied to the reader's own heritage, traditions and cultures and life. He says that the Bible should not be viewed as irrelevant, or as a means of ego-enhancement and power over our world. He says that we should come humbly before the text and allow it to speak to us and challenge us in ways that promote personal and communal growth.

The Bible is a challenging book, and openness to the challenges and range of insights it presents can be a valuable aid to spiritual formation. Christians believe that God's Spirit is present in our Bible reading practices. His Spirit is able to illuminate theological principles and guide application to contemporary settings and needs. Openness to God-breathed revelations in scripture can bring life transforming engagement with the living God and His Word.

DeSilva (2004) in '*An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods, and Ministry Formation*' reminds us that Christian faith is not founded on historical

investigations of Biblical books, or study of history, but on a life changing encounter with the risen, living Lord (p. 191). The Bible can facilitate this, by bringing students closer to the living Christ in ways that allow Christ to challenge and shape their lives. Thus, Christian educators will place an emphasis on the Gospels, and engagement with the living Christ revealed through these writings. Recognition of the importance and nature of Biblical revelation in Christian education should motivate Christian educators to provide frequent opportunities for students to listen to, understand, and apply God's word and to reflect on the ways scripture speaks into contemporary situations.

3.1.4 Reason

Many students enter tertiary study with the view that reasoning involves the pursuit of single, correct answers that they are required to learn. The instructor is often initially viewed as the disseminator of all truth and his views are unquestioned. Over time, students learn to appreciate the value of considering a diversity of viewpoints, and they develop greater confidence in their own voice and ability to gather, evaluate and use different sources of information. As they transition from narrow teacher-centred pedagogies to learner-centred approaches that require new skills, and abilities in self-resourcing, it is important to more fully understand the changes students are going through if we are to be well equipped to support students in these transitions.

In his book, *'The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind'* (1994) Mark Noll warns that Evangelical Christians have often been slow to use their God-given ability to develop their thinking skills to use them in engaging with the wider needs of societies. In his 2011 book, *'Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind'*, Noll reiterates this point, saying that a new middle ground is needed that combines a commitment to Biblical revelation, relationship with God through Christ and the Holy Spirit, miracles and Church tradition, and a willingness to fully engage with the intellectual challenges and advancements in contemporary society. Noll (2011) argues for the value of integrating a commitment to a living, vital faith-filled relationship with God as well as engagement with the dominant intellectual methods and arenas, and the dangers of narrow forms of isolationism and conservatism, or rationalism and materialism. The development of God-given capacities to reason and engaging with academic scholarly disciplines is particularly important in Christian tertiary education.

It is important to ensure that our teaching is relevant to each student, and to support their flourishing in a wider contemporary society. Students need to be equipped for engagement with the contemporary scholarly disciplines. The claims of reason also mean that we have to try to relate revelation to the world in which we live, and to the possible objections to belief that come from the natural and human sciences. Support needs to be provided as they address the challenge of reconciling their faith with big questions about the nature of the universe, the living world, the human person, the mind and thinking, and historical and cultural change over time.

Perry's (1970) model of intellectual development offers valuable insights into the ways in which students' epistemological frameworks develop as thinking skills change over time. Perry (1970) identifies important transitions, from absolutisms and dualisms in early thinking stages to increased awareness of the limitations of knowledge and beliefs, and the roles of contextualism and relativism. He reminds us that our students are often at different stages along different pathways on their journeys towards higher levels of thinking. Perry's (1970) studies of students' tertiary intellectual development note that tertiary study typically promotes an increased awareness of the benefits of rational knowledge, followed by increased awareness of its limitations, contextual considerations and relativism. Increased awareness of relativism and contextualization can also make an important contribution to deepening intellectual development. Perry (1970) observed that many students will transition to relativism and a multiplicity of viewpoints, before they feel they are able to develop their own well-supported foundations for intellectual commitments. Many will struggle with the challenges faced in weighing up and contextualizing evidence, in relating it to different settings, in making changes to deeply held viewpoints. Some will also be tempted to adopt dualisms in which different realities are held in different settings and progress in thinking can be stifled by these strategies.

King's and Kitchener's (1994) more recent study similarly proposed that intellectual development progresses from pre-reflective thinking (stages One to Three) to quasi-reflective relativism (stages Four to Five) to reflective commitment (stages Six to Seven). These models suggest that teachers can assist students to grow intellectually by encouraging them to consider the contexts, perspectives, relativisms, limitations, complexities, mysteries and paradoxes of knowledge and faith. Strong teacher resourcing and support can go a long way towards aiding the successful resolution of these intellectual development challenges.

Gardner's (2006) studies observed that changes in thinking often occur as individuals or groups 'abandon the way in which they have customarily thought about an issue of importance and henceforth conceive of it in a new way' (p. 2). Gardner's (2006) framework identified seven levers of change that influence change processes. Gardner's seven levers of change are: (a) reason, (b) research, (c) resonance, (d) representational redescription, (e) resources and rewards, (f) real-world events and (g) resistances. He proposed that shifts of mind are most likely to occur when the seven levers of change work together to move a group or individual in a particular direction. These studies highlight ways in which teachers can promote intellectual development by offering opportunities for students to identify and reflect on the challenges they face as their approaches to thinking change over time.

Tertiary study places a considerable emphasis on reasoning skills, weighing up of evidence, consideration of multiple and alternative viewpoints, and recognition of the nature, benefits and limits of language, models and concepts. In seeking to develop skills in reasoning, care is needed so that an emphasis on academics does not underemphasize other ways of knowing. As Zemach (1997) reminds us, 'if you subscribe to any kind of realism, scientific or metaphysical, aesthetic features are a part of it.' (p. 34). A greater appreciation of aesthetic knowledge can enrich

students' understanding of the limits of academic reasoning, and encourage the development of further approaches and practices to engage with God and the spiritual realm. The challenge for a Christian college is to not only promote intellectual growth but to integrate this with support for spiritual and relational growth, and relationships with communities that aid growth in all these domains.

3.1.5 Spiritual Growth and Academic Success

A 2003 to 2010 study led by Alexander W. Astin and Helen S. Astin titled, *'Spirituality in Higher Education: Students' Search for Meaning and Purpose'* surveyed 14,527 students attending 136 North American colleges and universities. They found that while formal religious engagement often declines during college, students' spiritual qualities tend to grow. The research showed that students who grow most in the five spiritual qualities of Equanimity, Spiritual Quest, Ethic of Caring, Charitable Involvement and Ecumenical Worldview are those who are most actively engaged in the 'inner work' of transformation through practices of self-reflection, contemplation, or meditation. They also found that students showed the most increase in Spiritual Quest when their faculty encouraged them to explore questions of meaning and purpose and offered support for their spiritual development. Growth in Charitable Involvement was found to be promoted by offering opportunities for service work, helping friends with personal problems, and giving to charity. Growth in Equanimity enhanced students' grade point average, leadership skills, psychological well-being, abilities to get along with other races and cultures and satisfaction with college. Growth in 'Ethic of Caring' and 'Ecumenical Worldview' was shown to enhance students' interest in postgraduate study, self-rated ability to get along with others, and commitment to promoting racial understanding. This study found that educational experiences that promoted spiritual development, interdisciplinary studies, study abroad, self-reflection and meditation had positive benefits towards traditional college outcomes.¹

The recognition of the close relationship between spirituality and other academic domains is a reminder of the importance of spiritual development in tertiary education. It is also a reminder of the need for greater understanding of the relationship between intellectual, spiritual and relational formation. The awareness of the importance of spirituality in tertiary education tends to distinguish Christian colleges from more secular approaches to tertiary education where opportunities for the development and integration of spirituality in tertiary education are more limited.

¹These results were published in Astin et al. (2011). A summary of the findings can be found in Appleton et al. (2011).

4 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted some the challenges faced by Christian students as they engage with a wider variety of sources and perspectives in tertiary education. It identified how this diversity often leads to liminal sensations of vulnerability as students transition from an alignment with earlier family, Church and institutional supported faith propositions to engage with more diverse sources of knowledge and viewpoints required in tertiary academic study. The four source model for understanding revelation and knowledge through sources that Christians value—in experience, tradition, Bible and reasoning—was shown to be useful for helping students to recognize the value of integrating multiple ways of knowing and grow beyond dependence on one source and viewpoint. A tertiary college understanding of each source was shown to be complex, contextual and interdependent with other sources, as well as posing a danger in that each source could claim dominance, leading to simplified, single sources of knowledge as often prevails in early years. Hermeneutical skills were shown to be important, not only for understanding of the original intended meaning of Biblical writings but for understanding all sources including Bible, traditions, reasoning, culture and experience and their contexts. Academic progress cannot be isolated from other areas of growth in all areas of life, including spirituality and faith. The insights of Smith (2009) show that habits and ‘liturgies’ play important roles in the formation of students. Habits of study, relationship building, spiritual growth, reflection and in-class engagement can have considerable influence on the ways people develop and grow.

In order to reimagine what it means to teach Christianly, we might ask, ‘what is the difference between Christian and secular approaches to education?’. An answer to this can be found in the way Christian teaching not only focuses on academic progress, it also seeks to promote growth in every area of the student’s life during their time in college and to relate this to academic development. There has been increasing recognition in recent years of the valuable contribution that spirituality can make toward the development of a more holistic and integrated life. Academic, spiritual and relational growth are part of a holistic engagement with life that includes relationship with God and His purposes for us and for our world. Christian faith and academic development cannot be segmented off from other life arenas including growth in self-understanding, inner spiritualities, relationships and other domains. This chapter reminds us that Christianity and tertiary study are not just things we do, it is about who we are and who we are becoming. This chapter provided insights into ways in which this more holistic and integrated tertiary education might be achieved through greater awareness of the challenges involved, as students transition from narrow understandings of the sources of knowledge, to deeper understandings of these sources and their interrelationships.

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Chapter 12

Reimagining Reflective Practice as Lifelong Learning for Professional Development Within Christian Ministry



Graham James O'Brien

Abstract Within Christian education, the subject of reflective practice is often addressed through practical training programmes such as internships or pastoral courses like Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). There is, however, a need to reimagine reflective practice in the context of lifelong learning for those involved in Christian ministry due to the ever-changing nature of ministry and society and the increasing demands of leadership in this context. In order to better cope with such continuous change, professional development through reflective practice is required to both challenge and renew expertise. As a result, reflective practice can become the foundation of intentional professional development in Christian education. Components of this approach will include

- Intentional reflective practice as the central methodology,
- Communities of practice as the central location for reflective practice and
- Facilitation as the central mechanism for reflective practice.

Keywords Reflective practice • Facilitation • Constructivism • Community of practice • Leadership

1 Introduction

Reflective practice (sometimes called theological reflection, or more recently ministerial reflection) provides the most effective means within Christian education to develop professional competence in an ever-changing world, and is often associated with internship programmes and Clinical Pastoral Education (Blodgett and Floding 2014, p. 270; Sims 2011). However, there is more to reflective practice than just

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developing practical and reflective skills that make sense of experiences. Reflective practice can also be a transformative process as theological knowledge is integrated with practical ministry experience, professional collegiality developed, and God's call discerned (Ball 2012; Blodgett and Floding 2014; Click 2011; Floding 2011; Hillman 2008; Shaw 2014; Sims 2011). The challenge being addressed in this chapter is to reimagine reflective practice beyond the training phase and to prioritise space for reflection within the reality of lifelong learning in ministry so that 'the busier we are the more reflective we need to be' (Thompson and Pascal 2012, p. 320).

To do so, recognise the three general features outlined by Payne (2008) that bring intentionality to reflective practice within ministry development. The first is sustainability, where the habit of reflection becomes part of who ministers are and how they interpret the world. Second, humility recognises that life in a broken world leads to decisions that are often far from perfect. Finally, reflection has an action orientation leading to new praxis in the face of ministry challenges.

The proposed reimaging of reflective practice involves implementing and evaluating the use of communities of practice for the professional development of those in ministry (ordained or lay). This strategy also reflects educational best practice in moving from an 'instructional' to a 'learning paradigm' (Barr and Tagg 1995, p. 13). Therefore, the intentional reflective practice model will involve the following:

- Reflective practice as the central methodology to develop professional knowledge, build professionalism in practice, collegiality and teamwork.
- Communities of practice as the central location for reflective practice, encompassing a range of ministry experience from which the group can reflect and learn, primarily through discussing the current learning edges in ministry.
- Facilitation as the central mechanism to provide intentionality to reflective practice, resulting in the best collaborative and educational environment for lifelong learning.

2 Reimagining Reflective Practice Within a Facilitated Community of Practice

I have previously published the conceptual framework offered here for reflective practice within Communities of Practice (O'Brien 2016, Fig. 1), but a brief overview of both the educational and community of practice frameworks is necessary to understand the implementation and evaluation of this approach.

2.1 The Educational Framework

The action-reflection model of learning provides the educational framework for reflective practice and lifelong learning, where a problem in practice is identified and forms the basis of inquiry, followed by change and further reflection

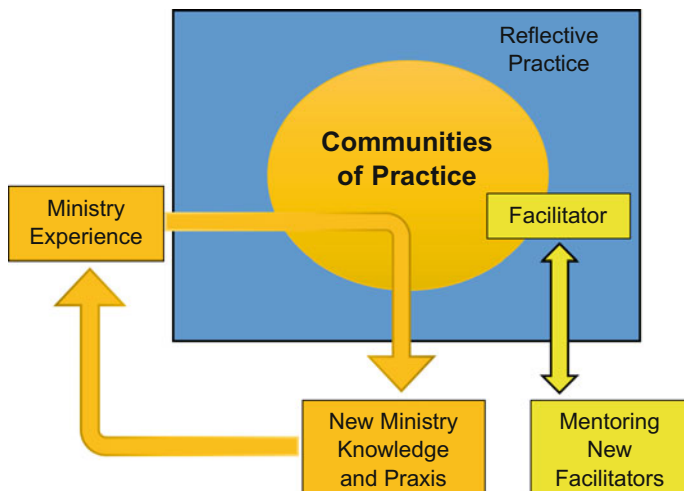


Fig. 1 Conceptual framework for communities of practice in the continual professional development of Christian ministers (O'Brien 2016, p. 386; reproduced with permission www.tandfonline.com)

(Harland 2012, p. 13; Kemmis et al. 2013; Lewin 1946; Rushton and Suter 2012). As an educational process, declarative knowledge is integrated with professional knowledge and skills in real-life situations, so that practitioners learn to cope with the novel situations that professionals face in a changing context, and ultimately develop professional wisdom and competence (Biggs and Tang 2011, pp. 81–82; Wenger et al. 2002, pp. 8–9). As a result, personal effectiveness is changed by ‘bridging theory and practice, integrating prior beliefs with theory and practice, and reconstructing professional knowledge from experiential knowledge’ (Thorsen and DeVore 2013, p. 90).

Action-reflection may be practiced within the habit of reflective practice, formally defined as, ‘the process of engaging with learning and/or professional practice that provides an opportunity to critically analyse and evaluate that learning or practice [...] to develop professional knowledge, understanding and practice that incorporates a deeper form of learning’ (Black and Plowright 2010, p. 246). This deeper learning is supported by the educational theory of ‘constructivism’ from the work of Lev Vygotsky (1978), referring to how learners build on previous knowledge and experience to construct new knowledge (Harland 2012, pp. 62–64). Central to the theory of constructivism is the ‘Zone of Proximal Development’ (ZPD), which is defined as:

the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving [zone of current development] and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (Harland 2003, p. 265)

Importantly, it is the collaborative aspect of learning that is crucial within ministry, so that with the help of more experienced peers the outer edge of the ZPD can be reached, after which such help now defines the new zone of current development and the process continues providing a model for lifelong learning and growth (Harland 2003; Wass and Golding 2014).

Three types of reflective practices are commonly identified based on the concept of the 'reflective practitioner' from the work of Donald Schön (1983, 1987): reflection in-action, on-action and for-action (Rushton and Suter 2012; Scales et al. 2011; Thompson and Pascal 2012). Reimagining reflective practice focuses on reflection-on-and-for-action, where the emphasis here is to reflect on past situations or issues, as well as using experience and an implicit professional knowledge base to plan, think ahead and reflect on desirable and possible futures and the ways to get there. In summary, although a form of reflective practice is part of current Christian education, there is a need to reimagine reflective practice if we are to aim for a more reflective-centric model of professional development within Christian ministry.

2.2 *The Community of Practice Framework*

A common issue within the busyness of life and ministry is that there is often little infrastructure in which to embed and sustain reflective practice (Amulya 2011; Raelin 2002; Sims 2011). Therefore, the community of practice framework provides the structure to embed reflective practice for leadership development through lifelong learning. Defined as 'groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis' (Wenger et al. 2002, p. 4), communities of practice are now recognised across a range of professions for professional development (Wenger and Snyder 2000; Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner 2015). Originally named by Jean Lave (1991) and Etienne Wenger (1998) for managing and developing knowledge in the business sector, to the best of my knowledge, this approach has not been used specifically within Christian ministry. The closest model is the 'huddle' used by the 3-Dimension Ministry movement (3DM) pioneered by Mike Breen (2017).

Within the context of reimaging reflective practice for lifelong learning within ministry, it is important to recognise that the three distinguishable characteristics of communities of practice—a shared domain, a community and being practitioners (Lai 2015; Wenger et al. 2002; Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner 2015)—are all present within Christian ministry practice. Christian ministry forms the domain where members are distinguished on the basis of a calling to such ministry; the community is the regular gathering of those involved in ministry with a variety of experience; the practice is Christian leadership within a ministry and societal context (O'Brien 2016, p. 386). The goal of a community of practice in this context, therefore, is the co-construction of knowledge through intentional reflective practice leading to knowledge development and innovation of practice.

There is, however, the need to provide a suitable structure within a community of practice to ensure that members get high value for their time and a culture of trust is developed; this is what Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) call ‘cultivation’ through ‘artful facilitation’ (pp. 6–7). Facilitation provides the scaffold for personal and communal growth so that ‘a learner can attain a goal or engage in a practice otherwise out of reach’ (Davis and Miyake 2004, p. 266), a strategy closely aligned with the principle of constructivism already mentioned. The scaffolding of the reflective process is achieved through the use of thought-encouraging/empowering questions, which are the questions that experts ask themselves to reflect on situations when they cannot draw on experience or knowledge alone (Golding 2011). The reason for this reimagining of reflective practice through such questions is that leadership in a rapidly changing and busy world is now seen to be about knowing what questions to ask rather than about providing answers. The need is for a culture shift towards a ‘culture of inquiry’ (Berger 2014, p. 165) or a ‘questioning culture’ (Marquardt 2014, p. 30), because ‘yesterday’s solutions will not solve tomorrow’s problems’ (J. Carew, interview cited in Marquardt 2014, p. 35). The problem as Berger (2014) suggests is that we are trained out of questioning once we enter schooling, yet as the world becomes more complex, the value of questions increases and that of answers decreases (pp. 23, 40). However, within Christian ministry, we already have a model for this culture shift to reimagine reflective practice recorded in the words of Jesus in Matthew 19:14. Jesus often used children as the example for the right attitudes of faith, and here Jesus tells his adult followers, ‘Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children’ (Matt 19:14, The Holy Bible New Living Translation¹). Often we focus on humility (Matt 18:4-5); however, two child-like aptitudes not often thought of in these words are the innate curiosity and courage of children to inquire about their world through questions. It is these qualities that reflective practice seeks to reignite in order to produce lifelong learning in ministry that can adapt and adjust to change. Finally, by having memberships with diverse experiences, the community of practice provides an internal scaffold through which inexperienced participants develop reflective skills from those with more experience in order to learn critical thinking skills through enculturation and immersion (Golding 2011, p. 359).

3 Implementing and Evaluating Communities of Practice for Lifelong Learning and Professional Development in Christian Ministry

So far, intentional reflective practice within a community of practice has been identified as the central methodology for continual professional development within Christian ministry, supported by the action-reflection model of learning. In this

¹All scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation (2004).

context, facilitation and scaffolding using thought-encouraging/empowering questions assist the process of collaborative problem-solving, as well as personal and communal development.

After 2 years of implementing the above framework in our Diocese, we decided to evaluate the community of practice framework to assess the benefit for professional development within Christian ministry. Several structural observations were identified as to how this framework adapted over the 2-year period from the original concept. Initially, the plan was for groupings of Anglican Ministers within four geographic locations to gather every 6–8 weeks as a community of practice. Each meeting began with a provided lunch and would run for a period of three hours (with a break) to enable everyone to have an opportunity to share. Everyone was also provided with a journal so that during the intervening period between meetings they could record situational context and begin their reflection. Observations and resultant changes to the community of practice structure were as follows:

1. Three hours was too long for the group to focus, and attention decreased after a refreshment break. Two hours was determined to be the maximum time frame for community of practice meetings.
2. On average, each individual sharing and reflection time took 20 min.
3. To enable everyone to have the opportunity to reflect on their practice, optimal group size was four–six participants. As a result, for those regions with larger numbers of ministers, everyone gathered for lunch and then self-divided into groups of up to six, with each group having a facilitator.
4. The provision of lunch was a good way to facilitate a relational culture, and each community of practice closed with the group praying for each other and what had been shared.
5. The frequency of meeting appeared to fit members' schedules, with some groups meeting for longer each time (especially if long distance travel was involved) to have a business meeting first, then lunch was followed by the community of practice.

Participants were also asked about their experience using a 'strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats' framework to provide qualitative responses for the benefit they found in reflective practice within a community practice. Seventeen responses were obtained out of 34 participants. Table 1 shows a summary of the responses received, focusing on the benefit of reflective practice for ministry practice, personal growth and developing relationships.

Key findings were that the major benefit for ministry practice was in the support and encouragement received, and the focus that this framework provided for meetings. However, irregular attendance was identified as both a weakness and a threat, along with interpersonal issues that reduced trust and a willingness to share in some groups. For personal growth, learning from collective wisdom and listening to others were the main strengths and opportunities. For those in different forms of ministry other than church-based, for example, chaplaincy, there was a feeling that not all issues discussed were relevant, and again low levels of trust were identified

Table 1 The benefit of reflective practice for ministry practice, personal growth and developing relationships

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<i>Comment on the benefit of the reflective practice process to my ministry practice</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused discussion • Questions provide insight • Input from others • Time to reflect on real practical scenarios • Sharing and reflecting • Support and encouragement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relies on continuity of attendance • Discussion can be too broad • Can avoid reflecting deeply—relies on what people are willing to share • Not all sharing is directly relevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationships • Useful to reflect on what I have done and to be given feedback and consider other approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group composition—not willing to share with some people present • Irregular attendance • Time-consuming—especially if need to travel • Requires opening oneself up to others
<i>Comment on the benefit of the reflective practice process to my personal growth</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow through listening to others and sharing my own challenges and joys • Space and stimulus for reflection • Relationship building • Collective wisdom • Learn from those more experienced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust levels of group not high enough to share everything • My needs cannot always be met • No benefit • Prior preparation can be lacking—reduced depth of engagement • Issues not relevant to all forms of ministry, e.g. if not parish based 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement and insight • Platform for growth • Discuss issues I have not experienced or might have ignored • Another mirror to access where I am 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I could choose not to participate honestly • Threatening if group too large • Feeling safe/unsafe—confidentiality • Time
<i>Comment on the benefit of the reflective practice process for developing relationships</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives focus to the life of the deanery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some can dictate the focus • Reflection has not translated into collaboration • I was not in my own deanery (assistant priest so with others) • Feeling restricted because of who else is present • Requires all present to engage and be on board with process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning from others—their challenges, and any training they have undertaken • Relationship building and depth of sharing • Smaller numbers help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No solutions/direction provided once you have shared • Personality clashes • Requires trust in confidence that takes time to build • Limited number of parishes involved

as a weakness/threat. It is worth noting that for a small number (two–three individuals), they perceived no benefit from the process mainly due to being involved in other groups or preferring a different method. One of the main goals of this process was the development of good relationships between ministers within each region. As noted already, there were some trust issues present, but in general communities of practice were seen to provide good focus for meetings and helped deepen relationships which over time will translate into better collaboration. Overall, reflective practice within a community of practice was beneficial and represents a culture shift in how we undertake professional development—which will take time to fully embed. This approach provides space for curiosity while also requiring courage as trust is formed and relationships deepened.

Table 2 shows a summary of the responses focused on the effectiveness of facilitation and group dynamics for reflective practice. The strengths of facilitation were in providing structure and intention in the group process that ensures value for time; this, however, does require strong leadership at times. Ensuring that good questions are asked was another key function, however, from personal experience, there was a tendency for the group to rely on the facilitator to ask the questions. Both Berger (2014) and Marquardt (2014) identify that knowing the right question is difficult and so often we protect ourselves by not asking. Furthermore, in our busy lives problem-solving can be seen as a quicker process and reflection a waste of time (Berger 2014, pp. 183–188; Marquardt 2014, pp. 63–82).

The reimagining of reflective practice as suggested in this chapter does represent a culture change, and one way to develop this practice is to expand our questioning vocabulary within the community of practice. Both Berger (2014) and Marquardt (2014) provide examples of good questions to use. Through this expansion, questioning becomes a natural process in place of the tendency to try and solve problems with suggestions or deflect the conversation by others sharing their experience of a similar situation (Table 3).

Associated with being more comfortable with questioning is also the need to be comfortable in both silence and uncertainty so that we live in the middle of the question (Berger 2014, pp. 187–214). Communities of practice provide such a space by gathering together away from the normal demands of ministry in a space where answers can be worked towards gradually and communally. As stated by Marquardt (2014), when utilised with a sincere desire to learn through empowering questions:

leaders create a social space where authentic accountability, commitment and community become a possibility [...] Empowering questions get people to think and allow them to discover their own answers, thus developing self-responsibility and transference of ownership for results. (p. 153)

The most surprising response in relation to facilitation was that for some, the facilitator was perceived as an ‘outsider’ and being separate from the community. Over the past 2 years, the facilitator (myself) has come from the diocesan

Table 2 The benefit of facilitation and group dynamics for reflective practice

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<i>Comment on the effectiveness of facilitation for the reflective practice process</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained facilitator gives confidence for the group to ask questions • Necessary to keep group on track and ask guiding questions • Provides structure and intention, focus • Anyone in the group could have a turn facilitating • Facilitation means good questions are asked and others are stopped from 'fixing' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could drive a particular thought or has favourite participants • Needs to be strong • Facilitator being perceived as from 'outside'—a peer or not • Leave questions up to the facilitator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw people out if they are not participating • Having an alternate if facilitator cannot make meeting • Learn questioning techniques • Key in making the time of value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for over talking • Who leads the group • Facilitator being separate from the community
<i>Comment on the effectiveness of group dynamics for the reflective practice process</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of group and in similar roles and contexts • Diversity of experience and ministry contexts • Six weeks about right • Size no more than four–six • Break larger groups into two 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of continuity in membership • Lack of diversity in membership, e.g. age and experience • Not frequent enough to build trust/too frequent. If someone is away, then it is a long time before you see them again • Time frame—1.5–2 h max 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about each other and draw on others' unique set of strengths • Ideal size three–four • Maybe should meet monthly for the best dynamic • Requires clear start, finish and commitment • Build greater openness and accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time issue for those in part-time ministry • Depends on the mix of people you are with • Personality clashes, lack of trust • When there is little time to explore someone's issue • Competing processes in some regions

theological college to run these groups, and even though I am well known by all the ministers attending, there is clearly the need to develop local facilitation, possibly by enabling community of practice members to take turns facilitating, or by identifying key individuals to train. Comments relating to group dynamics have already been discussed earlier.

Table 3 Examples of empowering questions for the reimagining of reflective practice as lifelong learning within communities of practice

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is that important...? • Why do you want to do that...? • Why are you trying to...? • Why do you think that? • Why did this work? • Why did this happen? • How would you describe the current reality? • How would you describe your desired result? • How does ... apply in practice? • How is God at work in this? • Where is God at work in this? • What do you think is realistic? • What is the current reality? • What resources are you looking for? • What kind of help do you need? • In failure, what went right? • What is possible now? • What might happen if...? • What possibilities come to mind? • What would you do if we could not fail? • What would happen if we do nothing? • What do you mean by...? • Can you describe your concerns more fully? • Can you say more about...? • Can that be done in any other way? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of support do you need to ensure success? • What is a viable alternative? • What are the advantages and disadvantages you see in this suggestion? • What are a few options for improvement? • What matters most? • What do you think about...? • What possibilities come to mind? • What might happen if you...? • What do you think you will lose if you give up...? • What do you feel God is saying to you? • What would happen if you did nothing at all? • What other options do you have? • What is stopping us? • What are you trying to accomplish? • What are the factors you considered in reaching this solution? • What are our strengths and weaknesses? • What can we learn from this? • What are we missing or forgetting? • What is a viable alternative? • What are a few options for improvement? • What did you learn in this process?
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4 Conclusion

The suggested approach represents a reimagining of the reflective practice developed in theological education, towards reflective practice-on-and-for-action as a sustainable habit of lifelong learning and professional development in Christian ministry. The community of practice framework provides the ideal context for embedding reflective practice, using empowering questions and facilitation to scaffold lifelong learning in ministry. In doing so, my hope is that Christian ministers will further develop professional competence in the face of the unique challenges and the growing complexity of Christian ministry in an ever-changing world.

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Chapter 13

Measured Reflection to Assist in Dealing with Conflict: Can an Educative Approach Improve Reflection and Cultivate a Healthier Classroom Community?



Debra Ayling

Abstract Teachers are continually assisting students to manage relationships and make healthy choices when experiencing conflict in the playground. An educative process employing reflection strategies to assist with conflict resolution was investigated to try to cultivate a healthy classroom community. ‘Friends In Conflict Sort It Together’ (FICSIT) was a program developed by the researcher as part of a Master’s action research project in 2014 in a Brisbane suburban Christian primary school. This program explored four key questions students need to explore and reflect on to improve outcomes in conflict. A rubric was created as a pre-test and post-test quantitative measurement tool. This assessment tool provided an indication of initial and final student understanding of the four key questions explored during the program relating to observation and perspective, empathy, insight, and decision-making skills in conflict. This rubric was adapted from the ‘5Rs Reflective Writing Scale’ by Bain et al. (2002) that was originally created to measure and encourage quality reflections during practicums for pre-service teachers. A ‘Teacher Resource Booklet’ and ‘Student Journal’ were designed to support active engagement and record each student’s reflective journey throughout the research program. An interactive program of one hour a week over five weeks was implemented by the researcher for a Year Two and Year Five class. This program provided practical opportunities for students to develop their understanding of the four key questions in a conflict resolution process through role play, group activities, scenario brainstorming, group and individual reflection. The results of the program suggest that there can be benefits in engaging transformative educational approaches to explore conflict scenarios to encourage a perceptive, reflective, responsive and proactive healthy classroom community.

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Keywords Reflection • Conflict resolution • Educative processes
Transformative learning

1 Introduction

Much time and energy are spent by teachers planning and implementing opportunities for students to engage in the amazing journey of learning. Conflict and the ability to deal with conflict can be a key factor in a student's capacity to cope, thrive and shine in the school setting. This action research study's purpose was to investigate the benefits of exploring transforming educative strategies to encourage reflection to (a) assist students to propose potential methods to resolve conflict; (b) provide a standard procedure for students and teachers to employ to assist in self-management strategies and (c) to cultivate positive outcomes for the class community.

This study was conducted in a Year Two and a Year Five class in a suburban Christian primary school in Brisbane in 2014. An educative program was developed and implemented by the researcher titled, 'Friends In Conflict Sort It Together' (FICSIT) and incorporated: A teacher's support document ('FICSIT: Teacher's resource for Year 2 and Year 5'); a student booklet ('FICSIT: Journal for Year 2 and Year 5'); and a rubric to measure levels of reflection on four questions for each year level. These rubrics were adapted from the '5Rs Reflective Writing Scale', based on a revised study by Bain et al. (2002). This adapted rubric provided a quantitative measurement of this educative process. Students received a 'FICSIT Student Journal' to support and record their responses and reflections throughout the educative activities and discussions over the five-week program. These students' responses provided qualitative, anecdotal data to assist the researcher in determining student appreciation and engagement of each phase of the program. Results by using a rubric to measure students' understanding, suggested that by including an educative process and scaffolding to reflect on actions; students may develop their appreciation of more positive options in conflict resolution that may benefit and cultivate a healthier classroom community.

1.1 Literature Review

Transformative learning is the goal of this study; to assist students to appreciate the benefit of reflection to gain positive outcomes in conflict situations. Transformative learning occurs when an individual reviews their own previous understanding, reflects and revises their perspective to drive future responses (Mezirow 1990). Reflection is a vital tool for transformative learning. Reflective practice, while considered a relatively new practice by some, can be traced back to Socrates as a source of knowledge (Rolfe 2002). Reflection is the process where a situation or

problem is considered; what has happened, is happening or is going to happen with deliberation and a response in possibly a different way for improved outcomes (Schön 1983). In an educational context, the purpose of reflection should be to examine the ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ of teaching practice, reviewing this evidence and considering future practice in this light (Kreber and Cranton 2000). There are some limitations involved with reflection, with a suggestion that it can be an ‘interpretivist paradigm’ (McIntosh 2010, p. 39), where there is often an agreed set of assumptions around experiences and the social order of things. However, when reflection and action research combine they can provide a phenomenological focus that can be a practical opportunity to improve organisational or individual functioning (McIntosh 2010).

In educational practice, Schön (1983) has identified reflection-in-action as related to reflection in the moment and reflection-on-action as reflection after the event. When teaching and learning, there should be continual cycles of reflection and action (Ghaye 2011) to improve practice. Critical reflection is the precursor to transformative learning (Mezirow 1990), which may lead to changes in personal understandings, and potentially to behaviour. Reflection as an assessment tool to reveal transformative learning was the key focus of this study.

Reflection as an assessment tool can provide quality formative feedback for teachers and assist in social justice situations. Dewey (1938) suggested that reflective practice used in education could change things for the better. Much of the evidence-based practice feedback that researchers were providing to schools was becoming less useful and it seemed that a viable alternative that was proposed was reflection-on-action (Schön 1987). In contrast, however, reflective practices can be seen as dangerous ‘navel-gazing’ exercises (Hayes 2007, p. 169) that would be better replaced with descriptive practice using careful observation. There can also be a danger that if reflection is necessary as an assessment requirement it may not reveal a real or true understanding but rather an expected response from students (McIntosh 2010). Reflective practice can be controversial in research terms and in the practical application of assessment of learning. Therefore, caution needs to be exercised when drawing definite conclusions from reflection as an assessment. Critical reflection incorporated in the learning environment, however, may assist with social justice and equity issues (Jacobs 2006), and could improve the outcomes for teachers, students and the future. This current study provided opportunities for students to explore conflict and social justice issues which can be experienced in class settings (Dyches and Boyd 2017), and use reflection as a key tool to explore these issues. Reflection through quantitative and qualitative assessment were used as feedback to indicate student understanding of conflict resolution processes and potential social injustice challenges.

Social injustice can be evidenced by conflict in a classroom. Social justice considers that ‘each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice’ (Rawls 2005, pp. 3–4) and social injustice is, therefore, the relegation of a person or group due to an imbalance of power or authority (Strier 2007). Conflict resolution provides opportunities for students to develop the skills to navigate positively when there are social justice issues or imbalances in the classroom. Reflection offers the

vehicle for this development of skills and the process of conflict resolution. Morrison (2002), comments for the Australian Institute of Criminology on Braithwaite's (1989), book 'Crime, Shame and Reintegration', summarising that: Reflection through restorative justice practices encourages participation in a procedure that 'addresses wrongdoing while offering respect to the parties involved, through consideration of the story each person tells of how they were affected by the harmful incident' (p. 3). Social justice suggests a goal and a process where there should be 'equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs [...] in which distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure' (Bell 2007, p. 1). Conflict resolution is where individuals or groups work together to find a solution to a challenge or issue that all parties can accept as an appropriate solution which can be evidence of transformed learning.

Transformed learning is reviewing what is currently believed and through reflection, reassessing this understanding to gain new insights (Mezirow 1995). These educative experiences need to provide opportunities to prepare 'individuals for problems that cannot be foreseen in advance [...] and help make] some order of this world' (Bloom and Krathwohl 1956, p. 40). While it is recognised by many that the individual is entitled to their own opinion and their judgements and values on ideas or activities, 'one major purpose of education is to broaden the foundation on which judgements are based' (Bloom and Krathwohl 1956, p. 186). Christian theism recognises the unique individuality of each person made in God's image (Sire 1997), and that when there are wrong attitudes or acts, a response of acknowledging the issue, repenting and continuing in a positive relationship with others and God is important. With this foundation recognised and ongoing, students and teachers can reflect and learn together, to enable engagement with transformative practices (Mezirow 1995) to help prepare for future and unknown contexts. When we teach with an attitude of responsibility and accountably to God for purpose and impact with teacher, student and subject-centred focus (Holtrop 1996), the student may appreciate the importance of their role in the learning process as being 'unique, made in the image of God, redeemable by Christ, creative, a little less than angels, but fallen, flawed and floundering' (Pearcey 2008, p. 95). The exploration of the importance and place of observations, perspective, empathy, insight and decision-making skills that were explored in this study were to cultivate positive reflections and a better understanding of themselves and relationships for present and future healthy contexts.

Transformative learning through reflection encourages students to review their preconceived ideas and renew these perspectives for positive outcomes in conflict and social justice issues. While there have been several studies that have examined the value and use of reflection in pre-service teaching and nursing practice (Bain et al. 2002; Smith 2011), there appears to be a paucity of research in educational contexts for primary student programs exploring reflective practices; particularly when related to conflict resolution and social justice. Reflection in primary contexts needs further research but should provide respectful opportunities to share, be heard and consider other students' perspectives (Moloney and Genua-Petrovic 2012).

Scaffolding, a process incorporating reflection for students to navigate conflict resolution was provided to assist students to appreciate theirs and others' emotional place in a dispute. Goleman (1995), when researching emotional intelligence, claims that children need to be taught how to deal with the emotions involved in conflict. When reflecting and exploring the value of empathy, spirituality and learning, it is necessary to accept that we need to find ways for students to explore their feelings and their 'sense of awe and wonder at phenomena' (Whitaker 1995, p. 188), and learn to share and celebrate these experiences with others. Developing trust clearly assists students when trying to encourage collaboration in conflict management (Condliffe 2008), and in authentic social justice opportunities. Action research can provide an opportunity to gain insights into the challenges students face in understanding conflict and promote reflective practices for improved relationships (Altrichter et al. 2005). This action research study was conducted to investigate the benefits of exploring educative strategies of observation and perspective, empathy, insight and decision-making skills to assist students to propose practical ways to resolve conflict with positive outcomes. Reviewing the outcomes of this study should provide a reflective teacher with much information to improve experiences for the individual and hopefully the classroom community.

Reflection can assist students to explore the challenges of conflict and appreciate their impacts on the class community. Conflict can be defined as a perceived threat to our goals and wants (Condliffe 2008) and appears almost necessary to provide an opportunity for constructive change (Lederach 2003; 2 Cor 13:11 [NIV]¹), and an opportunity for reflective practice. When working through conflict, problem solving skills can be developed to assist students to deal with peers more effectively and gain confidence to assist in their motivation to learn (Tileston 2010). By reflective journaling, students are encouraged to reveal their 'conceptual and perceptual changes' (Dunlap 2006, p. 7). This provides a way of identifying their challenges in an individual and private way (Howard 2003), so that they can explore possible solutions or vital questions that they may want to ask themselves. Journal writing encourages students to consider social justice and conflict resolution issues and consider the theory of these issues and transfer possible solutions into practice (Argyris and Schon 1974). This study explored educative activities to develop and transform an understanding of observation, perspective, empathy, insight and decision-making skills and how these skills can assist in conflict resolution situations in classroom contexts.

Transformative educative approaches can assist students to understand their own and other's perspectives. Transformative approaches using lower and higher-order thinking can assist students to engage in their learning. When considering planning for class interactions, the Ontario Ministry of Education (2003) adapted the ideas of Bloom and Krathwohl (1956), and identified four skills of problem-solving, analysing, synthesising and evaluating that teachers need to explore to develop higher-order thinking. By encouraging collaboration and group work (Tai 2015),

¹All scripture quotations are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version [NIV]* (2011).

young children can be assisted in writing and co-operative learning and it allows students to explain their understandings and appreciate each other's perspective (Yager et al. 1985). It is important to provide opportunities for students to explore their worldview, perspectives and understanding to enable them to appreciate the value of other perspectives (Whitaker 1995), and then take action. Transformative learning embraces collaborative and self-reflective practices (Mezirow 1995), to assist with social transformations that will consider others. This study incorporated lower and higher-order thinking strategies to encourage discovery of individual and group perspectives to assist when experiencing conflicts.

Questions can provide a useful context to explore an individual's thoughts and feelings and provide an opportunity to hear other's perspectives when in conflict. By asking the right questions, reflective conversations can not only look back but also can encourage a looking forward to future possibilities (McIntosh 2010). Bain et al. (2002) implemented the '5Rs Reflective Writing Scale' to encourage pre-service teachers to identify and enrich their reflection on teaching episodes using five key questions with three levels of engagement possible; ranging from a surface analysis to a deeper analysis (pp. 14–15). Using this framework, the pre-service teachers could measure the level of their reflection and through feedback from lecturers and reviewing the writing scale, could enact a positive or deeper response for future reflections. A study by the researcher (Ayling 2013) adapted and simplified the '5Rs Reflective Writing Scale' (Bain et al. 2002, pp. 14–15), and used four of the five key elements, measured in three levels to assess Year Three primary students' understanding of conflict scenarios and quantify the depth of their reflection in their writing. The current study used four questions as the key elements to assist student participants and provide scaffolding for the rubric. Student verbal and written reflections in their 'FICSIT Journals' were recorded in response to qualitative standardised open-ended questions for each phase of the program (Johnson and Christensen 2012). This action research study provided a number of perspectives as scenario options (Johnson and Christensen 2012) for analysis to provide an opportunity for students to appreciate their own and others' perceptions.

Conflict resolution programs need to support the individual and provide positive community outcomes. There have been a number of studies exploring conflict resolution programs in schools. A study in Western Australia (Morrison 2002) had five secondary schools with five groups of students participating in the Schools Conflict Resolution and Mediation (SCRAM) in 2001 over three years. Morrison (2002) advocates that schools using restorative justice programs support the individual while recognising that they do not accept the inappropriate behaviour of students. One of the instruments used for the SCRAM study was a qualitative pre-program and post-program questionnaire that indicated an increase in students' feelings of safety in the school over the year because of the program (Morrison 2002). This current study used qualitative student responses throughout the program recorded in the student 'FICSIT Journal' exploring individual responses and classroom contributions to develop an agreed process to negotiate conflicts and quantitative pre- and post-student responses. This study mainly focussed on incidental conflict in the classroom and playground rather than bullying and harassment

behaviours. The behaviour promotion program operating in the school where this study was completed was the 'My life Rulz' program (Bosch and Davis 2012a, b), which provided students with ten key concepts to consider and encourage positive experiences with other students and teachers. These rules or principles are to 'guide one's thinking and enhance one's ability to live well' (Bosch and Davis 2012a, p. i). While this program offered numerous options to deal with the concept of conflict, there did not appear to be a clear educative process to assist students in understanding and negotiating conflict for positive outcomes. This study provided educative processes to develop an appreciation of the four key questions that may assist students to process and gain a positive outcome in a conflict situation.

Transformative education should provide students with the confidence that they are gaining positive outcomes from their learning, reflections and responses. Good education is 'the process through which ideas can be empowered, insights gained, possibilities explored, understandings reached, and breakthroughs made' (Whitaker 1995, p. 205). By exploring conflict using reflection-on-action and transformative educative strategies, this study will consider whether students will be more prepared for positive social interaction to cultivate a healthier class community. By reviewing the literature and considering the practical challenges in the school environment for teachers and students, the following research question was explored: 'Measured reflection to assist in dealing with conflict: can an educative approach improve reflection and cultivate a healthier classroom community?'

2 Research Context, Methodology and Data Collection

2.1 The Context

Much valuable class learning time can be expended in dealing with conflict issues that have occurred in the playground. The 'Friends in Conflict Sort it Together' (FICSIT) program was designed as an action research project to try and address this challenge. A mixed method research study was implemented using a quantitative rubric (Figs. 1 and 2) to measure a students' initial and subsequent understanding of conflict scenarios, and qualitative standardized open-ended questions for each phase of the program requiring students' verbal and written reflections in their 'FICSIT Journals' (Johnson and Christensen 2012). Both methods were selected to provide a more comprehensive overall picture of student engagement with the program, rather than only a quantitative or qualitative response.

Year Two and Year Five FICSIT programs were conducted in an independent Christian primary school in south Brisbane. The program of one hour per week for seven weeks per year level, including two weeks for assessment, was developed and conducted by the researcher with adaptations from a previous study (Ayling 2013) conducted for Year Three students. A teacher's support document ('FICSIT: Teacher's Resource for Year 2 and Year 5'), and a student's booklet ('FICSIT:

Year 2 Reflective Communication Project: Friends In Conflict Sort It Together (FICSIT) Rubric
Adapted from Bain, Ballantyne, Mills, and Lester (2002, pp. 14-15) 5Rs Reflective Writing Scale.

Name: _____

Pre-program task Post-program task

Date: _____ Date: _____

Reporting/What happened?

- Level 1: A simple description/drawing of the event with limited/disconnected detail.
- Level 2: Increased detail of the event with key elements included.
- Level 3: An understanding of the situation is gained due to the clear description of the situation.

Responding/How do you feel?

- Level 1: A feeling or attitude to the event is written/ drawn as a simple response.
- Level 2: A feeling or attitude to the event is explained in relation to the incident.
- Level 3: More than one perspective is considered with a description of the problem from these perspectives.

Relating-Reasoning/ Why do you think this may have happened?

- Level 1: One possibility is used to explain the issue that may be plausible.
- Level 2: Two or more possibilities are considered.
- Level 3: Cause of issue is well considered, reflecting on historical possibilities as well as immediate possibilities.

Reconstructing/What to do now?

- Level 1: One simple strategy/plan is suggested for future situations.
- Level 2: More than one feasible alternative suggested.
- Level 3: As for Level 2 and suggestions that are well suited to gain positive results.

Fig. 1 Year 2 FICSIT rubric (Note Adapted from ‘Reflecting on Practice: Student Teacher’s perspectives’, by Bain et al. 2002, pp. 14–15. Copyright, 2002 by Post Pressed, Flaxton, Queensland. Used with permission from the publisher)

Journal for Year 2 and Year 5’) for each year level was produced to support the program. Each FICSIT Teacher resource included a seven-week program including an initial, practice and final conflict scenario assessment activity completed in the first and final weeks of the program; a customised rubric (Figs. 1 and 2) for each year level (adapted from Bain et al. 2002, ‘5Rs Reflective Writing Scale’, pp. 14–15), to quantitatively measure the responses of the students’ initial and final understanding of conflict scenarios; a five week (Weeks 2–6) educative program unpacking the four key elements or questions with one review week included, and a comprehensive appendix with the resources required to conduct the program. Each

Year 5 Reflective Communication Project: Friends In Conflict Sort It Out (FICSIT) Rubric

Adapted from Bain, Ballantyne, Mills, and Lester (2002, pp. 14-15) 5Rs Reflective Writing Scale.

Name: _____

Pre-program task Post-program task

Date: _____ Date: _____

Reporting/What happened?

- Level 1: A simple description of the event with limited/disconnected detail.
- Level 2: Increased detail of the event with key elements included.
- Level 3: An understanding of the situation is gained due to the clear description of the situation.

Responding/How do you feel?

- Level 1: A feeling or attitude to the event is written as a simple response.
- Level 2: A feeling or attitude to the event is explained in relation to the incident.
- Level 3: More than one perspective is considered with a description of the problem from these perspectives.

Relating-Reasoning/ Why do you think this may have happened?

- Level 1: One possibility is used to explain the issue that may be plausible.
- Level 2: Two or more possibilities are considered.
- Level 3: Cause of issue is well considered, reflecting on historical possibilities as well as immediate possibilities.

Reconstructing/What to do now?

- Level 1: One simple strategy/plan is suggested for future situations.
- Level 2: More than one feasible alternative suggested.
- Level 3: As for Level 2 and suggestions that recognize personal action/responsibility for the situation to gain positive results.

Fig. 2 Year 5 FICSIT rubric (Note Adapted from ‘Reflecting on Practice: Student Teacher’s perspectives’, by Bain et al. 2002, pp. 14–15. Copyright, 2002 by Post Pressed, Flaxton, Queensland. Used with permission from the publisher)

‘Student FICSIT Journal’ enabled students to record and summarise their reflections of class activities, discussions and practice conflict scenarios for each phase, thus providing the qualitative responses for this study.

The qualitative measurement for this study was the adapted rubric for both year levels. The original ‘5Rs Reflective Writing Scale’ by Bain et al. (2002), designed for pre-service teachers, comprised of five categories, ‘Reporting’, ‘Responding’, ‘Relating’, ‘Reasoning’ and ‘Reconstructing’ (pp. 14–15), with a choice of three possible levels in each category to measure reflection. For this study, the rubric was

trialed in a 2013 study (Ayling 2013) and as a result of the participants' responses, was adapted to suit younger (Year Two) and older (Year Five) participants. There were four categories titled as questions rather than phrases to assist student understanding, with three levels possible in each category. The four questions were entitled 'What happened?', focussing on the place of observation and perspective; 'How do you feel?', to appreciate the importance of empathy; 'Why do you think this happened?', realising the impact of insight and 'What to do now?', understanding the importance of developing decision-making skills for positive resolutions.

The educative program explored a variety of lower-order to higher-order activities including group work, problem-solving, role play and brainstorming to encourage creative thinking skills, maximise student engagement and enable individuals to contribute and have their unique perspectives and opinions heard and appreciated (Condliffe 2008; Lederach 2003; Reed and Bergemann 2004). Each week had a specific focus question to assist with exploring the key elements in conflict resolution. Following the completion of the program, the researcher assessed the student responses to the pre- and post-scenarios and entered this information on the adapted rubrics (Figs. 1 and 2), and then this information was entered into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis, and finally collected the 'FICSIT Student Journals' to include as anecdotal evidence of student responses, reflection and engagement throughout the program.

Permission was gained from the Head of School to conduct this study and the parents or carers and students provided permission or consent for participation in this study. This was an action research study in the researcher's school. Therefore, a 'convenience and purposive' non-random sampling technique (Johnson and Christensen 2012, p. 230) was chosen where students from the selected classes volunteered to participate and the researcher specifically chose the Year Two and Year Five student population to be the researched sample. Students were given the option to participate or leave the program at any time. A class of 23 (61% males and 39% females) students participated in the Year Two study and 20 students in the Year Five study participated with 15 (47% males and 53% females) of these Year Five students given permission to have their results published for this study. Pseudonyms were used for students' names to prevent the identification of any students.

2.2 Data Collection

To measure and evaluate understanding, students were given an initial and final conflict scenario assessment task, a one-group pre-test/post-test design (Johnson and Christensen 2012) for each level. Students responded by writing responses to four questions about these conflict scenarios. There was no prompting or assistance with these responses. A suitably adapted rubric (Figs. 1 and 2) was created for each year level as a quantitative measure of the depth of student response to these

conflict scenario assessment tasks. Following the completion of the program, the researcher assessed the pre- and post-program individual responses to the conflict scenarios and entered these results onto the adapted rubrics, and then entered this information into an Excel spreadsheet. Following the pre-test, each student was given a 'FICSIT Student Journal' to support and record their responses to the educative activities, including group discussions, brainstorming, role play and reflections over the five-week program. The student responses to the open-ended questions and activities in the booklets provided qualitative, anecdotal data to assist the researcher in determining student appreciation and engagement of each phase of the program.

3 Results and Key Findings

The following is an outline of findings of the program including some student qualitative anecdotes and a summary of the pre- and post-assessment information from the results tables to gain an appreciation and quantitatively measured comparison of students' understandings.

A full visual representation of pre- and post-responses attained from the student rubrics in each category for Year Two and Year Five are included in a bar graph format below (Figs. 3 and 4). Pre- and post-results for each student were displayed beside each other in the table to identify each individual student's response at the beginning and end of the program. The four questions were colour-coded within the bar graph to indicate results in each category, yet providing a total for all four categories as well. By examining the pre- and post-responses for each question, these tables provide an opportunity to compare students within their year level and see any questions that may have been challenging as well as evidence for development of understanding in students' results.

3.1 *Year Two*

Week one: 'What happened?' examined a conflict situation and explored the importance of honest observation and how perspective can influence that observation. This area had the least improvement in post-assessment results indicating that students may have been challenged to appreciate the connection of perspective in conflict. Week two: 'How do you feel?' highlighted the importance of identifying how we feel and of realising each person may feel differently in a conflict. Students engaged with 'funny emotional sentences' and 'emotional identifying' activities. One student identified the importance of knowing 'How we feel?' in a conflict by saying 'because you get to know if somebody is hurt' (Student's exact words: 'bekos you get to no if sambode is hart'). Eleven students (47%) increased by at least one level in the post-assessment responses for this category.

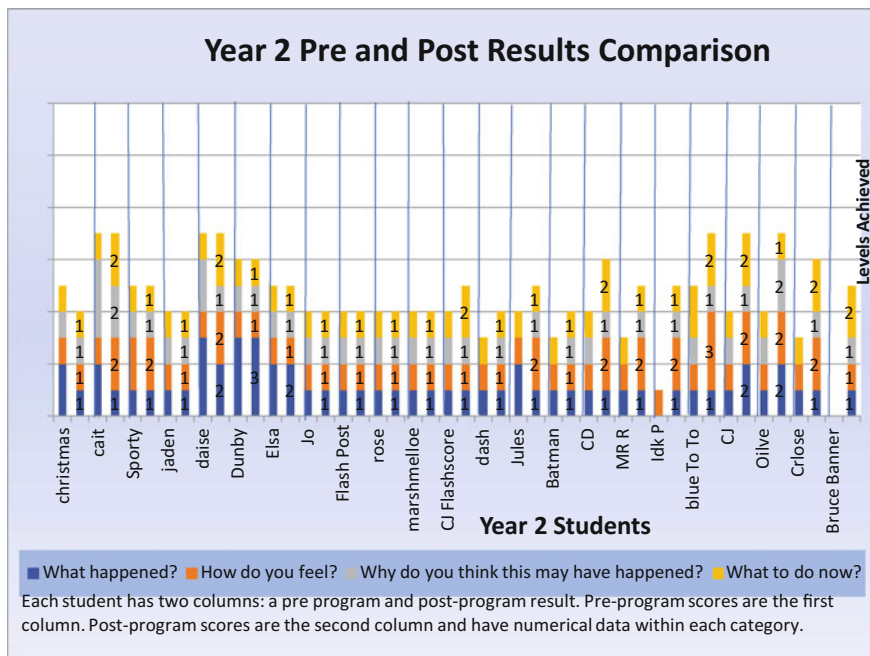


Fig. 3 Year 2 FICSIT pre- and post-results comparison. *Note* Due to the large amount of data displayed for the Year Two class, extra blue line breaks were included to identify each student’s result

Week three: ‘Why do you think this may have happened?’ explored brainstorming and role play activities to appreciate possible hidden and obvious reasons for conflict, with some groups identifying causes and appearing to understand this concept better than other groups. Many students gave specific examples regarding their conflict scenario rather than a conceptual understanding of the question. This expectation appeared challenging for this year level. However, eight students (34%) improved their post-response levels in this category.

Week four: ‘What to do now?’ seemed to be the crucial area for this year level to focus and develop. Students became excited when viewing a media resource, showing two students working through a conflict using cue cards with suggested resolution-action statements. Students suggested that similar cue cards could be created using additional student suggestions to encourage student ownership and use of this resource for future conflicts. These cards were placed on the classroom door to provide visual options for the final phase of our program and to assist students so that they could refer to these cards if they experienced conflict in the playground.

Following the completion of the study, there have been a number of occasions where the cue cards have been used to direct and assist student choices in conflict situations. IDK, who did not respond to any of the questions posed in the initial

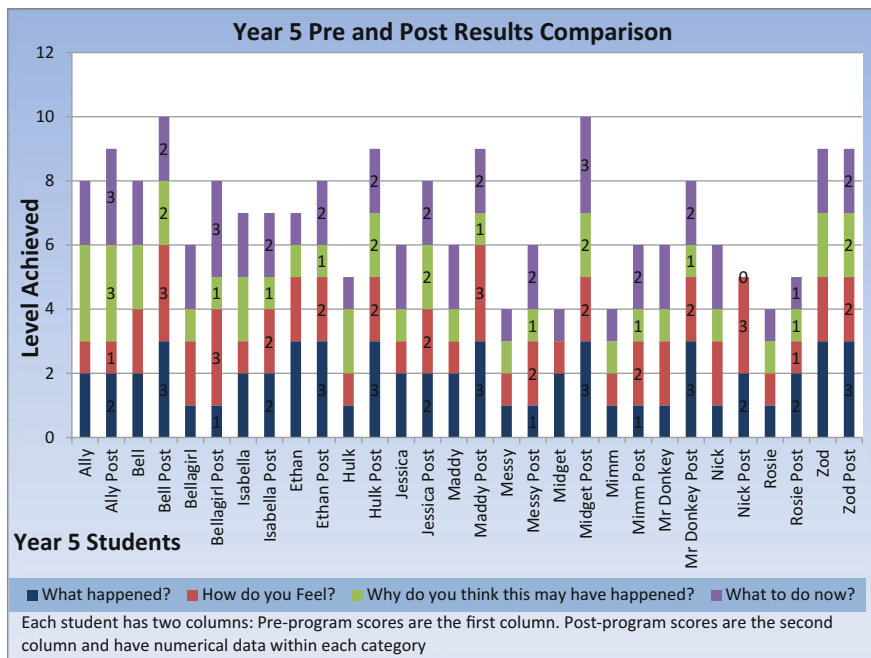


Fig. 4 Year 5 FICSIT pre- and post-results comparison

week, completed two sections of the student booklet in the second week, and in the final week, responded in the ‘FICSIT Journal’ that the reason we need to understand what to do in a conflict is ‘so everyone can [feel] better’ (student’s exact words). This seemed to indicate an improved appreciation, empathy and engagement with the program by this student. Also, in the final week, one student, Jo, had an actual conflict situation that occurred in the playground prior to our session. This provided an opportunity when discussing the ‘What to do now?’ phase, for her to suggest some appropriate choices and explanations to assist in resolving the conflict. This was invaluable for the whole class to hear her journey and the way she worked through her options to appreciate the possibilities of implementing the FICSIT program strategies for positive outcomes.

A customised table was designed to identify student movement in their post-program responses in comparison to their pre-program responses (Table 1). This table identified the post-program responses and indicated through numerical and colour codes the movement in comparison to the pre-program results. Light colours being scores either below or the same as their original achievement, through to darker shades for more improvement on their original results.

When analysing the numerical data for Year Two students, the mode score across both pre- and post-results was Level One (1–3 were the possibilities). The pre-program mean score was 4.3 out of 12 and the post-program result was 5.3, indicating a rise of one level overall. One student improved by five levels out of a

Table 1 Year 2 FICSIT analysis of post-responses to indicate movement in relation to pre-program results

Names	What happened?	How do you feel?	Why do you think this may have happened?	What to do now?	Total Movement	Colour Key	Post-program
	Post-program	Post-program	Post-program	Post-program			
christmas	1	1	1	1	-1		
cait	1	2	2	2	0		
Sporty	1	2	1	1	0		
jaden	1	1	1	1	0		Reduced 1
daise	2	2	1	2	0		
Dunby	3	1	1	1	0		Same Result
Elsa	2	1	1	1	0		
Jo	1	1	1	1	0		Increased 1
Flash	1	1	1	1	0		
rose	1	1	1	1	0		Increased 2
marshmelloe	1	1	1	1	0		
CJ Flashscore	1	1	1	2	1		Increased 3
dash	1	1	1	1	1		
Jules	1	2	1	1	1		Increased 4
Batman	1	1	1	1	1		
CD	1	2	1	2	2		Increased 5
MR R	1	2	1	1	2		
blue To To	1	3	1	2	2		
CJ	2	2	1	2	3		
Olive	2	2	2	1	3		
Crlose	1	2	1	2	3		
Idk	1	2	1	1	4		
Bruce Banner	1	1	1	2	5		

Year 2 FICSIT analysis

possible 12, another by four, two students by three; four students raised their overall score by two, four students raised their score by one, nine students had the same score, one student had a reduced overall score of one, and one student had a reduced overall score of two. The range for total scores in the pre-test were 0–7 indicating that some students may not have known how to respond or didn’t respond appropriately and in the post-test scores were 4–7, showing that all students achieved at least a Level One in all categories in the post-results. A visual comparison of the mean and range data for Year Two was created (Fig. 5). Eleven students improved in their score for appreciating ‘How do you feel?’, hopefully indicating a greater sense of the place of empathy for characters within a test scenario. Two students, who improved their overall scores by a noteworthy amount, initially appeared not to understand the expectations of the pre-task, with one student writing an imaginary account and the other not responding to a number of categories. Accordingly, once the program was completed, both students responded to questions in an appropriate way and improved their levels quite significantly.

3.2 Year Five

A review of the four focus weeks can be summarised as follows: Week one: ‘What happened?’ explored perspective and truth in conflict. This was a strong area for most students in the post-results with all students except three, scoring at least a

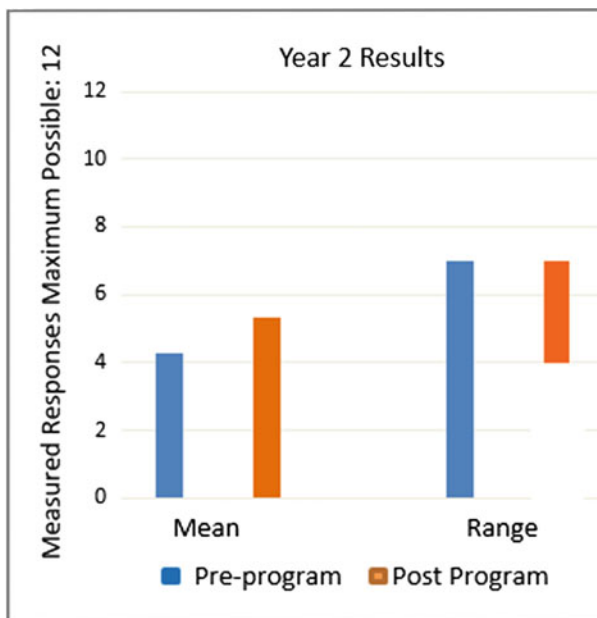


Fig. 5 Year 2 mean and range data for pre- and post-program responses

Level Two or Three in the post-response and seven students (46%) improved their levels, indicating a clear appreciation for the detail necessary when reporting an incident at this year level.

Week Two: ‘How do you feel?’ saw students exploring role play opportunities to appreciate the emotions behind conflict situations. This was also a strong area for most students, with only two students scoring a Level One and nine students (60%) increasing their levels in the post-response.

In Week Three: ‘Why do you think this happened?’ time restrictions for this lesson meant that many students struggled when trying to identify the hidden causes of conflict. Not all groups were able to present their visual scenario productions in the lesson and this may explain why the post-program results for this element indicated only a limited number of students improving in this category. One student, The Hulk, emphasised the importance of examining why the conflict happened, stating ‘because maybe it was not really the person’s fault’ and Zod suggested that ‘there might be something hidden that you do not know.’ Both showed insight in their responses. However, this was clearly the phase where most students were challenged to appreciate the significance of exploring the cause of a conflict. Eight students achieved a Level One with only two students (13%) improving on their pre-response score and two students decreased their levels in comparison to the pre-assessment response.

Week Four: ‘What to do now?’ saw two students, Ethan and Zod, designing their reflective response to the last question ‘What to do now?’ by creating an acronym

Table 2 Year 5 FICSIT analysis of post-responses to indicate movement in relation to pre-program results

Isabella	2	2	1	2	-1	Reduced 2
Nick	2	3	0	0	-1	Reduced 1
Zod	3	2	2	2	0	Same Result
Ally	2	1	3	3	1	Increased 1
Ethan	3	2	1	2	1	Increased 2
Rosie	2	1	1	1	1	Increased 3
Bell	3	3	2	2	2	Increased 4
Bellagirl	1	3	1	3	2	Increased 5
Jessica	2	2	2	2	2	Increased 6
Messy	1	2	1	2	2	
Mimm	1	2	1	2	2	
Mr Donkey	3	2	1	2	2	
Maddy	3	3	1	2	3	
Hulk	3	2	2	2	4	
Midget	3	2	2	3	6	

Year 5 FICSIT analysis

BBS (Be Brave and Solve), which the whole class voted as the statement they wanted to identify within their last phase. This was voted by the class as important to be included on a class poster to provide a visual summary and prompt for the program in the future.

The customised Table 2 for Year Five identified student movement in their pre- and post-program.

When analysing the Year Five data, the mode score for the pre-program results were Level One and the post-program results were Level Two, indicating an overall growth in student understanding in their responses. The pre-program mean score was 6 out of 12 and the post-program results were 7.8, indicating a rise of nearly two levels on average for post-assessment responses. The ranges for the total scores in the pre-test were 4–9 and in the post-test scores were 4–10. A visual comparison of the mean and range data for Year Five was created (Fig. 6). When examining the questions where students appeared to have bettered their scores from the pre- to the post-program assessment, there was a noteworthy improvement in all categories except for the ‘Why do you think this happened?’ section, with only two students making an improvement in this category. Due to time constraints in this week of the program, this section may not have been unpacked enough for students to appreciate the significance of this phase. The overall results for this year level were one student improved by six measured levels; another by four; another by three; six students raised their score by two; two students raised their score by one; three students had the same score and only one student reduced their overall score by one. This last student was tired on the day of the test and seemed unable to complete the final task as evidenced by leaving the last two sections blank.

An overall comparison of student movement across both year levels from the pre-results to the post-results of the study was visually created in a column graph (Fig. 7).

There was a 52% increase for Year Two students and an 80% increase in Year Five students comparing pre- and post-test results and an overall increase of 63%

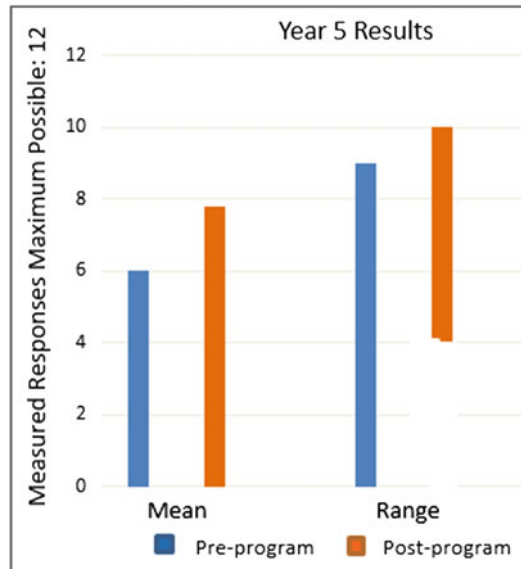


Fig. 6 Year 5 mean and range for pre- and post-responses

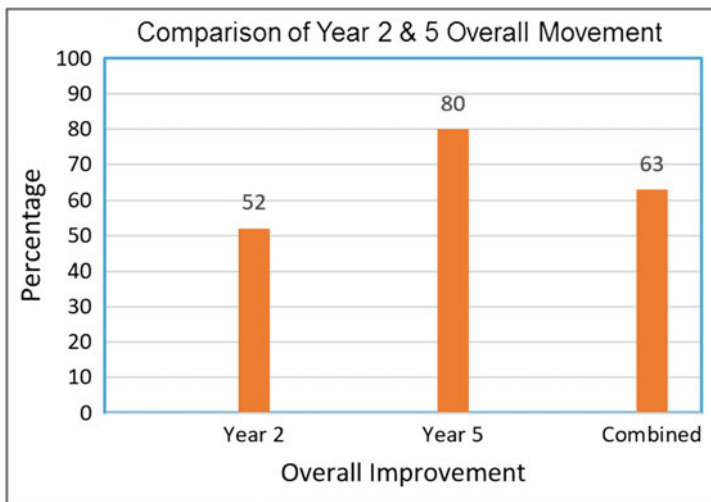


Fig. 7 Comparison of Year 2 and 5 overall movement

for the combined results. Anecdotal responses throughout the program also revealed further engagement of a more practical and natural response to stimulus material and investigations. The results of this study through the analysis of pre- and post-assessment data for the FICSIT programs using a reflective rubric revealed that

there was a measured improvement for a number of students in their responses to the four questions focused on resolving conflict. These findings corroborated with the researcher's 2013 study (Ayling 2013), suggesting that an educative process can provide a measured improvement in student understanding of the conflict resolution process and provide opportunities to cultivate a more positive class community.

4 Recommendations

The Year Two and Year Five programs appear to have achieved substantial gains when comparing the student responses to conflict scenarios prior to and after the implementation of the FICSIT program. Further analysis and modification of expectations in the student booklets may provide improved opportunities for quality reflection for future programs. An examination by other educationalists experienced in teaching these year levels may assist in refining the rubric requirements. Altrichter et al. (2005) suggested that when students complete questionnaires that are not anonymous, they may respond to please their teacher. Utilising an impartial teacher to present the program and assess students' responses may ameliorate this concern. Increased collaboration with fellow teachers or using 'investigator triangulation' (Johnson and Christensen 2012, p. 272) in planning and analysis may provide a 'richer application of the action research process' (Altrichter et al. 2005, p. 61). Introducing one conflict resolution program throughout the school and providing a standard procedure for conflict issues could enhance the level understanding between staff and students and reinforce this learning process with other peers throughout the school.

The assessment rubrics may have assisted the researcher to measure student understanding of the four phases to resolve conflict but when encouraging reflective practice, there needs to be an opportunity for a unique engagement for each individual with the concepts being explored (McIntosh 2010). When using one-group pre-test/post-test as a research design, the final post-test results may also be influenced by maturity, absence from the teaching program, attitudes and well-being on the day of testing (Johnson and Christensen 2012). Accordingly, caution is necessary when analysing and interpreting the responses to the assessment tasks. In addition, the quantitative results need to be considered in the light of the qualitative student reflective comments throughout the 'FICSIT Student Journals' and conversations during the program.

The 'Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians', highlights the importance of providing opportunities for all young Australians to become 'confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens' (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs Melbourne 2008, pp. 8–9). Further research exploring creative and engaging educative activities to assist students to positively negotiate conflict and other social justice issues could be considered as an extension to this study. The exploration and development of these skills could have a significant impact by students becoming

better able to communicate with their peers and the broader community. In addition, further research on developing cross-cultural conflict resolution skills via reflection for action could provide quality social justice outcomes for a healthier community.

5 Conclusion

The purpose of this action research study was to investigate the benefits of exploring transforming educative strategies to encourage reflection to assist students to propose potential methods to resolve conflict; provide a standard procedure for students and teachers to employ to assist in self-management strategies and to cultivate positive outcomes for the class community. The program for Year Two and Year Five students provided opportunities for reflective practices and empowering of ideas including (1) student insights in the creation of class posters based on the four key questions of this study and cue cards for future conflict resolution; (2) the exploration of relationship possibilities, with student responses and reflections to conflict dilemmas and (3) an understanding of the requirements of communication considering the importance of observation and perspective, empathy, insight and decision-making skills to promote positive conflict resolution solutions. This study provided a measured scale for data collection (Figs. 1 and 2) and the inclusion of some reflection-on-and-for-action student anecdotes, to identify the level of reflection and understanding of the concepts involved in resolving conflict scenario tasks for the two-year levels.

When comparing pre- and post-program results for both year levels for this study using an adapted rubric (Figs. 1 and 2) of the '5Rs Reflective Writing Scale' (Bain et al. 2002), there were 3 students whose scores declined, 11 students whose scores remained the same and 24 students, or 63%, who improved their score. This indicated a noteworthy enhancement of student understanding of the four key elements of this conflict resolution process. In addition, the study provided a mutual, structured class strategy for considering dilemmas; the four key questions: 'What happened?', 'How do you feel?', 'Why do you think this happened?' and 'What to do now?', along with cue cards to provide concrete resources for students to negotiate options; and a class-generated poster to motivate and guide future actions. Both year levels' overall scores for each phase indicated that they have some challenges related to identifying the hidden causes of conflict, which suggests that this may be too high an expectation for these year levels.

The original provocation for this study was to try to reduce the amount of classroom time a teacher spends assisting students to resolve conflict and social justice issues. Bull (1989) commented that 'perhaps the best way to produce reflective learners is to have reflective teachers' (p. 69). The time spent on these conflict issues, particularly in the researcher's Year Two class was reduced. However, teacher reflection-for-action reveals, how much more significant it is to provide validity to these conflicts and provide learning, reflecting and growing opportunities for students through this process of reconciliation. Conflict, when

seen in the light of an opportunity for social learning, provides students with opportunities to gain a greater appreciation and understanding of others' perspectives. Much insight was gained by the action research process, particularly using a quantitative rubric to measure reflection to identify how students deal with conflict prior to an educative program and following this process. By exploring the causes, effects and positive options available through the FICSIT programs, an overall improvement in student measured levels of reflection was revealed. It is hoped that the process of encouraging reflection-on-and-for-action will assist students to use reflection-in-action during conflicts to improve future social justice outcomes and school relationships, and thus develop healthier classroom communities.

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Chapter 14

Narrative Possibilities and Potential for Understanding a Twenty-First Century Christian Spiritual Journey



K. Rhonda Ransford and Ann Crawford

Abstract Spirituality has become a significant term for describing the twenty-first century individual's religious experience. Although institutional Christianity has provided a context for religious tradition and spiritual life through beliefs, rituals, doctrines and dogma, it has also been over-cautious in exploring the contours of the self. Research literature indicates a declining attendance within Christian religious institutions as well as evidence that they have not served the developing and holistic concept of self as well as it could. This chapter proposes an emphasis towards whole-hearted listening and learning from a spiritual narrative context of 'story'; recognising and encouraging the spiritual drive and journey of another, along with a call for a spiritual education context rather than a religious context.

Keywords Education · Narrative · Spirituality · Christianity · Religion

1 Introduction

Over the last few decades, there has been a growing trend in people exiting the Church. A major motivation for this trend appears to be that of discovering and engaging in a faith that honours and acknowledges one's self, as well as nurturing an authentic relationship with God (Butler-Bass 2012; Jamieson 2001; Kania 2009; McCrindle 2013, 2014; Ringma 2003; Tacey 2003; Winell 1993). The challenge for a postmodern culture and Christianity is to provide a safe holding space for the individual narrative, a space that not only facilitates a spiritual journey but also validates the self and provides an interconnection with who we are, among the myriad of life experiences. Ringma (2003) states that part of the challenge and difficulty with Christianity and its institutional focus is that '[...] we have built churches that are either so "holy" that they are world-denying or so pragmatic that they have no transforming power' (p. 9). These statements tend to illustrate how

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197

the structure and framework of Christian religion are perceived. It appears that a gap between what it means to be holy and what it means to be whole has been identified (Cannon 1988, p. 15).

This is supported by Jamieson's (2001) research, a four-year, 162 interview study, that looked at why people leave the Church. Based in New Zealand, his research discovered that people 'were not leaving "mainline" or "traditional" churches but were, in fact, leaving evangelical, Pentecostal and charismatic (EPC) churches' and that these churches appeared ill-prepared to minister to people experiencing a faith journey transition (p. 20). As such, this chapter proposes exploring narrative understandings of the faith journey, to assist in filling the gap, when one's faith journey appears to extend beyond the Christian paradigm of religion.

The meaning of narrative utilised for this chapter comes from the narrative therapy understanding of the human person rather than a narrative theology. Narrative theology bases its 'premise [...] that all knowledge is narratively formed' with a focus on the Church as community, whereas narrative therapy has its 'emphasis on the individual' (Siscoe 2011, p. 60). This chapter emphasises the significance of narrative in that it 'is the believer's religious experience that presents the context and the way in which the faith story is shared' (Coyle 2010, p. 192). It argues that a person's narrative has significance, value and requires validation within and alongside Christian religious contexts.

To address this identified gap, this study will look at the individual spiritual journey from a narrative perspective. This chapter addresses four areas. First, a brief history of the self from a societal, cultural and religious perspective. Second, the influences of postmodernism and psychology in relation to the understanding of the self. Third, the influence of Christian religious institution doctrine and dogma which can have a potential negative impact on self and spiritual development (Benner 2012, pp. 176–179; Kania 2009, p. 5; Rowe 2009, p. xiv; Tacey 2003, p. 3; Winell 1993). Finally, how might the narrative process, as understood by narrative therapy serve to facilitate a dialogue between the twenty-first century individual and the traditions and dogmas of Church. The learning of how to participate in this dialogue could be vital knowledge for both churches and individuals struggling to serve God in spirit and in truth.

1.1 A History of 'the Self' in Society, Culture and Religion

However, in order to become skillful in this conversation, knowledge gained from such disciplines as psychology and theology can bring fresh understandings to our search for God. An examination of the history of the self in society, culture and religion is the starting point for this knowledge acquisition.

Baumeister's study (1987) on the self asserts that up until the Romantic era any quest towards 'human fulfillment on earth' had a strictly salvific emphasis (p. 163). Calvinism and Puritanism directed one's self-awareness towards a consciousness of

gaining heaven and avoiding hell (Baumeister 1987). This era, marked by the advancement of economic, industrial and private endeavours, weakened a previously class-regulated society and prompted people to seek meaning in life (Baumeister 1987). Such existential awareness grew in acceptability through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ashmore and Jussim (1997) view ‘William James’s *The Principles of Psychology* (1890)’, as a strategic marker of ‘the introduction of self as both a major determinant of human thought, feeling, and behaviour and as susceptible to understanding by empirical research procedures’ (p. 3). Up until this, ‘the self only had to concern itself with one’s position in society’, whatever that society represented at the time (Baumeister 1987, p. 163). This awareness of self-gained attention though, from 1974–1993, with approximately ‘31,550 abstracts dealing with *self*’ identified by Ashmore and Jussim (1997, p. 5).

Religious tradition has generally viewed the self as problematic. As Boyce (2014) has observed, the doctrine of sin ‘has always been central to the Western experience of what it means to be human’ (p. 3). Fox (1981) supports this claim stating that Western spirituality has ‘[...] put the body down and called this repression holy [...] it has taught sin-consciousness rather than people’s capacity for the divine; it has more often fostered curses than blessing’ (p. 3). Although not denying that one may indeed experience salvation and live in the knowledge of relationship and love, traditional Christian religion often imposes obligations to reach some sort of perfection in the here and now.

Masked within this attempt and struggle to live a ‘godly’ life, is a self that is also denied the freedom to live one’s humanity. This is never more evident than in the area of emotions. Elliot (2008) alludes to two points which culture and the Church emphasis when it comes to ‘attitudes and actions’ and the fact that ‘[...] we have made our relationship with God more about fulfilling our duty than expressing our passion [...] we have become indoctrinated in the belief that emotions are unreliable, dangerous, and bad’ (pp. 16–17). The result is that ‘(M)any of us live distorted lives as we repress the very emotions that would give us life’ (Elliot 2008, p. 18). An example worth noting is that of anger. Anger became classified as sin by the Roman Catholic Church in the early Middle Ages (Lester 2003, p. 2). The general assumption regarding the emotion of anger is that ‘[...] good Christians [do not] express anger and that the best Christians [do not] even feel it’ (Lester 2003, p. 1). This teaching claims that any expression of anger becomes a reminder of our depravity and should not have any ‘place in the life of a mature Christian [...]’ (Lester 2003, p. 3). Tacey (2003), however, warns that ‘any repression of self leads to neurosis and emptiness rather than spiritual illumination’ (p. 83).

2 Postmodern Influence and a History of Psychotherapy

Postmodernity has influenced society and the individual in society. It no longer accepts previous privileges of authority, truth and justice, nor past interpretations of history to guide it (Wilkins and Sanford 2009). Realising that ways of knowing are

not necessarily as rational and scientific as was once thought, has provoked new ways in which we understand ourselves and our world (Dunn 1998; Giddens 1991; Webber 2006). In addition, Christian frameworks of fundamentalism no longer remain credible in a postmodern paradigm. As well, central tenets of belief and faith from previous worldviews are providing unsatisfactory answers to the questions of the self. Fundamentalism called for a separation from culture and its dangers and a conformity to specified, authoritarian constraints (Kania 2009). Religious traditions which incorporate an 'us versus them' mentality simply lack credible answers in the present-day culture (Butler-Bass 2012, p. 149).

A look at the history of psychology offers further understanding of the need for self-narrative as well as why therapy has also become an important venue for stories. McLeod (2006) stresses the need to understand the history of psychology on two levels: The scientific and the cultural. The scientific level, labelled as the technological side of psychology, occurred through the advancement of 'psychiatric and psychological knowledge', resulting in the formulating of new methods of treatment (McLeod 2006, p. 1). This simply meant applying scientific and 'validated theories and procedures to problems of emotional life and behaviour' (McLeod 2006, p. 1). But just as significant is the cultural level which looks 'backward to some very old cultural traditions' (McLeod 2006). He continues by stating that

all cultures possess ritualized ways of enabling members to deal with group and interpersonal tensions, feelings of anger and loss, questions of purpose and meaning. These rituals evolve and change over generations and are part of the 'taken-for-granted' fabric of everyday life. Looked at in this light, psychotherapy can be viewed as a culturally sanctioned form of healing that reflects the values and needs of the modern industrial world. (McLeod 2006, pp. 1–2)

However, what makes therapy attractive to the postmodern seeker is that it 'does not demand total allegiance or commitment, nor does it prescribe an absolute system of religious beliefs and rituals' (Saliba 1996, p. 117). Although in the early times of psychology it was not considered worthwhile or convenient to invite spirituality into the therapy room, this is also now changing. As therapists are more and more accepting of their client's spirituality, those who are disengaging from Christianity's religion and subcultures are finding therapy as an acceptable alternative (West 2000, p. 1).

2.1 Concerns of Christianity

It has been noted that distinctions between the doctrine and dogmas of Christianity, and the Biblical message as presented in scripture, has also created a division of self in finding holiness and wholeness (Benner 2012; Kania 2009; Rowe 2009; Tacey 2003; Winell 1993). Benner (2012) states that instead of 'a communal function of support, love and understanding' there can exist 'tribal functioning' which is more

concerned with who, what and how the Church, and indeed individuals within the Church, perform (p. 178). Kania (2009) states his concern with the institutional framework that is present within Christian religious groups today: ‘Institutional religions that insist on prescribed dogma, ritual, and practices for membership and spiritual wholeness, violate the integrity of the person’ (p. 54). He states further that

religion has become the primary social force in our culture for dealing with the human psychological condition. Religion, however, is not a pathway to the divine. It is primarily a way of addressing human psychological needs. It operates on a horizontal (material) level. Spirituality, the vertical level, not religion, is the pathway to the divine. (Kania 2009, p. 54)

Winell (1993) states that ‘The problem of religious damage has not received much attention, perhaps because Christianity is so much a part of our culture and real criticism is taboo’ (p. 1). This helps to explain the above author’s concerns as they work with people on both a psychological and spiritual level. Instead of allowing natural and important psychological processes to occur in areas of healing, forgiveness, grief, divorce, and even anger, the Christian subculture often presumes that one-line Biblical quotes and confessions to be what is needed. A continual maintaining of ‘happy-clappy’ and ‘praise the Lord’ clichés are what are prescribed and encouraged in some situations. The Christian who is unable to live in continual happiness can easily become labelled as a problem, holding on to sinful attitudes and giving way to the devil. The need for psychological wholeness, long buried under false attitudes about holiness, has become conscious. However, the advent of the psychological appreciation for narrative opens a new dimension for authentic Christianity.

3 Making Sense of ‘Self’ Through Narrative

Jesus was the master story teller. After two thousand years, and the progression of a myriad of different cultures and worldviews, the Gospels of Jesus Christ are still as relevant today as they were when they were written—largely because Jesus took the complexities of human life and relationships and brought understanding through the stories that we all can relate to. Therefore, the postmodern preoccupation with narrative is certainly not new but, just as in Jesus’ time, it is providing a fitting vehicle to help us unravel the complexities of being a Christian ‘self’ in the twenty-first century. Although the valuing of story is again beginning to infiltrate into many areas of life—just consider the popularity of the ‘self-stories’ shared through social media and the insatiable thirst millennials have for reality TV and film!—it is in the telling and the being listened to where lives are changed. Narrative therapy is a well-researched approach to psychotherapy with evidence of life-changing outcomes through the telling and hearing of stories (Vromans and Schweitzer 2011; Weatherhead and Jones 2008, pp. 38–41; Young and Cooper 2008, pp. 67–83). As the spiritual journey being examined here fundamentally is a story, some of the theory, practice and processes of narrative therapy will be shown

to be a fitting framework towards a better understanding of the journey of the spiritual self.

Narrative therapy, a therapy first devised by the Australian, Michael White and the New Zealander, David Epston (1990) is a 'strength-based' rather than a 'problem-focused' approach to therapy and has been widely accepted by therapists worldwide over the last couple of decades. Part of its appeal, as we have already alluded to in the previous mention of Jesus' story-telling, is the fact that narrative therapy, through story-telling and story-listening, helps to make sense of the complexities of the past and, therefore, bring hope for the future (Denborough 2014). Narrative therapy considers that we all have a story, a story that not only includes suffering and pain but also victories and joy. This therapy approach emphasises that the failures and problems that overtake us do not define us and that we all have exceptional times when our successes brought empowerment and joy (Morgan 2000). By identifying the problem story and understanding the influences that shaped it, the way is then open for the problem story to be recognised, honoured and then retold from a new perspective, using the exceptional story to underpin the opportunity for a more desirable story to become a reality (White 2007).

This focus on bringing the complexities of the 'self' into a new perspective for renewed understanding holds promise for this investigation into the Christian's journey through the Church system. The study that underpins this chapter found that, although the Church is purported to be the place where the soul can find comfort and on-going spiritual growth, in many cases, this is not the reality. Although the rituals, sacraments and doctrines of the Church were designed to guide the pilgrim through life to a deeper understanding of self and God and the other, when these rituals, sacraments and doctrines become separated from the stories of God and His interaction with humanity, and become 'prescribed dogma, ritual, and practices for membership and spiritual wholeness' that are imposed upon the Church goer rather than integrated into the on-going growth and maturity of the Christian, they are no longer life-giving but stifling (Kania 2009, p. 54). Narrative therapy recognises that each person's story is influenced by environment, community values, cultural norms and traditions and, for Christians, the Church represents a very strong influence on the stories of the individuals who make up the congregations (White and Epston 1990, p. viii).

As previously explored in this chapter, although the worldview of the Church could be described as 'tribal functioning', more concerned with who, what and how the Church, and individuals within the Church, perform (Benner 2012, p. 178), the fact is that postmodernism sees the freedom, dignity, respect and autonomy as the right of the individual self. However, postmodern 'freedom to be whatever I want' also has its pitfalls. What this chapter is, therefore, suggesting a dialogue between the tribal functioning Church and the postmodern fluidity that allows the story of the self to be heard within the safe boundaries of a Biblical Church and psychological truth. Dialogue, the sharing of stories, is fundamental to the human person. In narrative therapy terms, a dialogue between the Biblical Church and the individual, spiritual self would proceed by exploring both stories, identifying where

environment, culture and tradition had created a dysfunctional story that caused pain and suffering and raising awareness of the stories that empowered and brought freedom and joy. By embracing the pain and suffering through forgiveness and love and celebrating the freedom and joy, new perspectives of the individual, the Church and our loving Father God could be gained and a new story, solidly built on Biblical and psychological truth would be free to emerge. Cook and Alexander (2008) state that ‘Narrative ideas can aid the deconstruction of ideas in circulation within the wider community about self, religion, faith and spirituality, as well as ideas in the Christian sub-culture’ (p. xi).

4 A Spiritual Education Context Versus a Religious Context

The limits of this chapter prevent an intensive study of a call towards a spiritual education. Instead, it seeks to open the door and provide an understanding that spirituality is more than just a New Age concept, which in general, the Christian religious community tend to avoid.

This chapter views spirituality as a quest for one’s identity, meaning and life purpose. This activity, knowingly or unknowingly, embodies seeking and connecting with the Divine and is also entwined with those activities which assist in discovering and living a fully integrated life. It is a spirituality which empowers acceptance and expression of all aspects of ones’ humanity and the freedom to become all that one is uniquely created to be. Spirituality ‘has to do with becoming a person in the fullest sense [...]’ (Macquarrie 1972 cited in Principe 2000, p. 53). This includes, as Villegas (2011) states, integrating ‘the insights into the human condition of disciplines such as sociology, psychology, gender studies and literature’ (p. 28).

Accumulative research in ‘cultural anthropology and the history of religious ideas’ also bears testimony to the idea that ‘spirituality is, and always has been, more central to human experience than religion’ (O’Murchú 1997, p. vii). ‘According to Hegel, the notions of self-love and self-consciousness combine to form the identity of God’ (Taylor 1984, p. 38). ‘Descartes built on the foundation laid by Teresa of Avila and John Calvin that the self is the starting place for spiritual understanding’ (Butler Bass 2012, p. 174).

This search for self has brought spirituality into practically all areas of public life and study. It can be seen in all forms of business, art, anthropology, psychology, social sciences and politics, as well as various dimensions and aspects of life, including developing into a discipline of study in its own right (Schneiders 1989, p. 676; Vanhoozer 2005, p. 767, attributed to Petersen 1981). This branching out of spirituality into dimensions of life and study has thus created new approaches to studying spirituality. Webster (2003) understands:

spirituality to be the dimension of the individual that addresses the fundamental questions of existence. It is not religious in the sense that students are to be bound to doctrinal dogma, nor is it to be found in formal philosophical courses such as in the 'History of Ideas'. Spirituality is something that involves the personal, passionate responses of individuals to the issues of their existence. (p. 11)

According to Rolheiser (2014), everyone has a spirituality and 'it is either a life-giving one or a destructive one' (p. 6). How do each of us shape and form the 'fire', (the desire) which is within us all? This is what Rolheiser (2014) states amounts to one's spirituality:

What shapes our actions is our spirituality. The habits and disciplines we use to shape our desire form the basis for a spirituality, regardless of whether these have an explicit religious dimension to them or even whether they are consciously expressed at all. Spirituality is about what we do with desire. (p. 7)

Tacey (2003), in his work, 'The Spirituality Revolution', calls himself a 'spiritual educator versus a religious educator', as he sees spirituality as 'the primary ground of the religious' (p. 76). Tacey's experience with teaching spirituality to university students revealed that young people did not disregard religion, nor were they attempting 'to destroy it'. They are searching for an "interiority" which refers to a depth or resonance in all parts of reality' (p. 76). 'My role is to educate the spirit so that it begins to recognise itself' (Tacey 2003, p. 76). O'Murchú (1997), Ringma (2003), and Tacey (2003) all agree on the need to reclaim spirituality as the priority in lieu of the weaknesses of restrictive conceptualising within traditional religions. Spirituality invites a holistic quest for the individual to experience one's full essence, being and spirit. Tacey (2003) concludes that caution and discussion need to occur for both religion and spirituality to learn from each other; and that 'the spirit is a universal aspect of human character, and it needs to be developed and educated in every educational setting' (p. 93). Narrative invites and incorporates one's story in the midst of discovering and exploring that spirituality.

5 Conclusion

The contribution this chapter offers is an emphasis on the power and capacity for transformative healing to occur, through narrative story, along with a spiritual educational soul-care paradigm. Alternatively, literature has shown that religiously contextualising of the self within doctrinal and traditional ways can prevent and limit self-growth and development. We each are culture-carriers and bring with us our own rituals and practices of living. Stories are how we communicate and every day our narrative enlarges as well as encompasses the narratives stories of others and the world around us. Christian counselling has shown that by simply allowing and hearing an individual's narrative with intention and deep listening, healing and wholeness can occur. As well, a renewed understanding of who we are as spiritual beings invites a broader context of integrating this holiness and wholeness.

In our contemporary culture, a credible sense of self, the ability to embrace one's own life narrative are important for a healthy identity. Telling of one's story offers an effective construction of the self and their emerging world. As our stories are heard and acknowledged so is the individual. Such a resilient self may then 'retreat from the rivalry of dogmatic beliefs and uncover a universal spiritual wisdom that might transform us from within' (Tacey 2003, p. 5).

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Part III
Inclusive Education and Hospitality:
Educational Perspectives on Voice, Agency
and Inclusion

Chapter 15

You are Welcome: Hospitality Encounters in Teaching



Kaye Chalwell

Abstract Teaching involves a number of hospitable encounters where teachers welcome and create learning spaces for their students. Derrida differentiates between two types of hospitality that he calls the *law* of hospitality and the *laws* of hospitality. The law of hospitality is a limitless and unconditional hospitality where all are welcome without regard for who they are or where they have come from. It is an aspirational, yet impossible type of hospitality because hosts always hold the power in hospitality relationships. The laws of hospitality reflect the way that we actually do hospitality. They are conditional and limited and provide both guests and hosts with roles and obligations. Hosts welcome their guests to cross the threshold and provide the guidance for how the guest should behave. Hospitality can also be understood through a Christian lens by considering how God offers hospitality to his people. In addition, hospitality has been used as a metaphor for understanding the pedagogical decisions that teachers make as they welcome their students. Drawing on two qualitative research studies on Christian teachers' experience of being hosts and guests in the classroom, this chapter examines the nature of Christian hospitality in light of Derrida's theories, Biblical hospitality and classroom hospitality. Four themes emerge from these studies, namely, (i) hospitality takes risk and effort, (ii) hospitality is different in different teaching contexts, (iii) there is a relationship between hospitality and the hospitality God offers to his people and (iv) hospitality matters because it provides space for deep learning and offers an approach to teacher reflection.

Keywords Hospitality • Pedagogy • Teaching • Relationship • Christian education
Derrida

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1 Introduction

Teaching involves a number of encounters where teachers welcome and create space for their students. These acts of hospitality are part of a teacher's way of relating to their students to help them engage with their learning. Classroom hospitality is complex, and teachers experience being both hosts and guests in the schools and classrooms where they teach. For Christian teachers, hospitality is connected to their belief in a hospitable God who welcomes them as host into the kingdom of God, but who also came as a vulnerable guest when he became flesh and made his dwelling among us (John 1:14 [NIV]¹). Hospitality is an important aspect of pedagogy because of its relational quality that can motivate and engage students in their learning. It is also an important spiritual endeavour as it is an active expression of a Christian's relationship with God, and provides a way for teachers to implicitly or explicitly express their faith in their classrooms.

This chapter explores the nature of Christian hospitality in light of Derrida's (2000, 2005), (see also, Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000) theory of hospitality, Biblical hospitality and classroom hospitality. The discussion in this chapter is derived from interviews with two groups of teachers: Special Religious Education (SRE) teachers who are volunteer teachers teaching students in secular public schools about the tenets and beliefs of their faith; and professional Christian teachers in paid employment who are working in a variety of contexts. It draws together commonalities and differences in their experiences and provides insight into the role that hospitality plays in teaching and learning, and the possibilities that adopting a paradigm of hospitality in the classroom presents for Christian teachers.

2 Literature Review

Shortt (2014) and others (see, for example, Badley and Hollabaugh 2012) suggest that metaphors shape the way we live and teach. Hospitality as a metaphor for teaching can be found in educational literature as diverse as tertiary education, Christian education, language education and theological education (Soh 2016). Parker Palmer and Henri Nouwen are often referenced² as seminal thinkers in hospitality and education (for example, Smith and Carvill 2000; Soh 2016). Palmer (1998) describes educational hospitality as the place where teachers treat their students with compassion and care, inviting them into a place where they can both listen and be listened to. Nouwen (1975) describes hospitality in terms of creating safe physical, emotional and spiritual spaces for students and teachers where strangers become friends. The language of hospitality is also often implicit in educational literature. For example, in their discussion of engagement and

¹All scripture verses are from the Holy Bible, New International Version [NIV] (2011).

²For example, Derrida (2000, 2005), Derrida and Dufourmantelle (2000), Palmer (1998).

motivation, Furrer et al. (2014) describe the components of high-quality relationships in a classroom, concluding that ‘the classroom is welcoming [...] filled with laughter [...] and mutual satisfaction and respect’ (p. 104). This review considers three aspects of hospitality: Derridean, Biblical and classroom, and provides a foundation for understanding the hospitality Christian teachers describe and experience as they teach.

2.1 *Derridean Hospitality*

Derrida’s (2000, 2005), (see also, Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000) exploration of hospitality provides a helpful paradigm for exploring Christian teachers’ pedagogy in light of their experiences and understanding of being both guests and hosts in their classrooms. Derrida (in Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000) describe the different relationships that may exist between guests and hosts, and defines hospitality as inviting and welcoming the stranger who is ‘treated as a friend or ally, as opposed to the stranger treated as an enemy’ (p. 4). He uses the construct of personal hospitality (Caputo 1997; Derrida 2000, 2005; Derrida and Dufourmantelle 2000), to explore welcoming strangers across individual and national borders and examines the difference between the unconditional and limitless, or conditional and limited welcome they are given.

Derrida differentiates between the law of hospitality and the laws of hospitality. The *law* of hospitality is a limitless and unconditional hospitality where ‘anyone can come at any time and can come in without needing a key for the door’ (Derrida 2000, p. 14). That is, there is no pressure for the guest to behave in a particular way (Telfer 2000). The law of hospitality is an ideal to aspire to. It is an openness towards the guest that means regardless of what s/he brings to the relationship, no conditions of occupation are given (Derrida and Dufourmantelle 2000; Patton 2004). There is a ‘welcome without reserve and without calculation, an exposure without limit to whoever arrives’ (Derrida 2005, p. 6). Derrida (2005) acknowledges that such an absolute hospitality is an impossible ideal because hospitality is always conditional. However, it is something that he believes should guide and direct all expressions of conditional hospitality.

Derrida (2000, 2005), Derrida and Dufourmantelle (2000) contrasts the law of hospitality with *laws* of hospitality. Reflecting the way we actually do hospitality, these laws are conditional and limited. Conditional hospitality and its incumbent laws of hospitality provide both the host and guest/s who are crossing the threshold with specific roles, rights and obligations (Hung 2013b). The host is the ‘one who dwells safely at home’ (Reynolds 2010, p. 179) and makes space for the guest/s. In offering hospitality, the host chooses who to welcome, how long they can stay and what they can do while they are guests (Westmoreland 2008). Even when the host invites a guest to make him/herself at home:

[...] this is a self-limiting invitation. “Make yourself at home” means: please feel at home, act as if you were at home, but, remember, that is not true, this is not your home but mine, and you are expected to respect my property. When I say “welcome” to the other, “Come across my threshold,” I am not surrendering my property or my identity. (Caputo 1997, p. 111)

Hospitality covers a wide range of micro- and macro- relationships. As such, hospitality can be understood in relation to crossing a number of thresholds such as those between ‘private and public, inside and outside, individual and collective, personal and political, emotional and rational, generous and economic’ (Still 2010, p. 4). Derrida’s (2000, 2005), Derrida and Dufourmantelle (2000), work has influenced the philosophical and political debate regarding the movement of asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants (Still 2010), and has been used for understanding issues as diverse as academic mobility across institutions (Kenway and Fahey 2009), nurses doing home visits (Oresland et al. 2008), Indian hospitality (George 2009) and education (Hung 2013b).

Asymmetrical power relationships are inherent in hospitality (Derrida 2000). Whenever a guest is invited to cross the threshold, go through the door and inside; a subtle, unequal power relationship is implied (Hung 2013b), resulting in conditional hospitality. This is because the existence of the threshold and door ‘means that someone has the key to them and consequently controls the conditions of hospitality’ (Derrida 2000, p. 14). To be hospitable, ‘one must have the power to host’ (Kenway and Fahey 2009, p. 555) and the guest is reminded of his/her powerlessness because of the host’s mastery and sovereignty over him/her. Regardless of how generous and welcoming the host is, the conditional ‘welcoming gesture effectively says: “You are permitted to come and I shall thereby grant you some of my space and time, for I *rightfully belong here*”’ (Langmann 2011, p. 339) and you don’t. The host retains his/her power and sovereignty by saying ‘you are welcome if you [...]’ and because s/he has the right of exclusion or at very least actions of welcome, or lack of welcome. As such the host can only be the host because s/he is the master of the ‘space and goods he [sic] offers or opens to the other’ (Derrida 2000, p. 14).

2.2 *Biblical Hospitality*

A Biblical understanding of hospitality adds to the Derridean view of hospitality by providing a way of seeing a Christian teacher’s pedagogy. The Biblical account of God’s hospitality starts with the first words of Genesis where God ‘spreads out the table of creation before us for our delight [...] and we are welcomed to enjoy its multiple gifts and blessings’ (Hagstrom 2013, p. 3). Throughout the Biblical narrative, God is a hospitable God who defends the cause of the orphan, the widow and the alien (Ps 146:7-9 [NIV]), and prepares an eternal table and rooms for His guests (Ps 23:5; John 14:2-3 [NIV]). In the epistles, Christians are instructed to practice hospitality without grumbling to strangers (Rom 12:13; 1 Pet 4:9; Heb 13:2 [NIV]).

Paradoxically, God becomes a guest when He graciously sends His Son to earth as a guest and stranger who is born in a stable because there is no room in the inn. God's sacrificial offer of His hospitality is made to all people through Jesus' death and resurrection (Anderson 2011). The Biblical account of God's hospitality concludes with the new heaven and new earth prophesied in Revelation when God as host will eternally dwell with His people.

Christian hospitality is an act of obedience and gratitude to this God, 'a grateful Christian's response to God's gift of a home' (Smith and Carvill 2000, p. 91). As guests of God's grace and as His image bearers, our hospitality to others should imitate God's welcome to us. As Bretherton (2006) puts it in his book, 'Hospitality as Holiness':

[...] to warrant hospitality the stranger neither has to be deserving in some way, nor do they have to earn the right to it, nor must they possess some innate capacity that renders them worthy of acceptance among the human community [...] To be a recipient of Christian hospitality one does not have to do or be anything; one's status as a guest is received as a freely given gift from Christ. (p. 149)

Although we are undeserving of God's hospitality (for example, Eph 2:1-3) and alienated from Him by our sin (Rom 5:9-11), we are still welcome by God. Flowing from this welcome is God's commandment to love our neighbours as we love ourselves. This kind of hospitality moves beyond the home to other arenas. For the Christian teacher, it provides impetus and guidance for pedagogical hospitality regardless of the educational context in which they teach.

2.3 *Classroom Hospitality*

Discussions about hospitality often conjure up images of a welcoming home filled with food-laden tables, laughter and conversation. This is evident in Call's (2011) definition of hospitality as:

[...] the physical manifestation of welcome – the welcoming spirit is demonstrated through specific actions such as inviting someone into one's home, sharing resources or space, setting out a meal, and other activities meant to facilitate comfort and care. (p. 64)

However, classroom hospitality is more than 'creating a 'nice place' where 'nice people' can be nice to each other' (Andrews 2015, p. 36), and takes effort and risk (Anderson 2011). Classroom hospitality includes creating a welcoming space that cares for the social, physical and emotional needs of students. Palmer (1998), in his book 'The Courage to Teach', describes six paradoxes that guide the creation of such a welcoming learning space. First, learning spaces should be bounded by a topic, text or question; but also open to where learning may take the students. Second, they should be hospitable by offering a safe, open and trustworthy space; and by being charged with possibilities. Third, they should invite and welcome both the voice of the individual and the questions and affirmations of the group. Fourth, they should be places that honour the 'big' stories of the discipline being taught;

and allow for the ‘small’ stories of the students. Fifth, they should support a student’s need to reflect and to have his/her own opinions, while also providing a community where dialogue can take place. Finally, they should welcome both silence and speech. Each of these paradoxes fleshes out the nature of conditional hospitality in a classroom because they reveal how a teacher/host must work to intentionally create a welcoming space.

This kind of classroom hospitality centres on the teacher’s role in setting up a welcoming classroom environment. Reflecting on her teaching in a theological college, Wimberly (2004, 2007) describes Christian pedagogy in terms of hospitable kinship and gift exchange. Hospitable kinship takes place where, rather than developing a series of one-to-one relationships with each student, the teacher works to create a community that includes and involves everyone in the class (similar to Palmer’s [1998] paradox of welcoming the voice of the individual and the group). Wimberly (2004, 2007) believes that this is important because everyone is made in the image of God and therefore has an important contribution to make. Integral to hospitable kinship is the notion of gift exchange where students are encouraged to ‘struggle reciprocally with other challenging ideas, thoughts, learning, and stories that surface’ (Wimberly 2007, p. 318) in the classroom (akin to Palmer’s [1998] open space that is charged with possibilities). It is therefore unsurprising that like Palmer (1998) and Andrews (2015), Wimberly (2004) emphasizes the importance of creating ‘physical, attitudinal or emotional, and conceptual environments’ (p. 5) for learning to take place.

While welcoming a friend or expected guest is ‘not a particularly demanding task’ (Ruitenbergh 2005, p. 19), offering unconditional hospitality to the stranger or unexpected guest is more challenging. Derrida (in Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000) illustrate the depth of such hospitality by describing it as an act where ‘I open up my home [...] I give place to them, and I let them come [...] without asking of them either reciprocity or even their names’ (p. 25). In this more challenging space, teachers work towards providing a welcoming and open space for all students regardless of who they are, what they have done, or what they believe. For Hung (2013a), this means treating every new student as a friend rather than an enemy that the teacher willingly welcomes, asking ‘do we take her [sic] as an intruder or a guest? Do we treat her with hostility or hospitality, indifference or care?’ (p. 441); ultimately answering ‘yes’ and welcoming the new student in.

Inherent in the teacher’s welcome is a power imbalance between the teacher–host and the student–guest. Classroom hospitality emphasizes the need for teachers to reduce this imbalance by giving up some control of the learning space, while not completely handing it over. Ruitenbergh (2011) reminds teachers that classrooms are not ‘*their* spaces, spaces they own or should consider under their control, but rather spaces into which they have been received and whose purpose is to give place to students’ (p. 34). Offering this kind of hospitality allows students to work within the expectation of ‘home’, to impact what happens in the classroom and ‘to tackle strange, new topics with open-minded generosity’ (Gallagher 2007, p. 137).

For Christian teachers, providing a welcoming and open space for all students regardless of who they are, what they have done, or what they believe; eloquently

speaks of God's love and welcome to all. This unconditional hospitality enables Christian teachers to enact God's hospitable actions towards the outsider/stranger, foreshadowing the heavenly feast of Revelation (Smith and Carvill 2000). Severe (2013) identifies the 'offer of protection, removal of barriers, and self-sacrifice' as the foundation of pedagogical hospitality for Christian teachers, and suggests that 'hospitality is a primary avenue the gospel is lived within the teaching profession' (pp. 3, 7). Ruitenberg's (2011) reminder that the demands of hospitality are only aspirational as they are impossible to reach, and that teachers must merely 'do the best one can' (p. 33), is an important reminder for the Christian teacher of God's grace and forgiveness for teacher and student alike. It is also a valuable reminder that Christian teachers will never be perfect hosts, but can be hosts who are willing, thoughtful and intentional in their welcome.

3 Research Design, Methodology and Data Collection

My developing understanding of pedagogical hospitality originates from my doctoral work on the pedagogy of Christian Special Religious Education (SRE) teachers in two states of Australia—New South Wales and Victoria. SRE is faith-based single tradition religious education that focuses on the distinctive religious tenets and beliefs of the particular religion being taught. It is taught within the school timetable by visiting volunteer teachers who are adherents of the religion they are teaching. Participation in SRE is voluntary, and parents can enrol or remove their children from classes at any time during the school year. Since completing my thesis in 2014, I have broadened my exploration of Christian pedagogy beyond the SRE classroom to include Christians teaching in secular and Christian educational institutions. There are two components of this study: First, research derived from my original doctoral work (Study One), and second, a study into the relevance of the hospitality paradigm for other Christian education contexts (Study Two).

Study One is derived from my doctoral research that explored the research question: How do SRE teachers' beliefs and experiences influence their pedagogy? As a result of this doctoral research, I developed a theory of SRE Pedagogy called the SRE Pedagogy Lotus to illustrate the four emergent layers that are embedded in SRE pedagogy: (i) guest and host (hospitality), (ii) vulnerability and authority, (iii) truth and hope, and (iv) relational teaching. Study One reports on the layer of the lotus that pertains to guest and host experiences of SRE teachers. Study Two is a qualitative study that explores the research question: Do Christian teachers in educational settings other than SRE have similar experiences of being guests and hosts? The aim of this chapter is to draw together the data from these two studies to further understand the relationship between hospitality and Christian pedagogy.

In Study One, a qualitative paradigm and the use of constructivist grounded theory methodology based on the work of Charmaz (2009) is used. Constructivist grounded theory provides a set of principles and practices that consist of systematic,

heuristic and flexible guidelines for the collection and analysis of data. It emphasizes the emergence of meaning which is co-constructed in an interplay between the researcher, participants and data. Rather than testing and confirming a hypothesis, constructivist grounded theory uses a process of inductive data collection from the 'ground up' to construct theory. Constructivist grounded theory is appropriate for this study because it is suited to exploring issues where limited research has been conducted (McCann and Clark 2003), as is the case in SRE pedagogy. Furthermore, it provides a platform for listening to the voices of the participants and acknowledging their expertise to understand what is taking place. In contrast, Study Two takes a theoretically informed approach by working with the theory of hospitality in SRE teaching that emerged from my doctoral research to explore its relevance (if any) to Christian teachers working in different school contexts. Although Study Two starts from this theoretical position, it is important to not allow theory to constrain nor direct the key outcomes from the study. In other words, the experiences of the teachers in Study Two must direct the results, not the desire to confirm a hospitality theory of Christian teachers.

3.1 *Participants*

Data for Study One was collected between 2010 and 2012 from 24 SRE teachers. The participants were a heterogeneous group of people whose commonality was their Christian faith and their experience as primary school (Kindergarten to Year 6) SRE teachers. They have taught SRE between one and 43 years, with an average of nine years; have a range of relevant education including four with education qualifications, seven with theological qualifications, five with both education and theological qualifications, and seven teachers with no relevant qualifications; teach between one and 12 classes per week in cities, regional and rural towns; and teach classes of between four and 70 students. Participants in Study One were initially recruited by narrowly focused sampling, and four friends who were SRE teachers were interviewed. It was important to move beyond collecting data from people I knew to ensure that the data was not skewed to like-minded SRE teachers and to increase the heterogeneity of the population by striving for maximum variation in the sample (Maxwell 2005). Information about the study was given to potential participants by SRE providers in Victoria and New South Wales. Potential participants were included in the study if they provided variation in age, experience, training or religious denominational affiliation. As such, sampling became purposive and participants were identified who represented a range of experience and expertise in SRE teaching.

In contrast, data was collected for Study Two in 2017 using convenience sampling from six Christian teachers who were known to me. They were chosen because of their diverse educational experiences. Two of the participants teach in government schools, one in a Christian school, two in denominational schools and one teaches in a Christian training college for Indigenous adults. They teach in a

number of different contexts: Angela³ teaches Mathematics to Year 7–12 students in a government high school; Celeste teaches Christian studies to Year 7–12 students in an Anglican school; Alison is a learning support teacher for K-Year 6 students in a public school; Samuel teaches English to Year 9–12 students in a Christian school; Katherine is a Year 3–4 teacher in an Anglican school and Louise teaches literacy to adults.

3.2 *Data Collection*

Data for Study One was collected using participant interviews⁴ and reflective journals. Study Two also used semi-structured interviews where questions were focused around the hospitality paradigm. Semi-structured interviews were chosen for both studies because they ‘provide the best opportunity to find out what someone else thinks or feels’ (Bouma and Ling 2004, p. 177). In contrast to a casual conversation, questions in a semi-structured interview aim to go beneath the surface to examine the events, opinions and feelings of the participants (Charmaz 2006). A question guide was developed to help focus the content of the interviews and maintain some continuity between interviews. It was not intended that all the questions would be used; rather they provided a starting point for the interviews (Charmaz 2006) because it was important to allow the conversations to follow their own route (Birks and Mills 2011, p. 75). Semi-structured interviews give participants the opportunity to share their stories, experiences and understanding of their experience of being a Christian teacher. In Study One, 16 of the participants also kept a reflective journal for one term of teaching. Unlike personal journals, solicited journals are specifically requested by the researcher and are written with the full understanding that the text will be used for research purposes (Bijoux and Myers 2006; Jacelon and Imperio 2005). Reflective journals provide a view into the classroom by capturing a curated view of the participants’ teaching experience, where s/he can ‘reflect on, vent emotions about, and make sense of their experiences’ (Furness and Garrud 2010, p. 264). These 16 teachers also participated in a second interview. Using the two interviews and journals helped to elaborate and refine categories in the emerging theory (Charmaz 2006) of SRE pedagogy. In Study Two, only one round of interviews was used.

³All names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the participants.

⁴16 of the participants in Study One were interviewed a second time later in the study.

3.3 *Data Analysis*

In both studies, interview data was manually transcribed as soon after the interviews as possible. This ensured the accuracy of the collected data and helped the management of the large amount of data being collected. Although transcribing was time-consuming, it was very helpful because of the number of times the interviews were listened to throughout the process. This listening served as an informal initial analysis. Transcribed interviews were then manually coded through an iterative process of initial and focused coding.

Coding enabled the construction of meaning from a large amount of data. It identified patterns in the data by breaking it down from its original context, reconceptualizing it and constructing it in the form of categories, themes, stories and theories (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Coding is an emergent process that initiates theory development by attaching labels that ‘simultaneously summarize and account for each piece of data’ (Charmaz 2006, p. 43). It operates within a hermeneutical circle that enables the understanding of all the data through a close viewing of the individual parts of the data. It is an inferential process that leads to an understanding of patterns that can be captured in conceptual and theoretical terms. As Charmaz (2006) puts it, coding ‘defines what is happening in the data [to be able to] begin to grapple with what it means’ (p. 46).

In the first phase of coding, either each word or line of data was named. I used line-by-line coding for both the interviews and reflective journals. In the second phase, focused coding, the most significant initial codes were sorted into common patterns and ideas to make analytic sense of the data. In both studies, codes were divided into ones that were common to several interviews and ones that were unique for a particular interview. In this process, both commonalities and differences were identified. This was important in the next phase of analysis where categories that explained and conceptualized data were constructed. The iterative analysis of Study One moved from thirteen initial categories to nine categories and finally to four conceptual categories which include *Guest and Host*, the paradigm that is explored in this chapter.⁵

4 Results and Key Findings

4.1 *Study One*

Experiences and beliefs about being guests and hosts permeated the SRE teachers’ interviews. Nineteen of the 24 SRE teachers explicitly described their experiences of hospitality in the schools where they teach: 12 recorded positive experiences and

⁵The four categories are: Guest and Host, Vulnerability and Authority, Truth and Hope, and Relational Teaching.

seven had negative experiences. In SRE, the teachers are both guests and hosts. They are the guests of the school and the legislation that allows them to teach, and the classroom teacher; and they are hosts to the students both as teachers who welcome them in, and as mediators of God's welcome to their students. It is their personal experience of God's welcome that compels them to return to teach SRE each week regardless of the welcome they receive.

4.1.1 Being a Guest

To some degree, the relationships between SRE teachers and the public schools are determined by the legislation that allows SRE teachers to cross the threshold into public schools. Under this legislation, both the schools and SRE teachers must behave in a particular way and adhere to certain conditions based on their specific roles, rights and obligations. However, it is up to the schools and classroom teachers to determine the nature of the welcome that the SRE teachers receive. As guests of the school and the classroom teacher, SRE teachers teach in a space that is not their own and have to work within the constraints of a host/guest hospitality relationship. This was captured by Jane when she explained that:

We're guests, we're volunteers. If the teacher is in the classroom, it doesn't matter how nice the teacher is, I feel very much like I am the guest and my teaching is very different when they are there.

Some teachers receive generous hospitality while others are barely endured. Due to their unusual status, SRE teachers have to accept that sometimes inadequate teaching spaces that they are given. For example, Nerida described having no choice but to teach in a room that was 'really pathetic and not conducive to learning', and Bart described his frustration in teaching in a room where not being able to 'set up or address my own space, I cannot add to it over a period of time'. They were also not always told what is going on and occasionally arrived to find out that their classes have been cancelled, or that something had happened to upset a number of students. In addition, many of the SRE teachers were also reminded of their guest status when they had to ask permission to use classroom resources. Regardless of the welcome the SRE teachers encountered, they knew that they must behave as good guests who accept whatever welcome they receive.

The nature of the hospitality that the SRE teachers experienced differed from school to school and cannot be generalized. Many teachers received an accepting and generous welcome. For example, Beth explained that the SRE teachers are 'always welcome to come to the staff room and have a cuppa'. This positive experience of hospitality contrasted with the experience of Ruby who experienced a less generous welcome in the schools where she teaches. She described the welcome she receives as non-existent, where at its best the school 'couldn't care less' and at its worst, it is 'particularly hostile'. When Julia described the schools as welcoming and explained that 'it's not hard to walk into school, especially when you've been doing it a few years. No one is hostile,' she indicated that this

hospitality cannot be taken for granted. That is, walking into school to teach SRE could be initially hard, hostile and difficult. The conditionality of the hospitality was also evident when Renee said that at the end of the school year she gives a gift to the schools 'to thank them for *allowing* us to teach' (author's emphasis). Renee and Julia's experience of hospitality was positive and friendly; they could make themselves at home, but it was conditional on existing community relationships and the school allowing them in.

SRE teachers try to move from being a stranger who is treated as an enemy, to a friend or ally, by working on their relationships with individual teachers, the principal and the office staff. For example, when Joshua felt that his principal was 'scarcely welcoming' he made a point of showing an interest in the school to indicate that 'I'm not just an interloper'. In a similar vein, Shirley helped her classroom teacher with playground duty before her SRE lesson, Ruby ensured that she said hello to the school receptionist, and Renee took in an occasional special morning tea for the school staff to enjoy. Like good guests, the SRE teachers continued to invest in the relationships they had at school because of the conditional nature of the welcome they received. This was not done simply to be friendly guests, but because it made their job easier. Without this relationship, Nerida explained that there can be 'a negative attitude or a culture that is negative about SRE that filters down to the kids; it's pretty hard to work in with that'.

Many of the SRE teachers experienced conditional hospitality whenever they crossed the threshold into the classroom. All but one of the SRE teachers had a classroom teacher in the room for some or all of the time while they were teaching. Thirteen teachers were positive about the experience, eight described some difficulties and three did not mention the classroom teacher. When the classroom teacher remained in the classroom during the SRE lesson, the teaching space was shared. In this insecure place of welcome, the SRE teachers were vulnerable to how hospitality was extended to them and to what the classroom teacher chose to do. Jane explained that because she was a guest 'there's no assumptions. I'm not assuming and teaching the lesson as if it's my classroom. We're the guest, we're the volunteer. We have to ask to use things'. As guests in the classrooms, many of the SRE teachers were not given full responsibility for managing the behaviour of their students. They found that classroom teachers often intervened even when this was unwanted. Different teachers responded to this in different ways. Alicia explained that she was 'glad that teachers are in the room. They know the students so they are good for classroom control if they are doing their job'. However, in contrast, Renee explained that 'the class teachers are a problem'.

The religious beliefs of the classroom teacher also influenced the hospitality experience of the SRE teacher. When the classroom teacher was a Christian, the SRE teachers presumed that he or she was supportive of SRE. They often described a more generous hospitality that was offered to them because there was a meeting of likeness, a sharing in a common spirituality that acted as a modifier on the guest/host relationship. In contrast, many of the SRE teachers were like Patricia who was aware of the 'stranger-ness' of her relationship with the classroom teacher who did not agree with her beliefs so that she was wary of what the teacher thought when the

'kids are asking me curly questions'. Regardless of the level of support of the classroom teacher, all the SRE teachers approached teaching about faith with care, carefully considering what they could and could not say to their students.

The SRE teachers were also aware of the distant hospitality of their students' parents. Although the SRE teachers rarely met their students' parents, they were aware of their obligation to the parents and the possibility that SRE teaching may challenge parents' worldviews. In this way, the hospitality that the SRE teachers experienced was also conditional on an obligation to the parents of the students they taught. Elissa drew attention to this when she said that:

[...] we need to keep in mind that there are certain lessons that almost end up disrespecting [parents' beliefs; and] at worse, they can think that it might be brainwashing or that we might try to convert them.

Renee revealed a tension between the value that she placed on respecting the parents of her students, and the importance she placed on her belief in the truth of what she taught when she explained that she did not want to 'discredit the parents' for believing something different to Christianity, but also did not want to 'let the truth get away'. Renee's statements also highlighted the tension between the SRE teachers' desire to proclaim and draw their students to Christian truth and their position as guests in the schools where they taught.

4.1.2 Being a Host

The SRE teachers welcomed all students who attended their lessons because they wanted to share their beliefs. They believed that God is welcoming and loving and that they should also be welcoming and loving to their students. They did not want any student to miss out on SRE, and were willing to take on extra students even when this made teaching more difficult. They also put up with the difficult behaviour of some students because they wanted as many students as possible to participate in SRE.

SRE teachers acted as humble hosts who knew their students can opt out of SRE lessons at any time. They were aware of the tension of ensuring that their students enjoyed their lessons and continued to attend. As a result, they made choices about the content and approach to teaching that would combine fun and learning in their lessons. As humble hosts, many of the SRE teachers also chose to be open about their own lives. For example, Daniel emphasized the importance of 'being honest, answering all their questions, remembering their names and keeping our promises' to develop positive relationships with his students. As humble hosts, the SRE teachers also acknowledged that they could be learners rather than teachers. For example, Nicole described this experience when she said:

I find that as I am teaching I am learning as well. Each time year after year that I teach the lessons I find something new that I learn. One is the result of the other [...] Sometimes the kids are like the teacher [when they] bring [in] things from their own background or churches.

Many of the SRE teachers expressed the belief that knowing their students' names was a way to be welcoming; a form of hospitality. In addition, Pearl made a strong link between knowing the students' names and what she taught them about God:

I'm telling the kids that God knows and loves and cares for them so much that He knows the number of hairs on their heads. What am I teaching if I can't get their names right?

Because the SRE teachers believed that God had shown hospitality to them by making Himself known to them and enabled them to know Him, they humbly offered hospitality to their students. This common belief in the hospitality of God motivated many of the SRE teachers to be welcoming hosts to their students. Lisa described God's hospitality when she explains her belief that God will:

[...] welcome us with open arms [...] it is a gift that God has given you, you just have to choose whether you want to be friends of God or you don't.

For the SRE teachers, this unconditional love meant that even the most difficult children must be treated without criticism, judgment or harshness.

4.2 Study Two

The experience of being a guest and host was significantly different for the teachers in Study Two. In contrast to Study One, the teachers in Study Two were explicitly asked to reflect on the notion of hospitality in regards to their pedagogy. The interviews were driven by the leading question: How would your teaching be different if you saw yourself as a host in your classroom? This question was originally posed by Marmon (2008) and again by Call (2011) as they considered their own teaching. As a result, the teachers often made the comparison between hospitality in their home and hospitality in their classrooms. The teachers in Study Two described being hosts to their students and parents, guests of their principal, and on occasional times when their students became hosts to the learning in their classrooms. Like the SRE teachers, the teachers in Study Two described the importance of their relationship with God as they related to their students.

4.2.1 Being a Host

All the teachers in this study described how the way they taught is inseparable from being a Christian. They expanded upon this idea, describing how the way that they saw the world, their students, and the content that they taught; as well as how they spoke to their students and disciplined them, were all interwoven into their identity as Christians. As Louise explained, 'I don't separate the two things, because what it means to be a Christian is a part of everything I do'. With such a close alignment between their identity in Christ and their identity as a Christian, it was not

surprising that the teachers considered the way that God treats them as a model for how they should treat students in their care. For example, Alison described how it is her understanding of what God has done for her, and her knowledge that she is not ‘worthy to come to God’s feast, or to deserve His hospitality’, that drove her hope that the students and others in her community would know and accept God’s loving actions one day. Similarly, Samuel explained that his hospitality in the classroom was driven by how it ‘models what God has done for people [...] inviting people in graciously and freely at his expense’.

The classroom teachers in this study did not have to deal with the issues of welcome in their schools. They were part of the fabric of the institution and the question of whether they were welcome or not did not come into consideration. However, there was one exception to this: Christian teachers who were teaching in a secular context acknowledged that their ideas about faith were not always welcomed in their classroom. For example, when contentious ethical or religious issues were being discussed in the staff room, Angela described a time when she felt ‘quite nervous of someone asking me what I thought because I didn’t feel I was in a safe environment where I could share my belief and not be judged’. Consequently, they had to carefully consider how they dealt with issues of faith in their classrooms. For Alison, this meant carefully managing the situation when a Christian student mentioned God in her classroom so that ‘parents don’t come in saying “Mrs. Alison said that God did or said something”’.

Regardless of whether their teaching context welcomed the Christian message or not, all the teachers described how they believed that their actions served as a witness to God’s love and goodness. For the teachers in non-Christian contexts, it was only their actions that could witness to God. Their hope was that, despite not having explicit conversations about the Christian faith, their actions could lead people to wonder why they do what they do. For Angela, this meant ‘acting in a peaceable and calm manner even when that might not be what I am feeling inside’. These teachers were also aware that those around them who are not Christians were carefully watching them to see whether they behaved in a way that is commensurate with God’s love. While the teachers who were teaching in a Christian context could more explicitly discuss their faith, they still believed that their actions were an important part of their witness of God’s love. For example, Katherine believed that Christian schools:

[...] have the opportunity to stand apart and say ‘we value relationships, we value people, we love people and we want to love you’. [When] we show Jesus’ love, when we do start talking about Jesus’ love we have some credibility, otherwise it is hollow.

The teachers also acted hospitably towards their students because of their belief that all students are made in the image of God, and that God calls Christians to love one another. Knowing that their students are made in God’s image energized the teachers to welcome their students and build relationships with them. It was particularly helpful when the teachers encountered a student who was ‘difficult to welcome’ (Katherine) or ‘unlovely’ (Celeste) because ‘everyone is unique and special to God’ (Alison). The teachers also believed that they are called to love the

stranger and that ‘hospitality is an outworking of that love for one another’ (Katherine) where everyone is treated ‘with respect and as equal to us, where there is no discriminating because of age or sex or race or whatever’ (Alison).

This theological imperative to act hospitably towards their students was outworked in the teachers’ pedagogy. There were a number of methodological decisions that they made in their teaching that flowed from their desire to be welcoming. First, they believed it is important to have a warm and inviting classroom that Angela stressed did not belong to the teacher but is a ‘shared space’ that is there for the whole class. In this shared space, hospitality was a fleeting concept because although the students were like guests who were welcomed in, the teachers’ hope was that they would soon feel part of what was happening in the room, and leave their guest status behind. Katherine described this as moving from a hospitality relationship to a family relationship where there is a high level of trust and ‘we are all in this together’. In this learning community, students learn, love one another, and care for each other and are no longer a guest, but ‘a member and possibly even a host’; and the teacher, like a good host, ‘ensures that absolutely everyone feels safe and secure all the time so that the students can get the best out of it’ (Alison). Celeste described how in a learning community the teachers:

Instruct their guest where to sit, or where to eat, or suggests people they might want to talk to at a party. So they’re still managing, but no one at a party enjoys a party where the host is too bossy, or they feel they don’t have the freedom to choose the people they want to talk to, or eat the food they want to eat. A true hospitality classroom has choice like a good party.

Central to creating welcoming learning spaces is the effort teachers expended in developing positive relationships with their students. As Angela emphasized:

You can have the most amazing spaces that certainly would give an outsider the appearance of having a welcoming classroom, but if you have no relationship then nothing is happening in the classroom.

The teachers believed that at the heart of teaching is relationship, and developing trusting relationships with their students was important for effective teaching and learning. They believed that working on positive relationships with students from the first time they met them, helped students to feel safe and secure ‘so they can make themselves at home’. As this happened, trust developed and there was an opportunity for deep learning because students were willing to take risks in their learning (Katherine). Celeste described how she welcomed students’ questions and shared things about her own faith and Christian journey to help develop positive relationships with her students. In addition, because the Christian faith is built on a God’s welcome to us, the teachers also wanted to build relationships with their students where ‘everyone is invited, everyone is welcomed, and no one is marginalised’ (Angela). Celeste explained that the consequence of her emphasis on positive relationships was that she is:

[...] a class discussion kind of teacher, a one-on-one kind of teacher, a group work kind of teacher, an exit slip kind of teacher where I want individualised feedback from participants.

Samuel did not search for opportunities in each of his lessons to ‘leverage the lesson to promote the gospel’. Rather, the relationships he formed with his students were important because they had the potential to flow beyond the classroom where students could be encouraged in their faith or to consider faith.

Third, and closely related to the importance of the relationships the teachers had with their students, was the importance of learning and using students’ names as an act of hospitality. Even remembering names was challenging, so the teachers made a special effort to quickly learn students’ names. Amy described how she stood at the school gate and welcomed students, while Samuel described standing and greeting students by name as they entered the classroom. Louise described how when she taught Indigenous students she tried to learn and use their skin name⁶ even though she struggled to pronounce many of them. She explained that:

The easiest thing for me to do is to learn everyone’s white fella names, and just use them. And in the past, their experience of white fellas is that they do that. The names are easier to say and to remember. But I’ve always thought it was important to know students’ names, as a Christian it is extremely important to me.

The teachers’ hospitality was not bounded by the classroom. The teachers described how they tried to engage with their students in other parts of the school. These intentional moments during recess and lunchtime helped the teachers to further develop relationships with their students. It could take the form of simply chatting in the playground or running additional activities in the breaks. In addition, one teacher talked about the importance of welcoming parents because ‘the quality of education is better when it is extended to the family’ (Katherine). She acknowledged that this could be challenging, but wanted to find ways that she could welcome parents without them always having to ‘knock on the door’ hoping that teachers will let them in.

It is important to note that four of the teachers commented on how hospitality was not always easy. They described classes where they disliked the students, where they found their students to be racist or sexist, where they were ‘gleefully happy’ that they would not see their students again at the end of the year, and where students did not want to be in the room. Samuel also pointed out that teaching was different to a more generic understanding of hospitality where a guest’s presence at a party is negotiated between the guest and host. ‘At least,’ he explains, ‘if you invite people to your home and they don’t want to be there they have the tact to not let on. Whereas teenagers don’t have that, [and they] don’t go into class on those terms’. But regardless of the challenges, Celeste emphasized that:

When it gets tough, when the dinner party is not going well, you are still hosting [...] but Christ is the only reason I get up in the morning, He is all I am left with.

⁶A skin name is a kinship name that comes from the mother and determines who marries who and ceremonial relationships.

4.2.2 Being a Guest

The teachers in Study Two only described two situations where they were guests rather than hosts. The first was when, rather than becoming guests, their role as host diminished as their students give up their *guestness* and played a role in hosting. When this took place, the teachers described themselves using terms such as ‘head host’ (Katherine), ‘mega-host’ (Alison), and ‘co-host’ (Celeste). Even though allowing students to be hosts empowered them and helped them to have ownership of their learning, these terms indicated that the students could become more involved in welcoming other students and even in caring for their teachers, but the teachers did not give up their power as the host. As Katherine pointed out, when someone visits their classroom ‘we are all hosts, but I’m the head host, the responsible adult who is pushing things forward’.

The second way that the teachers experienced being a guest, was when their principal created a great space for them to work and supported them in their role. However, as Katherine pointed out, it was not always easy for a teacher to accept a principal’s efforts at hospitality because ‘principals are also our employers and we are not always honest with them’. Angela reflected on her experience where teachers were struggling. ‘The principal is the host’ she explained, ‘it is his party and his guests are going home every day feeling defeated’.

5 Discussion of Core Issues

Derrida’s (2000, 2005), Derrida and Dufourmantelle (2000) differentiation between the law of hospitality and the laws of hospitality is helpful for understanding the SRE teachers and professional teachers’ experiences in the schools where they taught. The law of hospitality is the ideal that anyone offering hospitality should aspire to. It is limitless and unconditional where the guest is truly able to make him or herself at home without any pressure to behave in a particular way. In contrast, the laws of hospitality are conditional and limited. These laws determine the rights and obligations of both the host and the guest. Because the host is the one who invites a guest in, the host always remains in control of what happens. He or she determines how much guests can make themselves at home and what is allowed to happen in this space. The SRE teachers in this study had a stronger experience of being guests who were receiving conditional hospitality. As guests in schools, they knew that they must behave in particular ways that were made clear to them by the legislative context in which they taught, the principal’s welcome, the classroom teachers’ attitude towards them, and their beliefs about God. In contrast, due to the teaching context of the professional teachers, they had a stronger experience of being hosts offering conditional hospitality to their students, rather than recipients of hospitality.

All the teachers in these two studies were compelled by their Christian faith to create welcoming learning spaces where students feel safe, secure and at home.

Four core issues arose from the two studies. First, Christian pedagogical hospitality necessarily involves effort and risk on the teacher's part. Second, the way that teachers experience and practice hospitality is not always the same. Third, there were commonalities to the experiences of both SRE and professional teachers in this study. Finally, hospitality matters in two distinct ways: It helps to create a positive learning environment for students, and it provides a helpful metaphor for Christian teachers as they reflect on their teaching.

5.1 Hospitality Involves Effort and Risk

For the SRE and professional teachers, offering hospitality involves effort and risk. For the SRE teachers, this was because of the conditional hospitality of the school and teachers that ranged from hostile to welcoming. There were also a number of reasons why both groups of teachers found hospitality challenging. These included having guests/students who were not always easy, likeable guests, or who do not welcome the hospitality that was offered to them. It was also because the teachers had high expectations of themselves. They wanted to be welcoming unconditional hosts who offered 'welcome without reserve and without calculation' (Derrida 2005, p. 6) that models the kind of hospitality they believe God offers; but as Derrida clarifies, is an impossible ideal. Palmer (1998) points out that:

Teaching is done at the dangerous intersection of personal and public life [...] As we try to connect ourselves and our subjects with our students, we make ourselves, as well as our subjects, vulnerable to indifference, judgement, ridicule. (p. 17)

When teachers offer an unconditional (or as close to one as is possible) welcome to their students, they put themselves at this dangerous intersection. As they openly and generously share of their lives and the things they love, they make themselves vulnerable to students who reject or misuse their hospitality. But they also open themselves and the learning space up to unexpected learning possibilities where deep learning can take place. Katherine concludes that when the teacher welcomes students, he or she 'builds [a] level of trust, then risk-taking can occur, and students can try and fail in safety'. Therefore, while being a hospitable teacher is challenging, and not, as Call (2011) puts it 'for the faint of heart' (p. 66), the teachers in this study continued to work hospitably in their classrooms and beyond.

The hospitable work that teachers do in their classroom revolves around the way they treat their students and the way they present themselves. They try to treat their students with unconditional hospitality by remembering their names and welcoming them at the door, looking out for their individual needs, showing them love and care, and working at building strong relationships in the classroom. They also offer themselves to their students by telling personal stories, being willing to answer questions about their faith when it is appropriate, acting in a godly manner, and

remembering that their students are made in the image of God. In these ways, the teachers work with their students to create a learning community that operates more like a family where everyone feels safe and secure.

5.2 Hospitality Is not Always the Same

Hospitality varied between the two groups of teachers and between different contexts. The SRE teachers' discussions about hospitality tended to be more about the challenges of being guests in the school; whereas the professional teachers talked mainly about their experiences of being hosts to their students. While SRE teachers tended to think of themselves as guests in the schools where they teach, not surprisingly, professional teachers took their position in the school for granted. They did not have to ask permission to use things in the same way that the SRE teachers did, nor did they have to thank the school for allowing them to teach. They were able to create a physical learning space, whereas SRE teachers had to make do with what they were given.

There were two different contexts that influenced the hospitality of the teachers in the studies: Different school environments and different view of faith. First, there can be variation in the kind of hospitality teachers give and receive depending upon the school where they teach. Some schools are more welcoming and supportive of both SRE and professional teachers, other schools have unfriendly, difficult teaching environments that teachers have to struggle through. As a result, the same teacher can do the same things in two different places and have very different experiences of being either a guest or a host. Second, there is also a difference between Christian and public schools welcoming ideas of faith. The teachers who work in Christian schools are confident that their faith is welcome and are therefore able to be far more open about questions and issues of faith with their students and other teachers. In effect, they experience an unconditional hospitality towards faith, whereas the teachers working in non-Christian schools experience a conditional hospitality and have to be careful about what they say and who they say it to.

5.3 Hospitality Is Always the Same

While there were a number of differences in the experiences of the SRE and professional teachers, they were all driven by their relationship with God. This relationship gave them the assurance that He is with them. This was always explicit in the conversations of the SRE teachers and either explicit or implied in the professional teachers' conversations. Both groups of teachers wanted to witness to God's love and goodness, and the teachers working in Christian contexts looked for opportunities to share more with their students either in the classroom or elsewhere in the school setting. In addition, the teachers acknowledged that all students are

made in the image of God and therefore deserving of their hospitality regardless of how they behave or respond in the classroom.

The teachers were also driven by a desire to move from hospitality to an ‘at-home family’ relationship in their classrooms. In such a relationship, students’ ideas were welcome and had the potential to change, challenge and grow the learning community. This was what Celeste alluded to when she described how when her Year 9 students prepared and taught a lesson they ‘were really affirmed, pumped that their stuff was seen as valuable’. Similarly, Louise described how when she was struggling to learn her students’ skin names, ‘they laugh at me a lot when I try to say them and I think that helps. They are experts on that and I think that is good too, that they can be teaching me something too’. Each of these examples showed the benefits of moving their students from guest to co-host in an at-home family relationship.

5.4 Hospitality Matters

Hospitality matters because it provides an avenue for creating the paradoxical learning spaces that Palmer (1998) describes. As students become co-hosts with the teacher as head host it is possible for learning to go to unexpected places. Hospitality helps to create safe spaces where students are excited about what they are learning. Hospitable environments give opportunities for students to share and to inspire one another with their new learning. When students move beyond being guests to family, they can share their stories in safety, share different ideas without risk, and listen carefully to one another. In a hospitable learning space, teachers and students can find an appropriate place for conversations about faith either in the classroom or beyond. Because hospitality matters, teachers need to carefully consider how they use their host status in the classroom. That is, they need to carefully consider how they use power in the classroom and how they encourage students to become co-hosts of their learning.

Hospitality matters because it provides a helpful metaphor for Christian teachers as they reflect on their teaching. After reflecting on her own teaching in light of hospitality, Soh (2016) had to ‘pause, reflect and critically examine my own teaching practices’ (p. 1). Similarly, when each of the teachers in Study Two completed their interview, they all commented on how they would like to think more about their teaching in the light of hospitality. Using hospitality as a way of reflecting and critiquing practice may be a helpful tool for gathering valuable insight into a teacher’s pedagogy.

Ultimately, for Christian teachers, the starting point for pedagogical hospitality lies in their relationship with God because our ‘hospitality emerges from a grateful heart; it is first a response of love and gratitude for God’s love and welcome to us’ (Pohl 2002, p. 37). It is, therefore, important for Christian teachers to spend time on their relationship with God. Such devotional time helps to embed teachers’ awareness and joy of God’s invitation to them and the students they teach, it keeps

God at the centre of all hospitable endeavour, and helps teachers in the challenging times when being hospitable to a particular student or class is an almost unbearable burden.

6 Conclusion

Christian pedagogical hospitality provides a helpful paradigm for understanding the interactions teachers have with their students and others in the school. Because hospitality takes effort and risk, regardless of the kind of teaching or the school context, Christian teachers need to dwell in the hospitality of God to support them in their teaching. Pedagogical hospitality means teachers accepting their experiences of vulnerability that come from welcoming their students, and of sharing themselves. They need to build into their teaching the time needed to actually get to know their students, and be willing to humbly change direction within a lesson to provide better for the needs of their students. As hosts in the classroom, Christian teachers need to be committed to developing appropriate relationships with their students, carefully monitoring how they use power, and ensuring that their actions point students to God, the ultimate host. While there are similarities and differences in how hospitality is experienced, and although Derrida's (2000, 2005), Derrida and Dufourmantelle (2000) unconditional hospitality will always be out of reach, Christian teachers are driven by the trust in God as host and the possibility that their students will accept His welcome. Thinking about hospitality helps to provide Christian teachers with a way forward for developing a learning community in their classroom, and a way to look back on where they have come to further develop their practice.

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Chapter 16

Personalized Learning and Teaching Approaches to Meet Diverse Needs: A Prototype Tertiary Education Program



Karenne Hills, Kirsty Andersen and Samuel Davidson

Abstract Many universities and private higher education institutions have established specialized supports for students with a disability in recognition of the specific challenges these individuals confront, and to ensure that they are able to fully participate in their learning environment. The support offered by Australian institutions are inclusive of a wide range of disabilities and medical conditions, however, few seem focused specifically on intellectual or developmental disabilities. In response to this, in 2014 the School of Social Sciences at Christian Heritage College in Queensland Australia, decided that equal opportunity should be provided for all people to participate in the transformational learning that underpins the ethos of Christian Education. Subsequently, the School developed and initiated a prototype program aimed at filling the perceived gap in education support services for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. One student with a moderate intellectual disability and mild physical impairments participated in the prototype. In recognition of his specific learning needs an individualized, strengths-based academic support program was created. The personal narratives and anecdotes of the prototype leader, the tutor and the student have been woven into the academic discourse of this chapter to provide the reader with a clear picture of the learning from the journey as it unravelled.

Keywords Christian education · Learning supports · Intellectual/developmental disability · Australian universities

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1 Introduction

As a mother of two adult sons, both of whom have significant disabilities, I (Karenne) am ever mindful, and deeply sensitive to the societal attitudes that box my children, and others with similar life contexts, into a place that limits their ability to enjoy and participate in many of the typical provisions and benefits of society. People with disabilities have long been the recipients of well-meaning, but often unhelpful interventions within models of care that seek solutions from perspectives designed to diminish or correct perceptions of difference (Clapton and Fitzgerald 1997; Yong 2011). Religious and Medical models of disability have traditionally conceptualized people with disabilities as social burdens, with problems that needed to be cured, covered or compensated for, or worse, as objects of pity—tragic recipients of charitable acts of kindness and benevolence by those blessed to a life free from such encumbrances (Clapton 2008; Clapton and Fitzgerald 1997; Yong 2011). In recent decades, the social model of disability has made great strides in encouraging equal access for people with disabilities into society in a variety of ways (Bailey et al. 2015; Hughes 2010). Even so, societal myths about people with certain disabilities continue to see many people disenfranchised in the pursuit of the normal expectations of life (Hemphill and Kulik 2016; Monteleone and Forrester-Jones 2017; Savery 2015). This chapter suggests that when given the appropriate supports to level the playing field, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities can achieve far beyond the normal expectations of their mental calibre, thus enjoying the same quality of education and potential for success as their neurotypical peers.

When I was pregnant with my long-awaited first baby, “It was discovered on a routine scan that my baby had a rare disorder called *foetal ascites*, which is generally incompatible with life outside the womb. I was strongly advised by the medical experts” and most people close to me, “to terminate the pregnancy” (Hills and Meteyard 2013, p. 63). No one, really, had any hope for this little baby. I, however, was very troubled by the weight of this decision, so decided not to pursue a termination, but rather do what I could to preserve the pregnancy and the life of my little baby, so trusting the outcome to God (Hills and Meteyard 2013). As the pregnancy advanced, I experienced a type of epiphany, where I believe I received a Divine impression that reassured me that “I was having a boy”, that he would live, and that “I was to name him Samuel because [...] that name means *God heard my prayer*” (Hills and Meteyard 2013, p. 63).

Samuel Peter Davidson (Sam) was born at thirty-eight weeks gestation, a very fragile little boy, with a number of significant medical issues. As time went on, it became clear that he was not developing to the same rate as his peers. I struggled, as is very normal for a parent of a child with a disability, until I realized one day that the promise I received was never that he would not have a disability, that he was known and named by God whilst still in my womb, and he had been crafted to a grand design in the image of his creator (Hills and Meteyard 2013).

Although Sam did not develop the same way as his peers, at a young age I noticed remarkable gifts in my little boy. When he enrolled in kindergarten he could not hold a pencil, write his name, or keep up with the other children in physical or fine motor activities. Yet, by the end of the first day, he knew the name of every child in his class, whose bag and lunch box belonged to who, each child's mother, and each child's locker. He was given the class task of assisting the parent helpers to put the right artwork and belongings into the right locker. He never muddled the chore.

When he was about eight years old, I sat on his bed one night as he cried, and said he did not like his hands because all the other children could get across the monkey bars and he could not. We received special permission from the school to access the playground on weekends so he could practice on the monkey bars. He practiced until he had huge calluses on his hands. I was privileged to be there, watching, the day he made it across the monkey bars.

I hold many such stories in my heart. As Sam grew, life became difficult for him as he always tried to keep up with his peers. I knew, however, that I had been gifted with a remarkable child, different to others, but with many strengths that would carry him through his life. Sam was never destined to live in a box that labelled him unintelligent, even though he scored very low on a standard IQ test—not that I am a strong believer in the appropriateness of standard IQ tests as a measure of intelligence of *all* people. I agree with Grandin (2011), who suggested that a low score on an IQ test is generally used as “confirmation of impaired mental functioning” (p. 109), and I wonder why different ways of thinking and approaching the world need to be categorized in such a way. I distinctly remember the day of Sam's IQ test, which he took when he was about ten years old. One question on the test was—“what is a donkey?”. Sam answered—“It's what Mary rode on” (Lk 2:5, New International Version¹). No points for that answer, because it does not actually describe what a donkey is! Everyone knows that a donkey is an animal—similar to a horse! Sam's idiosyncratic way of conceptualizing and expressing his thoughts proved a barrier to normal expectations of intelligence. By focusing on his strengths, rather than his limitations however, he has been able to achieve far more in his life than I ever dreamed possible. This chapter describes one part of that journey, specifically his involvement in a specialized tertiary education program (hereafter referred to as the ‘prototype’).

The authors consider that the background leading to his enrolment in the prototype, and the progress he made whilst completing his studies are best represented by use of first-person narrative. The use of such narratives is purposed to *enhance* the academic rigour of a paper, as noted by Chilcott and Barry (2016), who observed that “stories are particularly powerful at illuminating and facilitating understanding of individual and social lived experience in context” (p. 60; attributed to Clandinin and Connelly 2000). This technique draws on narrative inquiry and autoethnography, both of which are well accepted as valid qualitative research methodologies (Adams and Manning 2015; Denejkina 2017), and as such,

¹All scripture verses are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version* (2011).

narratives are worthy inclusions in appropriate academic works. Even so, the authors debated in depth the interesting nuances the chosen writing style of this chapter has introduced. Powerful stories make an impact, so to exclude the narratives from this chapter seemed to diminish its purpose. Furthermore, it defied the goal and purpose of inclusion that underpinned the prototype (Carter et al. 2015; Reinders 2011; Swinton 2012) to write *about* this student, rather than *with* him. As such, all authors are in unanimous agreement concerning Sam's identity being highlighted in this chapter. His inclusion as a co-author, while perhaps unique in academic discourse, was considered early in the process to be a necessary component.

2 Literature Review of Tertiary Education for People with Disability

The "World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons" was formed by the United Nations (1983) in 1982. One of the purposes of this programme was to promote effective measures for the equalization of opportunities for people with disabilities to access the general systems of society, including educational and work opportunities. Since then, some progress has been made towards the equalization of opportunities for people with disabilities, with the intent to provide full participation in a variety of normal life experiences (Lysaght et al. 2012). Current empirical research, however, indicates a lack in existing knowledge regarding the *potential* of people with disabilities (Cowden 2010; Hadley 2017; Kubiak 2015; Moola 2015; O'Connor et al. 2012). This is despite the work of Patricia O'Brien and colleagues (n.d., 2009; O'Connor et al. 2012), who have demonstrated both at the University of Sydney, Australia, and Trinity College, Ireland, the potential of students with a disability to succeed at study.

Historically, universities and other higher education providers have been viewed as providers of academic pathways for the intellectual and societal elite (Burwood 2009; Kotzee and Martin 2013; McLellan et al. 2016; North 2016). Often the brighter students in high school sought careers requiring academic qualifications, whilst the less academically gifted students tended to pursue trades or blue-collar careers (Gavrel et al. 2016; Shavit and Muller 2000). This trend has transformed over recent decades, with higher education providers offering a vastly wider choice of study options for students, including those who would previously have been excluded from this privilege (Daddow et al. 2013; O'Connor et al. 2012). As a result, academic institutions are now called to align their underpinning values and philosophies with infrastructure designed to include opportunities for a range of atypical students (Uditsky and Hughson 2012). Career aspirations are now but one reason why someone may wish to further their education (O'Brien et al. 2009; Papay and Griffin 2013; Reed et al. 2015). The UK Widening Participation literature calls academic institutions to redefine student success to acknowledge the

“transformative” experience that higher education can impart to students as a benefit beyond course completion (Whiteford et al. 2013, p. 307). This experience includes the enhancement of essential life skills such as increased confidence and self-esteem, better physical and psychological health, improved socio-economic experience leading to better employability and greater ability to make significant contributions to society, even if a student does not complete their program (McLellan et al. 2016; Stuart et al. 2011; Whiteford et al. 2013; Zhao 2017). This is supported by data collected from the 264 American higher education programs offered for students with disability, which shows the employment rate of graduates of these programs is almost triple that of their peers who do not participate in similar initiatives (Zhao 2017). Such considerations impact the quest for inclusive education.

Within the Australian context, between 2008 and 2015 there was a 94% increase in students with a disability enrolling in tertiary undergraduate awards (Universities Australia 2017). These students, however, realized lower retention and success rates than other students (Kilpatrick et al. 2016). Significantly, the “2016 Student Experience Survey” revealed that almost one-quarter of students with a disability considered dropping out of study, well above the 18% of students without a disability (Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching [QILT] 2017). Additionally, this group was less satisfied with the quality of tertiary education they were experiencing (QILT 2017).

Seemingly there are a number of factors impacting the decision of Australian students with a disability to enrol and/or remain enrolled in tertiary study. Surveys conducted by KPMG (2015) revealed that concerns around lack of support (including physical accessibility, transport, understanding of course materials and ability to participate in lectures and to complete assignments), were influences on whether a student with a disability might pursue enrolment into tertiary study. These students have also reported stigma, an inability to self-advocate and conflicting staff–student expectations as barriers to their success (Fossey et al. 2017; Harpur and Loudoun 2011; Ryan 2007; Ryan and Struchs 2004). Ryan (2007) also reported that students felt that they had “fewer opportunities for their learning strengths to be recognized and valued” (p. 439).

Supports currently offered by Australian tertiary institutions are inclusive for students with a wide range of disabilities and medical conditions. Very few, however, focus specifically on offering programs for the inclusion of students diagnosed with intellectual or developmental disabilities into mainstream academic courses, which implies a gap in tertiary education disability services in Australia. In effect, as Webb-Sunderhaus (2010) noted, this means that certain groups of students may be able to access a tertiary education experience but “they do not have equality of success” (p. 101). With the increasing numbers of children with autism and other special needs coming through the Australian primary and secondary school systems, higher educational providers hold a responsibility to consider the provision of appropriate infrastructure for the inclusion of these students (Autism Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders 2010; Siew et al. 2017).

3 Disability Theology

Christian values such as compassion and mercy, concern for the marginalized and the pursuit of justice should underpin any Christian entity, and this, of course, includes Christian educational institutions. Traditionally, even within the Christian educational sector, lack of appropriate resources or initiatives along with attitudinal barriers to the education of students with a disability have resulted in poor outcomes for these students. In keeping with the mandates initiated by government and other national and international organizations concerning the inclusion of people with disabilities into educational settings, it is argued that the Church and organizations claiming to represent and hold a Christian ethos, should pay particular attention to the inclusion of people who, for whatever reason, are marginalized and often excluded. This is the message of the gospel and the charge for those who follow the example of Christ (Lk 14:13).

The academic and theological discourse pertaining to these and other relevant issues is being pursued within the discipline of Disability Theology. Originating about ten years ago, Disability Theology is a growing discipline that according to Professor John Swinton is “a way of looking at God and human beings from a perspective that is oftentimes overlooked” (Vermeer 2014, para. 1). This discipline “explores the ways in which religious traditions have engaged (or failed to engage) notions of disability and impairment, and offers constructive possibilities for inclusive theological work in the future” (Creamer 2012, p. 339). Disability theologians are making strides to inform faith communities, various other organizations and society at large about the inclusion of all people into the normal activities and expectations of life, including those who challenge generally accepted traditions and beliefs (Reinders 2011; J. Vogel et al. 2006). One of the growing conversations within the Disability Theology discourse is that of inclusion and belonging (Brock 2009; Swinton 2012), and so within the Christian education sector, consideration for the inclusion of people outside the profile of a ‘typical’ university student must be regarded.

In acknowledgment of the Christian imperative for inclusion and in response to the perceived gap in tertiary disability services, in 2014 Christian Heritage College (CHC) decided to develop and trial a specialized program (‘prototype’) for students with an intellectual disability. This chapter describes the background and evolution of the prototype over a three-year period.

4 Prototype

4.1 *Christian Heritage College*

Christian Heritage College is a small higher education provider located in Brisbane, Australia. The college supports approximately 700 students. Degrees are offered

across a range of disciplines including Ministry, Social Sciences, Education and Humanities, Liberal Arts and Business. Christian Worldview perspectives underpin everything at CHC, as the college seeks to not only provide the educational opportunities for students necessary for successful employment but to also impact students on a personal and spiritual level in a transformative way. Each student's potential to transform their world is recognized and valued. CHC's flexible study options are attractive to many students, and small student numbers facilitate a close community on campus. CHC (2015) is committed to "transforming people to transform their world" (para. 2), and this underpins everything the college works towards.

An opportunity for CHC to extend its Christian charter for inclusion came when Samuel Davidson made enquiries for enrolment. Disappointed yet undaunted after being refused admission to several other theological institutions for reasons of academic merit, Sam made an expression of interest for admission to Christian Heritage College. This request prompted a series of conversations within the School of Social Sciences, the Registrar's office and with the Disability Support Officer, about the possibility of trialling a specialized program² for students with an intellectual disability. Given his interest in the people helping field, the prototype was strategically placed within the existing Diploma of Social Sciences course.

4.2 Objectives

The prototype was underpinned by the following objectives: (1) to discover and implement alternative methods of educational delivery and assessment designed to assist students with non-typical learning styles to achieve academic success; (2) to explore CHC's ability to provide an adaptive and inclusive environment that welcomes diversity and difference; and (3) to expand CHC's invitation for transformation through the understanding of a Christian Worldview.

Coincidentally, at the time the prototype was introduced, an emerging trend was observed within the School and the wider college community, identifying a proportionately high number of students with different learning styles and needs realizing poor academic results. A history of failing classes and eventually withdrawing from study at CHC was noted in regard to these students. With this trend in mind the possibility for the success of the prototype as relevant to a variety of other students was excitedly noted and anticipated.

²For the purposes of the prototype, 'program' is defined as a structured framework comprised of a combination of individualized supports. This is differentiated from stand-alone supports and services such as peer note-takers.

4.3 Student

Due to the relative inexperience of CHC to cater for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities, along with resourcing considerations, the prototype was limited to one student (Samuel Davidson), aged 26, who following his difficulties in utero (as previously detailed), was diagnosed at age six with a complex congenital disorder known as acrodysostosis. This condition manifests a mild to moderate intellectual disability along with a mild physical impairment. Several features of his condition have proven to be barriers to learning within mainstream academic systems in the past. These include difficulties comprehending and retaining some information, distractibility, limited organizational skills, poor gross and fine motor skills and poor perceptual vision.

He completed his primary and secondary education under a modified curriculum that excluded formal exams or major assessments. It should be noted that with the aid of a learning support teacher he was schooled through the Queensland State School system and did not attend a special school. He had previously engaged in post-secondary education, achieving a Certificate 1 in Automotive and a Certificate 111 in Warehouse Logistics.

In keeping with CHC's (2015) mission statement "Transforming People to Transform their World" (para. 2), that is underpinned by a strong foundation of Christian principles and worldview, it was decided to seek to provide the necessary supports for him to realize his life goal of "studying the Bible and learning more about God". He was encouraged to enrol through the usual QLD Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) process and was accepted into the Diploma of Social Sciences on his own academic merit. The Diploma of Social Sciences consists of eight units encompassing a mixture of core and elective units, providing a broad overview of social science perspectives, and two Christian studies units. The School requested that the student allow his progress to be observed and monitored, and he willingly agreed to this provision. On enrolment, he registered as a student with an intellectual disability.

4.4 Prototype Implementation

A team was formed within the School of Social Sciences to manage the prototype. Team members included the prototype leader (Karenne Hills, a lecturer and course coordinator within the School), the student's course coordinator, and the Dean of the School. In addition, a volunteer tutor (Kirsty Andersen) was recruited, who was a staff member of another department within the college. It was intended that team members would liaise with lecturers, unit tutors and other departments within the college (e.g. Registry and Student Services) when appropriate.

It is important to establish at the outset, that this program was not a research study, but rather an exploratory prototype purposed to discover if and how it could

be possible to support students with diverse learning styles and abilities to achieve success in higher education. However, to ensure rigour in the way the prototype was conducted it was aligned to a case study methodology, which by design “facilitates exploration of a specific phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources” (Baxter and Jack 2008, p. 544). A case study was deemed the most appropriate approach for this program, in that it is a valuable method for researchers “to develop theory, evaluate programs, and develop interventions” and to seek answers to the how and why questions of a program, without manipulating the behaviour of those involved in the study (Baxter and Jack 2008, p. 544).

Information gathered was limited to student assessment, unit grades and informal stakeholder feedback, and was therefore simply collated and reported rather than analysed as data. Whilst the collection of this information has been invaluable in encouraging the school to dream about expanding the program, initially, the approach was steeped in trepidation as we (the team) felt we were sailing into uncharted territory on a number of levels. As a prototype, the program did not require ethics approval, however an obvious bias needed to be addressed—specifically, the student in question is the son of the prototype leader. In response to this, intentional measures were put in place to ensure that this conflict of interest did not interfere with his progress, nor with the working of the prototype. These included the prototype leader receiving no access to his online learning forums, nor did she participate in any teaching or tutoring, course coordination, or assessment preparation. It was important to acknowledge, however, that she held valuable information about his academic background and learning style. As such, the prototype was designed in such a way as to hold the tension of these two conflicts with respect, so to utilize the strengths of her contributions. Because the underpinning motivation of the program was to test the possibility that *different* learning styles did not necessarily equate to less intelligence, it was imperative that the student did not receive any help beyond that offered within the program. The dual relationship of mother and prototype leader provided further opportunity for this to be closely monitored.

The academic goal of the prototype was to provide the support required for the student to achieve a Pass grade for each unit. Given his academic history and the nature of his disability, he was not predicted to achieve more than a passing grade and at the time of his enrolment there was some initial concern that even this may be beyond his capabilities. The team now stands very humbled by his achievements.

It was also important to gain an understanding of his expectations and motivations for study especially given that motivation has been shown to be an important factor in student engagement and retention (Bowles et al. 2014; Hsieh 2014; Kim et al. 2017; Price and Kadi-Hanifi 2011; Rizkallah and Seitz 2017; Saeed and Zyngier 2012). It has also been noted that those with a disability, as a group, appear to have a high level of motivation to engage in tertiary study (Gale and Parker 2013). The student provided the following reflection to his tutor on the first day of his study:

Looking forward to the journey to Chaplaincy or youth work. I'm worried though about how intensive it's going to be. I'm planning to have lots of fun completing the course.

I think the learning process will be enjoyable. Success as a student for me is achieving high grades as I enjoy the process. I am particularly looking forward to passing my first assessment and most of all I'm looking forward to the chase.

The project team was excited, if not somewhat daunted, by his enthusiasm!

It was recognized from the beginning that the student would require a significant amount of academic assistance. For this reason, the School decided he should enrol in one unit per semester. He was provided weekly one-on-one private tuition, for up to twelve hours per week. Modified assessment was offered and accessed in the first unit, however, this offer was refused by him after this. He was offered in-class support for the first three units, however, as he progressed through his studies and became more confident and independent, he attended classes alone.

4.5 Obstacles

Throughout the prototype, obstacles such as the student's difficulty in interpreting tasks, his distractibility and the length of time needed to complete a task were identified and addressed by the team. The time commitment he required to grasp the content of each unit along with his propensity to disengage when he became tired, required creative intervention. For example, the tutor encouraged him to incorporate his unique strengths, interests and ideas into his assessments. One such example occurred in his essay on drug addiction for which he interviewed a close friend of his who had been incarcerated on drug charges, quoted him in his essay, and included him in his reference list.

Concentration proved difficult in the first unit as this was offered in intensive mode, meaning three full days of teaching in a row. This barrier was subsequently minimized by choosing internal (weekly) units as the preferred mode. A lack of confidence in his abilities initially saw him rely heavily on the feedback of the tutor and lecturer, however, this issue improved greatly over the life of the prototype. By decreasing tutoring time throughout the prototype, he increased his independence and personal satisfaction. Finding a suitable work/life balance was problematic initially, however, the Social Sciences staff agree that this phenomenon is not unique to a student with a disability.

Another challenge, common to many contemporary students, was the contribution of social media (smart phone, Facebook and the Internet) to his distractibility. Technology has been evidenced to have vast and diverse educative benefits (Nadelson et al. 2017), however, non-academic media use in study settings is noted as a significant distraction as students attempt to hold a number of competing 'conversations' concurrently (Jacobsen and Forste 2011; Liu et al. 2017; Wood et al. 2012).

An interesting barrier specific to the student's condition lay in his issue with visual perception. This makes it difficult for him to write in a straight line, and to visualize lines, punctuation marks and some fonts. Again, experience has seen these

issues minimized. He was soon able to recognize that his academic writing was of a lower standard, so he requested that the tutor help him to make his writing “less scungy”. Replacing words such as “sucks” and “crappy” with more academic language soon saw an improvement in this area. As always anticipated, critical thinking was a new skill which needed to be learned.

4.6 Outcomes

Academically, significant improvement in areas such as grammar and sentence structure; time taken to complete tasks; his ability to recognize and correct mistakes; retention of information; participation in class activities; and independence was noted. After completing his first unit, his feedback included:

I couldn't have done most of these things a few months ago [...] When I got my marks back for the first quiz I was thinking holy crap I just did something I never thought I would do [...] The best thing [...] was excelling things that I didn't know I could.

Overall, he achieved well above everyone's expectations in all units achieving final unit grades of Credit or above. He graduated in 2017 having satisfied all requirements for a Diploma of Social Sciences (Fig. 1). This was an extremely proud day for the School of Social Sciences, the prototype team, the student and his family.

In addition to his academic success he has grown in self-esteem and confidence, is much more proficient in organizing his life, identifying priorities and communicating both verbally and in writing. Elaborating on this:

I prayed to God to help me get through this unit. It has made me a stronger person and made me realise not to give up. It has helped me remember in my whole life to not give up on your dreams. Doing this unit has made me more organized.

Lecturer feedback included the following:

- “The success of this program to date has greatly exceeded my initial expectations.”
- “Working with this student has encouraged me to be more innovative.”
- “This student applied himself well to this unit and far exceeded my expectations both in terms of participation and achievement.”
- “This student stands out as a student who sometimes asks unusual and unusually perceptive and intriguing questions, whose perspectives open up a whole new and different dimension to traditionally held viewpoints.”
- “He is capable of going much further than the Diploma in Social Sciences [...] if he puts his mind to his studies firmly and consistently over time, I can quite comfortably foresee him earning other additional tertiary degrees in the years ahead.”
- “It's interesting, he is nowhere near the bottom of the class. He identifies emotions and connects feelings to thoughts better than most of the class.”

Fig. 1 Samuel Davidson's graduation, 2017. (Published with the permission of DCD Photographics, Ascot, Australia)



- “Well I confess I was a little surprised but quite delighted. What impressed me most was his personal application. He derived meaning for his life from Scripture—the stuff of champions!”
- “The student did really well, his presentation was well researched and delivered. The whole class learnt a lot from him.”

The preconceived ideas held by many staff members concerning people with intellectual disabilities prior to working with this student are evidenced in these comments. This prototype has proven to be a learning process for all involved, which is an interesting phenomenon that is highly recognized and purported through the Disability Theology literature (Geiger 2012; Harshaw 2016; Reinders 2011; Vanier 1998).

4.7 Challenges

Concluding from the outcomes of the prototype several challenges were identified and addressed. First, being a small institution, funds were limited, which encouraged the team to be creative with available resources. A volunteer tutor was recruited, who multitasked some of the ideas considered at the outset of the program. Following the recommendations of the College of New Jersey, our plan to provide students “additional support before and after class sessions to maximize the quality of their participation and learning” (Carroll et al. 2009, p. 352), was included in the private tutoring lessons. The tutor, also liaised between the student and lecturers when extra support and explanation was required. Second, as reported in other tertiary institutions offering supports to students with a disability, staff workload and lack of training created some barriers (Couzens et al. 2015; Goode 2007; G. Vogel et al. 2007).

Interacting with a student with an intellectual disability, proved to be a new experience for some. Whilst the majority of staff, students and the wider college community embraced him, his potential and the idea of the prototype as a whole, at the same time a veiled undertone of ‘is it appropriate that a student with his apparent disability and high level of need be in a tertiary environment?’ or ‘We are not a TAFE you know’ rippled through to the team. Although this was disappointing, it is not completely surprising given that it has been reported that people with intellectual disabilities are more likely to confront attitudinal and societal barriers to inclusion than those with other types of disability (Clapton 2008; Myers et al. 1998; Scior 2011; Spassiani and Freidman 2014).

These attitudinal barriers created some difficult situations. A handful of students were quick to voice their suspicions that the student had received preferential treatment regarding assessment turnaround and generous marking. On the day of a group assessment, without informing him, the other members of his group did not come to class, meaning without warning, he was required to present the whole assessment himself. His inability to keep up with his peers in class meant that at times he was requested to work separately, out of the classroom, which resulted in him missing some lecture content and the opportunity for involvement in class discussion.

Perhaps the most glaring misconception of his abilities came when, towards the end of his award, it was implied that he was not capable of writing the assessment he handed in, and it was suggested that he had made use of a ‘ghost writer’. This plagiarism case was subject to a full panel investigation by the college, where he was called to defend his academic integrity. Subsequently he was fully exonerated of these charges. Although difficult to determine, a contributing factor to this issue may have been the public misperception that intellectual and developmental disability equates to very low capability (Scior 2011), an idea which empirical evidence has debunked in recent years (Carter et al. 2015; Chiang and Lin 2007;

Dawson et al. 2007; Dawson and Soulieres 2016; Ehlers et al. 1997; Göransson et al. 2016; Hord and Xin 2015). Unfortunately, however, this notion still seems to represent the dominant social discourse (Clapton 2008; Scior 2011), and continues to be reflected in society's propensity to polarize people groups into the "good, well resourced, all-knowing" uppers, benefactors to the "weak and vulnerable" lowers (Luetz et al. 2018, p. 3), who are seen primarily as objects of charity (Clapton 2008). Unwittingly, this prototype turned that societal myth on its head.

Research shows that students with intellectual disability should have the opportunity to engage in academic work which challenges them rather than simply being taught basic academics or self-care skills (Göransson et al. 2016; Prendergast et al. 2017). Identifying the balance between providing an appropriate level and type of assistance and underutilizing his true abilities required careful attention and negotiation. For example, whilst the tutor was aware of his capabilities, others doubted these strengths and continued to treat him as though he was not able to manage certain tasks. This meant that the tutor took on a secondary role as advocate for his academic ability and capacity for increased independence.

Finally, the dual relationship of the prototype leader with the student was a dynamic that needed careful negotiation. Overseeing the prototype whilst being restricted from making some suggestions or recommendations required sensitivity and discipline. In retrospect, however, this limitation has been identified as a strength of the program. The commitment of the staff to keep the student's progress 'pure', meant that his mother had absolutely no involvement in his academic progress. This has added significant credibility to the success of the prototype.

5 Recommendations

It is not possible to draw conclusive evidence from a prototype involving one student with specific needs. However, the outcomes of this prototype point to a number of exciting possibilities leading to specific recommendations that have the potential to benefit students with intellectual, developmental, and/or learning disabilities. At the very least, this initiative expands on O'Brien and colleagues (n.d., 2009) work, demonstrating what is possible in assisting these students to achieve success. The prototype identified a number of recommendations for developing and implementing future programs of this nature.

Academic and Staffing Considerations: As noted by Kilpatrick and colleagues (2016), training around the needs of students with disabilities should be provided to staff (see also Morina and Morgado 2018). Once a personalized study program has been formulated for a student, Professional Development for relevant staff should include information around issues specific to this student. In the case of this prototype, for the reasons described earlier, it was discovered that internal mode of study worked best. However, exploration into creative ways to adapt such a program to online learning will support the enrolment of students who may live remote to an institution, or for other reasons be unable to attend internal classes.

Study Support: Although not trialed in this prototype, the development of a pre-enrolment series of voluntary classes may be beneficial. These could provide training on basic skills such as the use of Microsoft Word and Excel, sentence structure, reading academic papers, study/life balance and appropriate in-class behaviour—all skills foundational to successful tertiary study.

Given that it has been suggested that both students with severe disability and intellectual disability favour collaborative learning (Kubiak 2015, 2017; Morningstar et al. 2017), the inclusion of group tutorials for specific students is also worth considering. This could include pre- and post- tutorials to prepare the students with the important points to look for in the lecture, and then to follow up with further emphasis of key learning after the lecture. This should help to reinforce necessary unit criteria specific to assessment and unit outcomes. Prior research has suggested that a combination of one-on-one tuition and group tuition is a successful intervention in teaching academic English to ESL students with a reading disability (Schiff and Calif 2004).

The limited hours for tuition currently available in many institutions may not be adequate to meet the requirements of students with a higher need for learning support. Thus, the contribution of the tutor to the success of the prototype cannot be underestimated. The student and the prototype team are extremely grateful to the tutor Kirsty Andersen, who provided support on a voluntary basis for the duration of the prototype. The employment of specialized tutors for this type of program is essential. The use of other students as tutors in exchange for academic credit is an initiative which has previously been trialed successfully in modified tertiary learning environments for people with intellectual and developmental disability (e.g., Remis et al. 2017).

Viability: Significantly, there are particular financial considerations for any institution seeking to establish or maintain specialized programs. The authors acknowledge the challenges that government universities in Australia would experience with funding for such programs, for as long as university funding is dependent on particular metrics of retention and student success within particular support structures and time constraints, it appears there would be considerable obstacles for such programs to be offered in institutions where elitism is still honoured. This sets up a tension as to whether such a program would/could remain viable within a secular university.

The strength of the prototype and its success for the student and his achievements is that it was offered within a Christian context, calling on Gospel values and mission imperatives. The challenge of course for small private institutions, then, is to find ways to access and maintain sufficient funding to support the viability of such programs. Furthermore, Christian institutions must ask themselves in what ways they can stand as a beacon for transformative change within the Higher Education sector, a value that Christian Heritage College holds closely. This prototype is the first spark of a dream to offer pathways for inclusion for people traditionally excluded from higher education.

As noted by the University of Sydney, the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Australia offers a remarkable opportunity for people

with diagnosed disability to access atypical programs such as this (O'Brien et al. n.d.). The opportunity to participate in post-school studies could be made possible by the purchasing of tutoring hours through their allocated NDIS funds. For this initiative to occur an institution would need to become a service provider. Furthermore, students may be able to use a paid carer as a note taker or tutor, by which the wages are paid by disability or government funding. Institutions may be able to partner with Disability service providers to realize this initiative.

Finally, an often overlooked factor in viability is the impact of strong support and advocacy—at the micro (staff) and macro (institutional) levels. For a program such as this to exist long term there must be a cohesive commitment across the institution to the provision of an environment which nurtures students of all abilities and learning styles to reach their potential.

6 Discussion

There appears to be remarkable benefits in an individualized, strength-based support program for students with specific learning needs. This is not surprising given that, as noted by Barnhill (2016) in relation to students with Asperger Syndrome, “A comprehensive, flexible approach that is individualized based on the student’s unique needs appears to be integral to a successful program” (p. 10). For example, the tutor discovered that the best strategies for working with this student seemed to be patience, creativity, flexibility, relating concepts to his life experiences and the willingness to work *with* him as a partner working towards a common goal.

It is evidenced in the high level of academic achievement realized by this student, along with his growth in life skills such as self-esteem, organizational ability and verbal and written communication, that the prototype was incredibly successful for this young man. Further, it provided an experience and intervention that enhanced his feelings of belonging, greatly increased his academic performance, and encouraged the development of skills that have translated into his personal and spiritual life. He reflected:

Since doing [uni] I have made my walk with God stronger by wanting to get to know him. I prayed to God who directed me to the Holy Spirit to guide me and help me to do what I needed through uni [...] I have gained more self-awareness and I am growing in confidence in using my learning to be an effective youth worker in training.

Since completing his award, he has attained full time employment, and looks forward to a bright future. A central feature and strength of the prototype lay in the implementation of a personalized program that focused on identifying individual needs and abilities and provided tailored, flexible support. When designing the prototype this consideration was considered pivotal partly because, as noted by Koca-Atabey (2017), the needs and level of support required by a student with a disability are complex and may change over time.

Another unique feature of the prototype was that the support provided was not time limited in that it extended for the length of the student's enrolment. Many programs offered in other tertiary institutions worldwide are limited to either short bridging courses, specific number of support sessions, or supports which are only available during the first year of enrolment in an award (Hart et al. 2010; Pugliese and White 2014).

Finally, unlike in many tertiary institutions the student completed normal curriculum requirements rather than a modified or audit program specifically designed for students with a disability. This student stood alongside his peers at his graduation ceremony with pride in his remarkable achievement. Clearly there are important implications of this prototype to the engagement and success of students with disability, and in the capacity of institutions to offer an equitable and positive study environment to a wider range of students.

Research has demonstrated that students who have family support are more likely to perform well at their studies (Cheng et al. 2012), and it is noted that although the prototype leader did not have any input into the education of the student, his awareness that he had strong support would likely have had an impact on his success. However, amongst all the many ingredients attributed to the initial success of the prototype, two major reasons stand out. First, the student's high commitment and motivation to succeed, and secondly, his willingness to work extremely hard to achieve his dream, cannot be under estimated:

I didn't have any trouble choosing to come in or not to come in because I know if I wanted it I had to work hard for it [...] I know that if you put your mind to anything you can always achieve.

Opportunities for further research to investigate the benefits of such a program to students with other types of intellectual, developmental and learning disability, are evident. Research should also pursue the benefits of such programs for various stakeholders such as staff, other students, families and the wider community. Following the success of the prototype for Sam, conversations are underway within the School concerning the possibility of expanding this program to include more students with a variety of needs, and to monitor each student's course progress. The School is also keen to expand their vision into the wider college community, and conversations are also under way with other departments to explore further opportunities for enrolment of atypical students, and for student resources to fulfil needs as tutors, note takers and other support roles.

7 Conclusion

The success of this prototype to date encourages us to dream of greater possibilities for people with disability within the tertiary education sector. Similar programs would hopefully enhance student success and retention and realize improved accessibility to tertiary education for greater numbers of non-typical students.

It could be argued that the success of this prototype extends past that of passing certain classes to achieve an academic goal. This prototype speaks to the very heart of the Gospel of Christ, which calls us to include all people into God's kingdom. CHC's (2015) core values that celebrate "the rich diversity and inherent worth of every person as a carrier of the Imago Dei and our desire [...] to encourage, support, and develop human flourishing and service across our community" (para. 5), echo the very intent of this prototype. In the words of the student:

I am a Christian which is very important to me and it also says what type of person I have become. I believe everyone should have a chance at life no matter what their situation is.

The success of this prototype moving forward lies in the hope that many students otherwise excluded from higher educational opportunities, would be afforded the benefit of the transformational experiences that are at the heart of who CHC is.

8 Epilogue

8.1 *Karenne*

Sam is now 30 years old and still manages to amaze me, yet I am learning that it has been my own perspectives and misconceptions that in many ways helped to create the 'box' that Sam has smashed out of in many areas of his life. When I changed my belief that a child with a disability was a problem to be overcome, and embraced and chose my children for the remarkable gifts they are (Hills and Meteyard 2013), miracles happened. Sam completing this program is but one of those miracles. As an academic, I am extremely proud of the achievements of the prototype, and eagerly anticipate the impact of a broadened program in the lives of other atypical students. As a mother, however, my heart is about to burst.

8.2 *Kirsty*

When I was approached to tutor Sam for the prototype, I had no idea that the opportunity would be life-changing. Prior to admission, Sam had described to me his life dream to attend Bible college; a dream which had been "crushed" by his exclusion from formal study in this area, probably because of the general perception that people with his type of disability have limited academic ability. It was the word "crushed" that got me. Did Sam prove them wrong?—Yes! Was the experience challenging?—Certainly! Would I do it again?—In a heartbeat!

8.3 Sam

Studying at Christian Heritage College has been a great achievement for me, but challenging at times. I had always wanted to go to Bible college but did not know about CHC when I was looking. This course has taught me to reference properly. My writing is a lot better, and I can now read more complicated things and understand them. My favourite class was ‘Foundations of a Christ-Centred, Bible Based Worldview’, because it was about the things I really wanted to study for. Doing well at CHC has made me feel better about myself, and I have proved to myself that I can do it. I am more confident now. I have learnt to believe in myself, and not let other people put me down. Now I know that I am intelligent.

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Chapter 17

Using Appreciative Inquiry and Multimodal Texts as Transformative Tools Within a Christ-Following, Missional, Learning Community



James Arkwright and Clement Chihota

Abstract This chapter reflects on an Appreciative Inquiry research project undertaken at Bethlehem Tertiary Institute (BTI) in Aotearoa New Zealand. The project explored how staff at BTI journey together to nurture more conscious and intentional attachment with God, resulting in transformed lives and communities. The five steps commonly associated with Appreciative Inquiry, namely, define, discovery, dream, design and destiny were implemented in a manner intended to be highly collaborative and fostering of consciousness-raising and commitment to what participants corporately love as Christian educators and researchers. In pursuit of these outcomes, the project took on a multivocal, multimodal and multipurposeful character, which was not initially anticipated but which did affirm participants' creativity, resourcefulness and commitment to their shared vision. This chapter describes the ways in which this process unfolded, and how it assisted BTI staff to engage in collaborative research, reimagine their core values and identities and to really think through what Christian higher education means to them.

Keywords Bethlehem tertiary institute · Appreciative inquiry process
Collaborative research · Institutional vision and mission · Christian higher education · Digital posters · Multimodal texts

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1 Introduction: Employing Appreciative Inquiry at Bethlehem Tertiary Institute (BTI)

Bethlehem Tertiary Institute is a small, private, Christian tertiary provider of teacher, social work, counsellor and professional practice education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Its vision is to be ‘a relational, responsive and transformational Christ-following tertiary learning community committed to growing a faithful expression of the Kingdom of God on earth.’ As its mission, BTI aims to ‘provide Christ-centred, Biblically-informed professional preparation, development and research for influential service.’ Finally, BTI is guided by the following values: A Biblical Christian worldview as formational; personal and professional inquiry and integration; a strengths-based learning environment and Treaty of Waitangi based relationships appropriate to the Aotearoa New Zealand context.

The decision to implement an Appreciative Inquiry at BTI was motivated by a desire to generate authentic and critical engagement with this vision, mission and values. In a sense, these agendas broadened the typical mandate of the approach, which predominantly relates to organisational change (Cooperrider et al. 2008; Whitney and Trosten-Bloom 2010). Whilst the main focus of the project was to raise awareness of the strengths and potential of BTI as an organisation, it was also hoped that involving all staff in the project would further enhance BTI’s research capacity.

1.1 Ethical Considerations

Prior to implementing the Appreciative Inquiry, an application was submitted to the BTI Research Ethics committee. In addition to describing the title, aims, methodology, procedure, and outcomes envisaged for the project, the ethics application also indicated that all BTI staff (that is, both academic and support staff) would be invited to participate in the project. This aspect of the ethics application deserves further discussion as it presented a potential ethical dilemma.

As indicated in the Ethics Application, the Appreciative Inquiry project was to be conducted during times set aside for staff research on the institutional calendar. This raised a potential ethical dilemma in that if a staff member did not wish to participate in the project, then in effect, they would have no active role(s) in prearranged meetings already included within their work plans. In considering this matter, it proposed in the ethics application that if a staff member did not wish to participate in any part or all of the Appreciative Inquiry, then they could still attend the meetings as part of ‘a witnessing audience’ (White 2007). Thus, the consent form inviting staff to participate in the Appreciative Inquiry included the ‘non-participatory’ option. Initially, two staff members opted out of the project as they were concerned that it would be an unsafe experience for them, but when the research process was clearly explained in a staff meeting, they changed their minds

and decided to participate. Although having full participation was not essential from a research perspective, the involvement of all the BTI staff in the research was felicitous as it strengthened both a sense of community and enthusiasm for the project, which was initially named ‘Learning by Doing: Exploring Institutional Best Practice through Appreciative Inquiry’.

The ethics application expressed hope that staff would learn about Appreciative Inquiry through actually applying it. Participants would also experience a collaborative research process during which they could actively craft research and interview questions, generate discovery statements, and imagine what the future might look like for BTI. In a sense, the project empowered staff to shape their preferred futures, as ‘the images we hold of the future are socially created and, once articulated, serve to guide individual and collective actions’ (Whitney and Trosten-Bloom 2010, p. 396).

2 Appreciative Inquiry Process

As a first step in the Appreciative Inquiry process, staff collaboratively defined the focus of the project. This was after a preparatory session in which staff were familiarised with the Appreciative Inquiry research methodology and process (including its five stages). Participants were then challenged, in small groups, to articulate the particular focus of the project. The different groups produced various suggestions, which were integrated into the following broad question: ‘When we are at our best, as a Christ-following missional learning community, how do we journey together to nurture staff and students’ more conscious and intentional attachment with God, resulting in transformed lives and communities?’

The second step of the Appreciative Inquiry was the formulation of the discovery questions. Here, staff, again in small groups, crafted more specific questions that would be used to facilitate focus group discussions. Notably, it was decided that it would be best to honour all participants’ contributions by including all proposed questions from the Discovery phase. Due to spatial limitations, it is not practical to list all the 36 interview questions that were generated. Examples of questions generated by the groups were as follows:

- What aspects of your role at BTI leave you feeling purposefully energised?
- How does BTI support you to fulfil God’s calling on your life?
- What do you appreciate about your work/workplace?
- What aspects of your work here make you feel like you are participating in a missional community?
- What do you think has been one of the most significant moments for you at BTI? Explain.
- Tell me about a time when you felt most proud to be a part of BTI. Explain.
- What are you really thankful to God for about your work and experiences at BTI?
- What has been the high point of your work at BTI?

- In thinking back to when you first came to work at BTI, what did you appreciate and what did it mean for how you went about your work and your life beyond your work?
- What gives BTI graduates the cutting edge? What is it about them? What distinguishes them from graduates from other institutions?
- What stories have you heard from students and/or their family that capture their transformation journey during their time at BTI?

Participants then discussed these questions in focus groups of four to five. Each group responded to different questions (out of the total of 36), which gave some variability to the data that was generated.

The next stage of the Appreciative Inquiry saw staff transforming their responses to the discovery questions into macro-provocative dream statements. These were statements that envisaged how themes emerging out of the Dream phase could be practically realised within the institute's day-to-day operations.

Finally, participants proceeded to the Destiny phase of the project. Again in small groups, they created digital posters that captured eight key themes emerging from the Appreciative Inquiry. These eight themes were that as a collective, BTI staff enjoy being God-Centred, they appreciate being Strength-Based, they view themselves as a Caring Community, they celebrate having Servant-Hearted Leadership, enjoy working in a Beautiful Environment, draw inspiration from watching their Students 'Grow and Go,' appreciate Providing and Receiving Mentoring and enjoy working within Supportive Teams.

At the stage of presenting the Appreciative Inquiry findings, it was realised that the theme of God-centred permeated all the other domains. Therefore, rather than present it as just one of the eight themes, this theme was positioned in the centre as pictorially represented in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1 Visual representation of the appreciative inquiry themes



The Appreciative Inquiry created opportunities for staff to engage with these eight themes and reflect on how they shaped their day-to-day practices. Participants' experience of the research was canvassed via an online evaluation survey, which overwhelmingly illustrated that the project had achieved its purposes of being a fun, lively and engaging way to experiment with research while furthering our collective sense of cohesion and missional identity.

2.1 Research as a Collaborative Learning Space

Defining the research question is usually established by the researcher, and even within Appreciative Inquiry, this is often undertaken by the core group facilitating the study, which in this case was the institute's research committee. However, the Appreciative Inquiry described in this chapter took a different, more collaborative approach as it involved all participants in formulating and finalising the research topic. In that sense, the process of defining the research agenda was collectively owned, rendering the project a collective commitment to best practice. The emphasis on collaboration was maintained when developing interview questions for the Discovery phase of the project. The process brought together staff from different departments within the Institute, that is teacher education, counsellor education, social work education, the learning centre and library, and support services. An interesting aspect of this approach was that participants engaged with questions, some of which they, themselves, had helped to formulate, which increased their sense of engagement with the research process. In short, this project emphasised collaboration within the research process, and as much as possible collapsed the division between researcher and participants. An emphasis that was intentional as a means for growing staff interest and competency in undertaking research.

2.2 Analysis of Data

The analysis of data generated from the questions was, again, collaborative. Seven members of staff analysed the data: Five being members of the research committee, one being an academic staff member, and one a member of the support services. All of these staff had participated in the Discovery phase and so, in a very real sense, were analysing their own responses alongside those of their colleagues. Four meetings were arranged to analyse the data and all commented on how enjoyable the process was. Findings including emerging themes and patterns were discussed and coded. Particular attention was given to recurring words or phrases and striking quotes. To illustrate, within the theme of students that grow and go, the following quotes were captured:

Feel I am buzzing when having one-to-one conversations with students, colleagues, opportunities to engage with pastoral care [...] energized when students make progress in

their journey towards God, and knowing that I had a part to play with that, energised when asked about something I can assist with [...] some of the conversations online, students sharing aspects of their lives—I find very humbling [...] when things are going really well, students appreciating learning activities, the holistic movement of change in students [...] all ‘scoring things off a list’, when the list is completed.

Appreciate the students that you meet are ‘enriching, diverse and talented and resilient people’. It is a privilege to work with people’s challenges to help them grow and develop. For example, one student said that ‘by coming here I found God again’. BTI provides a context whereby people can connect or reconnect to their faith!

3 The Dream and Design Phases of the Project

For the Dream phase of the project, academic staff were again asked to dialogue in small groups, considering several themes that had emerged from the data and proposing macro-provocative statements for each theme. The macro-provocative statements were an attempt to envision ‘what might be’. As Cooperrider et al. (2008) state:

The Dream phase is an invitation for an organization to amplify its positive core by imagining the possibilities for the future that have been generated through the Discovery phase. During the Dream phase, the participants are encouraged to talk about (and dream about) not what is, but what might be a better organization and a better world. The Dream phase is practical in that it is grounded in the organization’s history and generative in that it seeks to expand the organization’s true potential. It is the time to challenge the status quo of the organization. It is intended to create synergy and excitement. Once the group gets into the spirit and acknowledges the possibility of greatness, the positive core can be channelled, focused, and used to design how it will be and create the destiny of the envisioned dream. (p. 2353)

To facilitate the Dream phase activity, staff were asked to imagine a group of visitors who had been at BTI for a week and had found the place ‘absolutely amazing’. On the bus returning home, the visitors would be asked to describe their impressions of BTI. The macro-provocative statements were the descriptions staff imagined the visitors making in relation to the eight themes (God-centred, servant-hearted leadership, supportive teams, mentoring, strength-based, caring community, students that grow and go, beautiful environment)—see Fig. 2 for two examples.

The macro-provocative statements connected participants’ sense of BTI’s ‘current best’ with how this might translate into ‘preferred futures’. It seemed a straightforward step from here to explore and plan the Design phase together, which shifted focus from ‘what might be’ to constructing ‘how BTI should be’ in the future. The key question addressed by participants in groups was ‘how each theme could be further known and developed?’ As part of these discussions, staff were asked to consider what institutional structures and processes needed to either be affirmed or changed. Staff appeared to really enjoy the experience of imaginatively

Theme	<i>Dream Macro-Provocative Statements</i>
Caring Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>BTI is a loving family, I've never felt such genuine care</i> • <i>BTI is a warm, caring, other-focused place, founded upon God's unconditional love</i> • <i>Everyone at BTI feels an integral part of a transformational and relational community where all have a meaningful part to play and are appreciated for their unique contribution</i> • <i>Caring for each other in all aspects of belonging. BTI is an active example of love in action where people notice, respond with generosity in communion with God and one another</i>
Students that Grow and Go	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Walking together, the BTI community accepts, nurtures and disciples people on an authentic faith journey</i> • <i>Their students are willing to change. They're a passionate bunch. They are going to change the world (their part of the world)</i> • <i>Allowing space for exploration of God's purpose for students and the community. The staff are in tune with the Holy Spirit</i>

Fig. 2 Examples of dream macro provocative statements

planning and envisioning an ideal future for BTI via a process which intentionally sought to value people’s ideas (see Fig. 3 for an example of the Design phase in relation to the theme of Mentoring):

The final Destiny phase reinforced the appreciative learning culture nurtured throughout the project, ‘creating a positive focus, a sense of meaning, and systems that encourage collaboration’ (Cooperrider et al. 2008, p. 3384). It had been anticipated and certainly hoped that the findings of the project would have a transformative influence on, and be integrated within, BTI’s structures and

Theme	‘Design’ Structure, Processes and Action Plans
Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of formal mentor as well as those that arise organically • More co-teaching with a focus on the development of an aspect of teaching practice e.g., using WiZIQ within Moodle online learning • One-to-one mentoring in terms of people’s learning needs e.g., using Google forms, scholarly writing, strategies for classroom teaching • Receive mentoring from external persons, as well as from a cross-cluster person who mentors ‘me in my work’ and has time to get alongside ‘me’ • The question, “is there any part of your work/role where you would appreciate mentoring?”, could be included on appraisal form but not as a KPI. Receiving mentoring could then be included within a person’s work plan. Assessment for mentoring could be undertaken in regard to the need being internal and/or external mentoring required. Inclusion of a ‘Mentoring’ tick box on the appraisal form – will add to its intentionality – and maintain openness for both engagement with and ownership of mentoring happening for staff

Fig. 3 Examples of ‘Design’ structure, processes and action plans

processes. At the same time, this final phase of the project would hopefully promote a stronger research culture at BTI. The implementation of the final phase of the Appreciative Inquiry project reflected this agenda and a decision was made to have staff, working in small groups, design digital posters which captured one of the eight themes.

The digital posters portrayed the radical possibilities of what might happen if the theme in question became increasingly enculturated within the institute. Reflecting the Christian nature of BTI, participants were asked to integrate a scripture that resonated with the theme. Each group comprised of staff from the different departments of BTI, which meant that academic staff were working alongside non-academic staff. It was hoped that within the groups, at least one person would have the technical ‘know how’ to create a digital poster and fortunately, this hope was fulfilled. The process and outcomes of creating the digital posters became a highlight of the project for staff as they were a creative and collaborative means by which the appreciated historical character and culture of the institution could be expressed alongside a collective vision of BTI’s future.

3.1 Digital Posters: Generating Multivocal, Multimodal and Multipurpose Outcomes

The posters produced during the Destiny phase of the Appreciative Inquiry were clearly more of a ‘means to an end’ rather than ‘final end-products’ in themselves. More than just condensing or finalising the research process, the posters generated further conversations and visualisations—both during and after their preparation. While designing the posters, participants revisited themes relating to BTI’s character, culture, history and preferred future. Thus, far from being a linear process where each phase ‘neatly’ succeeded the preceding ones, the Appreciative Inquiry proved to be a recursive process, during which themes were recalled and further developed. Like semiotic guideposts, the posters captured institutional dreams and presented opportunities to deepen dialogues about our everyday practices.

In view of the collaborative processes adopted for their design, the posters were multivocal expressions that brought together various views (or interpretations) of each theme. Deciding what to show on each poster, what to accentuate and how to present the general layout required high levels of negotiation among the group members. Interestingly, this negotiation process did not end when the posters—all of very high quality—were completed. After the end of the Appreciative Inquiry project, staff continued to discuss the posters and refer to them during some of their meetings. In this way, the posters became pictorial sites triggering on-going discussions and engagements, as celebrated in what Habermas (1969) has described as ‘public spheres.’

Utilising posters for the destiny phase of the Appreciative Inquiry was a hallmark of the unconventional approach adopted right from the outset of the Appreciative Inquiry (Hamilton and Jaaniste 2009). Empiricist and positivist

models of research envisage researchers ‘going out’ to observe or study ‘other people’ or objects ‘out there,’ and then reporting their findings in written-up (or neatly-sutured) papers. Shifting from this paradigm, the Appreciative Inquiry focused the investigative lens on the researching community itself, and prioritised the constructivist process of the researching community over any ‘finished product.’ As a semiotic choice, the posters expedited a dialogic process that clarified and elaborated BTI’s vision, mission and our core values.

The posters were also multimodal forms of expression, which utilised various forms of semiosis such as visual symbols/images and written captions. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) have characterised multimodal texts as ‘rich’ forms of semiosis as they give higher affordance to subtle and complex ideas, which words or pictures/images on their own struggle to fully communicate. Partly due to their inherent multimodality, the posters also displayed a high level of intertextuality (Fairclough 2003; Kristeva 1987) as the words, captions, symbols and images related not only to each other but invoked other semiotic signs, texts and discourses (Burr 2003; Gergen 1999). As Fairclough (2003) has noted, intertextuality conveys, ‘[...] how texts draw upon, incorporate, recontextualise, and dialogue with other texts,’ sometimes ‘mimicking’ them, but at other times, undermining or seeking to supplant them (p. 17). In this case, the multimodal signs on the posters engaged with a wide range of other texts located in popular literature, various forms of realia, and Biblical scriptures. Due to their intertextuality and exploitation of multimodal forms, the posters proved to be a perfect vehicle for a project that sought to generate and escalate participants’ imaginations, while also harnessing their creative potential.

The combination of written and visual symbols and metaphors on the posters sharpened their communicative power (Lakoff and Johnson 2003; Zizek 1989). Zizek (1989) has described symbols—for example, emblems, badges and national flags—as ‘master signifiers,’ whose communicative force paradoxically increases because their exact meanings elude easy interpretation. Zizek (1989) compares such items to Kant’s (1914) ‘sublime objects’—great (or transcendental) ‘truths’ that are too subtle and complicated to be expressed in simple language, but whose meanings when symbolised are understood nonetheless. Thus, master signifiers underscore the limitations of ordinary verbal communication and potentially can also intensify (or multiply) the mystical power and authority inherent within communicative signs. For example, national flags are master signifiers that arouse people’s emotions and commitment due to their un-enunciated meanings, which are not fixed but open to multiple interpretations. In that respect, Lakoff and Johnson’s (2003) comparison of symbols to icebergs—which carry much more of their substance underneath than above the surface—aptly reflects this dynamic. Indeed, this is how the digital posters were experienced. They communicated BTI’s mission, vision and values much more profoundly than any written statements might have allowed.

All groups made use of visual symbols to express their perceptions of BTI’s distinctive character, ethos and preferred future. Examples included a dove (to represent the rather elusive notion of ‘Shalom,’ which features within several programmes’ rationale), a tree with prominent roots (symbolising BTI’s emergence

from the Judeo-Christian tradition and other significant cultural precedents) and a montage of people fellowshiping with one another (expressing BTI's caring community). Intriguingly, these symbols and metaphors used less to communicate more. The word 'more', intentionally repeated here, harks back to the point made earlier, that the posters facilitated a continuing process of visualisation and interpretation of BTI's unique character. The posters, therefore, could be viewed as active agents generating processual institutional transformation subsequent to their development (Dawson 1996; Latour 2005). Accordingly, the posters have been displayed in the staffroom and continue to be a stimulus. They are typically shared with visitors to BTI, many of whom become interested in the stories they communicate about who we are: our mission, character and purpose.

The posters appear to be a highly effective means of representing BTI's ethos and future possibilities, ironically, due to their elliptical style of communication (Chouliaraki 2010). As a genre, posters present multiple and differentiated signs and symbols without explicitly showing their interconnections. The reader or viewer is compelled to fill in the gaps by making their own connections (Chouliaraki 2010; Georgakopoulou 2004), which when shared, affirm a community's capacity to be creative, resourceful and committed to its vision.

4 Conclusion

Based on participants' feedback, the Appreciative Inquiry was highly valued, partly due to the insights it provided into participants' ways of working, exploration of the values that define and bind BTI's community together and also the directions of growth that this community hopes to pursue in the future. However—and superseding all of these benefits—what became most valued was the transformative effect of the research process itself.

The survey results strongly indicated that staff enjoyed the opportunity to work together across programmes, the transparency and clarity of the research process, the scope to shape and take ownership of the research agenda, and exploring an inquiry that was familiar and relevant to their hopes and passions for BTI. For example, one participant remarked that the research process was 'organic' and 'inclusive'. Another person commented that the project 'demystified', 'lightened the burden' and 'took the sting out of research'. A number of participants expressed their appreciation for how the research was not 'dry' or 'dusty', but 'relevant' and 'alive'. Another highlight was the inclusion of all staff in the project, with one participant saying, 'we are often overlooked when research projects are undertaken but our team is full of knowledge and ideas'.

The initial premise of the project was that all staff are imaginative, knowledgeable and capable—and this is what led to the design being a process that included all. It was one that enabled the emergence of multiple voices, combined visual and written semiotic signs to express the findings, and intentionally addressed the community's desire to grow and increase their research confidence.

It appears, with the benefit of hindsight, that the project did capture something of Smith's (2009) reimagining of education primarily being 'concerned with shaping our hopes and passions—our visions of 'the good life' [... and] transforming of our imagination [not] first and foremost about what we know, but about what we love' (p. 18). Through the staff engaging in what they love about Christian education and BTI, there is now a higher level of clarity about what BTI's purpose is as an institution, with displayed posters reminding all of what they are actually doing when they are at their best, as a Christ-following missional learning community.

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Part IV
**Contemporary Trends in Learning,
Business, and Technology: Proactively
Engaging Socio-cultural Realities**

Chapter 18

Investing in Australian Youth: Nurturing Values Integrated Through Action-Based Learning



Tony Dowden and Mark Drager

Abstract Current societal trends are creating new opportunities for community organisations—including church groups and non-profit organisations—that specialise in the delivery of extracurricular services to young people. This chapter discusses the case of a non-profit community organisation in Queensland that uses ‘Values Integrated Through Action-based Learning’ (VITAL), underpinned by a Judeo-Christian worldview, to help young people develop robust personal values. In particular, the chapter conducts a comparative analysis of the approaches used by this organisation and the developmental characteristics of young adolescents. It discusses key implications for educating and working with youth that pertain to enhancing: Self-discipline, personal confidence, social skills and a lifelong love of learning. It concludes that savvy community organisations that commit to understanding and actively meeting youth needs in safe learning environments are well positioned to ‘make a difference’ to future generations of young people.

Keywords Adolescent • Adolescence • Values • Developmental needs

1 Introduction

Reform of the middle years of schooling (Years 5–9) is a grass-roots movement driven by parents, educators and community members who are dissatisfied with existing approaches to schooling. While many young adolescents (Years 10–15) enjoy school and have positive experiences, many more have unhappy experiences. Research shows that disengagement, alienation and boredom with school peaks in the middle years (Middle Years of Schooling Association [MYSA] 2008). Young adolescents are generally interested in real-life experiences and authentic contexts

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for learning, but often less enthusiastic about traditional academic subjects, especially when lessons have little relevance to their interests or concerns (National Middle School Association and Association for Middle-Level Education 2010).

A key focus of reform in the middle years of schooling is to help upper primary and junior secondary teachers to recognise the developmental needs of young adolescents and design interesting curricula and create engaging learning activities that are responsive to young people's needs (Dowden 2007, 2014; Rumble and Smith 2016). Unfortunately, many teachers are unfamiliar with the developmental needs of young adolescents and do not know how to design programs that young people will respond to. The reality is that the quality of teacher education for the middle years in Australia is patchy. A few universities in Australia have excellent middle-level courses run by expert teaching staff, but most teacher education programs have an inadequate focus on preparing teachers for the middle years of schooling (Pendergast and Bahr 2010; Shanks and Dowden 2015).

2 Developmental Needs in Young Adolescence

As young people move through the developmental stage of young adolescence they face two major upheavals in their lives: First, their personal timetable for puberty abruptly commences, and second, they make the transition from primary to secondary schooling. This stage is, therefore, a time of significant personal change that leads to challenges, some of which occur simultaneously, and all of which influence educational progress (Caskey and Anfara 2014; Pendergast 2017).

From a biological perspective, individuals experience significant developmental change as they move from childhood to adolescence. Brains are still under construction (Nagel 2014). Emotions increase in intensity and play an important role in mediating motivation and engagement in learning. Indeed, emotion has a major influence on cognition (Damasio 2005). For example, when students like a teacher and enjoy a class, they think more deeply, try harder and concentrate for longer. Due to brain immaturity, students are prone to making black-and-white judgements such as 'I hate school', or 'I love my teacher'. Some of these snap judgments can have a negative impact on the quality of teacher-student relationships if they are reinforced by negative perceptions of the teacher's classroom management and then reified as accepted mythology among peers.

During young adolescence, individuals aspire to adulthood. On-going physical and cognitive maturation is a powerful driver of socio-emotional development but this is reliant on a supportive social context for healthy development. For young people, the first steps towards becoming independent adult learners involve acquiring a range of life skills, such as respect for others, tolerance of interpersonal differences, and accepting increasing levels of responsibility for personal progress; as well as key social skills, such as negotiation and conflict resolution (Brighton 2007; Caskey and Anfara 2014). Many young people also face other personal upheavals such as family relocations that necessitate a change of school,

modifications in their family structure due to failed relationships, or significant issues relating to poverty or poor health (Parkinson 2011). Young people also become increasingly aware that their peer group is divided by invisible fault-lines that include gender, ethnicity, citizenship, religious affiliation and socio-economic status.

During young adolescence, individuals also undergo significant growth in terms of moral and spiritual development (Caskey and Anfarra 2014). Moral development is associated with the attitudes, beliefs, values and choices that help form personal identity. Spiritual development is closely linked to moral development and is associated with the need to find meaning in life, and as individuals mature and become less egotistical, learning to give and receive love (Caskey and Anfarra 2014).

Today's young people live in an urbanised, globalised and digitally connected world that is radically different to the teenage world their parents and teachers experienced. They are exposed to trillions of unedited adult messages received 24/7 in a kaleidoscope of seductive images and sound-bites about a panoply of issues including friendship, love, sex, beauty, fashion, music, diet, obesity, alcohol, drugs, violence, suicide, loneliness, spirituality and saving the planet (Carrington 2006). Yet, despite easy access to digital connectivity, some young people are not well connected to each other or their communities.

Effective schooling in the middle years interweaves relevant subject content from the disciplines with the development of important social skills for learning. Done well, schooling in the middle years champions diversity by specifically teaching students to tolerate, value and celebrate difference in the classroom (Pendergast et al. 2017). It also teaches essential social skills and creates the right conditions for developing sound personal values and catalysing a love of learning that ensures young people become committed lifelong learners. Done poorly, schooling in the middle years alienates a sizable minority of young people and some individuals develop dysfunctional behaviours that create significant barriers to educational progress and socio-emotional development (Smyth and Hattam 2004). In some cases, young people who are at risk are reluctant to accept help unless it comes from outside the classroom or beyond the school gates.

3 Harnessing Local Community Organisations

Community organisations have the potential to play an important role in the education and personal development of young people, especially those who are at risk. School communities in Australia well understand the value of extracurricular activities for young adolescents, such as participating in organised sports or over-night camps, but the reality is that most activities are expensive, with extracurricular fees being hundreds or even thousands of dollars on top of standard fees in the independent school sector, and unlikely to be fully funded in the public school sector.

A generation ago most communities in Australia boasted a range of sporting clubs—especially team codes—and popular youth movements such as boy scouts and girl guides. The emphasis was on participation and inclusion, and fees were nominal. Most community organisations were run by an informal army of volunteers but, nowadays, extracurricular activities are much more difficult to run. Moreover, schools could often rely on members of the local community to assist with extracurricular activities such as raising chickens or growing a vegetable garden (Dowden 2011). These days, however, organisations are routinely faced with large overheads relating to insurance and licencing, while others struggle to find new volunteers. Activities are increasingly expensive and in competition with virtual activities online. The advent of professionalism means that many, if not all, sports clubs are oriented more towards developing elite players than promoting mass participation and, as a result, fewer individuals are willing to work without pay.

Current trends are creating new opportunities for highly focused community organisations that specialise in the delivery of extracurricular services to young adolescents. Indeed, some community organisations are becoming so effective in this role, and the related role of supporting families at risk that there is a case for government recognition or support (Parkinson 2011). The rest of this chapter discusses the activities of a non-profit community organisation which is focused on helping young people develop personal values, with respect to research understandings about the developmental needs and characteristics of young adolescents as outlined above.

3.1 Values Integrated Through Action-Based Learning

Values Integrated Through Action-based Learning (V.I.T.A.L.) ProJeX—hereafter referred to as VITAL ProJex—is a non-profit community organisation based in South East Queensland that utilises a broadly Judeo-Christian worldview to help young people realise their personal potential by exploring their developing morals, values and ethics (www.vitalprojex.com). One of VITAL ProJex’s programs called ‘Unlimited’ targets young people aged 10-14, especially those at risk of prematurely exiting schooling due to disengagement, suspension or expulsion.

3.1.1 Unlimited Program

The Unlimited program aims to:

- Help participants understand that personal potential is essentially unlimited;
- Create safe learning contexts where participants develop respect for self and others;
- Help participants discover the importance of appropriate behaviour via action-based learning;

- Empower participants to make healthy life decisions by accepting personal responsibility for their actions and
- Encourage participants to discover enhanced meaning and purpose to their lives.

The Unlimited program is informed by Glasser's (1998) theory of psychological needs which, in turn, predicts the development of healthy attributes in high school students. As Kesici (2015) explained, when young people's psychosocial needs for sufficient belonging, freedom, fun and power are met, this is manifested by a range of positive attributes including better friendships, greater tolerance and increased honesty.

At the commencement of each new Unlimited session, the facilitators and participants collaboratively establish ground rules (or 'principles') to guide individual behaviour. Young people need the security of boundaries but also the freedom to exercise degrees of responsibility. In particular, they tend to test the limits of acceptable behaviour. Girls will often test adults in incremental steps as a group, whereas boys tend to operate on an individual basis and test adults in increasingly brazen ways that, in some contexts, are related to gaining status within their peer group. Indeed, research broadly supports the notion that young adolescents typically act as well or as poorly as they are expected to act (Pendergast et al. 2017). Unlimited assumes that when participants are treated with respect and adults set high expectations, there is little they cannot accomplish.

A maximum number of ten participants in each Unlimited program helps participants to get to know each other quickly. Research supports the view that young adolescents learn especially effectively by participating in hands-on activities in small groups (Darling-Hammond 2008; Dowden 2014; Dowden and Nolan 2006). Early activities in each Unlimited program provide opportunities for participants to learn to respect and trust each other.

Facilitators are trained to work with participants in ways that are trust-building, sympathetic, needs-aware and relatively power neutral. It is crucial that the context for social learning is supportive; thus the Unlimited learning environment avoids undue criticism, humiliation or sarcasm and is free of shame, guilt or anti-social behaviour. With skilled facilitation, a safe learning environment is cultivated that keeps participants accountable and, along the way, encourages apologies and mutual forgiveness as needed.

During young adolescence the reality is that each person is adjusting to profound personal changes in the physical, social, emotional and intellectual domains but according to a personal timetable that may be significantly different to others. This can lead to introspection and moodiness that may be triggered by careless remarks when individuals are feeling vulnerable. Indeed, preoccupation with body image and self-consciousness prompts some adolescents to avoid physical activity. VITAL ProJex addresses these issues by putting participants in Unlimited programs into small and same-sex groups. Although young people learn by doing, they also think in ways that become progressively more abstract. By following up problem-solving activities with an opportunity to debrief and reflect on personal behaviour, students are able to identify how they have grown and can continue to

grow, in terms of their morals, values and ethics. This is especially effective because participants soon learn to recognise incongruence in their personal behaviour and begin to process cognitive dissonance within an emotionally safe and encouraging learning environment.

3.2 Values Development

Young adolescents develop their values in the middle years. Within a very short period, they move from an unquestioning acceptance of the values of their parents/guardian and other significant adults to developing their own personal values (Brighton 2007; Lovat 2010). At this stage in their lives, young people are often idealistic and only just starting to perceive grey shades within the appearance of black and white. They need opportunities to consider and justify different choices as well as experiencing the consequences of some of their choices. Challenging group activities followed by debriefing with guided personal reflection are effective learning experiences for exploring fairness, justice and equity (MYSA 2008).

Young adolescents progressively develop a sense of self and personal and social values which shape them as they progress to adulthood. They become increasingly aware they are unique individuals with particular gifts and talents (Caskey and Anfara 2014). Yet young people are fragile. Social maturation is generally slower than physical and intellectual maturation and this is typified by egotistical and less socially acceptable behaviour such as overreacting emotionally, ridiculing others or being easily embarrassed. Indeed, when young adolescents lack sufficient family or community support they can rapidly lose their ability to cope with life circumstances and become dysfunctional.

3.2.1 Dee's Story

Dee (12) was sent by her parents from the South Pacific nation of Samoa to school in Sydney. She had to learn her school lessons in a new language and an unfamiliar culture and she soon felt alienated. Dee found herself sucked into a negative spiral of violence. In response to being picked on by others, she fought back and quickly gained a formidable reputation for her physicality. She became a bully, and despite wanting to talk to others about her problems, was unable to do so because she did not know who to trust. Dee was given an opportunity to participate in an Unlimited program. This provided Dee with a lifeline by creating a safe emotional space for her to value herself and to start to trust others. She was soon transformed into a leader who was concerned for her peers (<http://vimeo.com/59965958>).

The Unlimited program provided the catalyst that helped Dee to move from being a schoolyard bully to someone who cared for her peers. Like all young adolescents, Dee desperately needed to affiliate with a group, and once this need was met she was able to reflect on her behaviour. She drew from family and communal values embedded in her Samoan culture and soon stopped being a bully and started to genuinely care for her peers.

3.3 Team Building via Social Activities

Young adolescents need high-quality social interactions with other people. They also need to gain experience making decisions and accepting responsibility for these decisions. Teamwork helps young people to look beyond themselves, moderate erratic behaviour and pitch to help their peers. Learning to work in a team is an especially important life skill for individuals who tend to be loners or who are unreasonable about their expectations of others.

The effectiveness of VITAL programs stems not so much from the activities themselves as from the needs-based program design, trained facilitator competencies and program sequencing that is based on the stages of the development of group dynamics. A critical component of each program is increasingly challenging trust activities that produce a supportive environment where participants can safely give and receive feedback.

In one activity in the Unlimited program, a group of participants is presented with a problem-solving activity that involves the group crossing an imaginary crocodile-infested river via a limited number of stepping stones. Successful completion of the activity requires good communication and physical interaction, including preventing each other from falling into the river. Participants quickly learn when they need to rely on their peers and when they should offer assistance and encouragement to their peers. In the debriefing stage of this activity, participants typically give frank feedback to their peers (for example, “I felt like others spoke over me and my idea wasn’t listened to”). With the opportunity to immediately implement their feedback in the next activity and reflect once more in the next debriefing, students can quickly acquire and integrate positive values (Lovat 2010). In some cases, participants realise that peer feedback from the activity is similar to feedback that they have been receiving from their teachers at school.

In another activity, participants compete in a game of volleyball but are selectively assigned handicaps such as having no arms or no legs, or being blind or mute. In the debriefing stage of this activity participants typically comment on frustrating aspects of this experience but in the process reflect that they feel more empathetic towards others, especially those with handicaps, and that they have realised that everyone can make a difference.

In another activity, the participants stand in a circle with one person chosen to be in the middle, on a ‘stage’, who then welcomes the person who was next to them to the stage, announcing the skill they will perform for ten seconds (for example,

“Please welcome to the stage Mark, who is going to sing his favourite nursery rhyme”). Having each experienced personal vulnerability, the group typically bonds at an enhanced level, with individuals learning to face their fears and talk about it frankly.

All these activities help participants, who as young adolescents are still emerging from childhood egotism, to shift their focus from self to others. Drawing from Yalom’s (1995) theory of psychotherapy, the approach utilised by Unlimited allows participants to benefit from shared experiences as well as receiving constructive feedback from peers and facilitators, which catalyses the process of breaking down unhealthy beliefs and replacing them with healthy ones. Young people develop positive self-esteem and personal confidence when they successfully complete challenging activities but experiencing success as a team is especially desirable for young adolescents because it creates powerful bonds and strengthens their sense of affiliation and belonging to a group.

3.4 *Kobe’s Story*

Kobe (Year 7) had been bullied and was a bully. He became increasingly angry and violent to the point where his mother believed that she was unsafe and rang the police to ask for help. Kobe was invited to participate in an Unlimited program. The program provided him with an avenue to communicate his feelings in a safe space. It was evident during the program that he started to believe in himself and trust others. After the program, he said he was able to trust his school chaplain for the first time. Soon he was engaging much more in his learning, interacting with his peers in healthier ways, and generally striving to succeed (<http://vitalprojex.com/programs-no-limits-and-unlimited/unlimited-grade-school-values-program/>).

The Unlimited program helped Kobe get back on track. Being in Unlimited gave him the chance to express himself. He explained that in Unlimited he had people he could talk to, whereas previously he had believed he had no one. Unlimited provided Kobe with a safe and supportive context where he could accept and take ownership of his thoughts and feelings, which enabled him to break the cycle of violence and find new belief in himself.

3.5 *Team Reflection*

Group activities in the Unlimited program are always challenging and capitalise on young adolescents’ increasing intellectual capacity and their growing ability to apply moral reasoning. As already indicated debriefing and guided reflection on the

outcomes of the activities is an important part of values formation (Lovat 2010). Typical questions include: What did I do? How did I feel? What could I do better? How did I help and encourage others? Was I sensitive to others' feelings? How did the team do? How did we measure success? How could the team improve? Team discussion along the lines of the characteristics that make a true friend or what makes individuals feel sad, angry or embarrassed, and why this might be so, is also likely to be fruitful.

4 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that when community organisations cater for the developmental needs of young adolescents, they can successfully work alongside the formal education system to help nurture young people. Once young people establish a healthy foundation for personal growth and, by developing values integrated through action-based learning, start to move from a self-centred perspective towards recognising the rights of others (Caskey and Anfara 2014), it opens the door for schooling to develop excellence of character in the intellectual, moral and civic dimensions (Shields 2011). VITAL ProJex has positioned itself to perform a key role in this process by catalysing values development and ethical formation, thereby enabling young people to overcome barriers to personal growth and become mature and productive citizens.

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Chapter 19

Hope, Faith and Love: Engaging the Heart in the World of Business



Julian Jenkins

Abstract Modern management theory and practice have been dominated by mindsets, systems and processes stemming from a scientific view of the world and a mechanical view of the organization as a means of production to create profit. Heavily quantitative in nature, this view of the world creates a business environment that is not readily conducive to Christian perspectives. Attempts to create a ‘marketplace theology’ as the basis for Christian reflection and education about the business world have tended to focus on a narrow band of issues around the edges of business life, rather than the core ‘operating model’ that drives most corporate experience. This prevailing worldview is, however, based on a limited epistemology. It is generally quite effective in solving a particular class of ‘tame’ problems, with largely technical or logistical characteristics, but does not address the more complex ‘wicked’ problems that affect large human systems (organizations, communities and societies) (Rittel and Webber 1973). The most urgent concerns of many leadership teams are exactly these ‘wicked’ problems that arise in the course of guiding their organizations through inherently ambiguous situations, amid disruptive market forces, into an unpredictable future. Recognizing this important distinction opens up a whole new domain of relevance and opportunity to explore how Christian heart dispositions such as hope, faith and love could connect with the work and experience of business leaders and management teams. This article explores the relevance of a number of points of resonance between these important Biblical themes and mainstream business activities and makes some recommendations for how Christian educators could adapt their approach to move their focus from the edges to the core of business life.

Keywords Hope · Faith · Love · Management theory · Wicked problems
Entrepreneurship · Marketplace theology · Christian education

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283

1 Introduction: Science, Business and the Limits of Marketplace Theology

In the film ‘The Martian’ (Kinberg and Scott 2015), we encounter the compelling narrative of NASA astronaut Mark Watney, alone and abandoned on Mars, confronting a daunting set of technical challenges to survive the harsh environment and get himself back home. Drawing on advanced deductive faculties to solve very complicated problems, he declares his intent to ‘science the shit out of’ his predicament. Whether intentional or not, the producers of the movie have created what may be the first feature-length advertisement for the importance of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects in the educational curriculum.

Much of the approximately two centuries of modern management theory has been dominated by a worldview emanating from the same Western intellectual tradition of rationalism and scientific problem-solving (Jenkins 2010; Martin and Golsby-Smith 2017). The first great management theorist of the twentieth century, Taylor (1911), codified his ideas in his seminal work *The Principles of Scientific Management*. Implicit in this pervasive mode of thinking is a concept of business as being the effective management of a largely mechanical process involving the profitable production and distribution of products and services to market. Technical research leads the way in developing new products, while scientific measuring and monitoring of production and distribution processes lead to optimal efficiency—as embodied in a series of business improvement methodologies such as Total Quality Management and Six Sigma (Snee 2004). Similarly, when the Australian Federal Government talks about innovation as the key to growth in our economy (e.g. Office of the Chief Economist 2016), it is largely science-led Research and Development (R and D) that it has in mind.

If business is conceived as a hard-edged, numbers-driven exercise in maximizing economic returns and competitive advantage (Porter 2004), then it is hard to see what Christian higher education has to say to the core of management theory and practice, other than perhaps offering a critique of the limitations of economic rationalist modes of thought and mechanistic modes of management. The Christian contribution to this heavily quantitative world of business is often limited to a narrow, mostly ethical scope (Grudem 2003), to niche areas like professional ethics (Rae and Wong 2013), the personal character and attributes of leaders (Maxwell 2007), or corporate social responsibility (Okonkwo 2014).

As a Christian working in the world of business, this limited scope seems quite unsatisfactory—all the more so since I began my working life in Christian higher education institutions that were dedicated to bridging the gap between the Church and the wider world. For 10 years I taught foundational Christian worldview courses which included applying a Christian perspective to different academic disciplines and areas of professional practice. I was well-acquainted with the literature of marketplace ministry, and the different approaches people take to it—from those who emphasize God-given vocation as the theological basis for ‘secular’

career paths (Keller 2014; Veith 2011), to those who see business as opportunity for evangelism or mission (Rundle and Steffen 2011); from those who apply theological concepts such as ‘servant leadership’ into the workplace (Greenleaf 2002), to those who undertake theological reflections on core concepts like labour (Banks 2008; Stevens 2012) or philosophically sophisticated investigations of key economic themes (Kidwell and Doherty 2015). I worked alongside some leading thinkers on the subject, and preached the occasional sermon on ‘Christians and Work.’ In short, like Paul I was a ‘Hebrew of Hebrews’ (Phil 3:5, New International Version¹) when it came to applying a Christian worldview perspective to the world of work.

My Damascus road moment came in my mid-thirties, when I was forced by unexpected circumstances out of academia and into a new career as a management consultant—which I had to learn from scratch and on the job. Even before I made the transition, I had some nagging questions about the limits of marketplace theology. When I moved into the world of business, I began to get a stronger sense of where my dissatisfaction lay. None of the prevailing approaches really grappled with the actual work that happens in the world of business, with the fundamental domains of activity and the prevailing paradigms of thought that drive both behaviours and systems. People in the corporate world operate according to deeply embedded assumptions about what business is and how it is managed; employees work in organizational systems that are pervaded by these concepts and which often create dehumanizing work environments. Yet, Christian theorists seemed to be speaking about issues at the periphery of actual business life, using language drawn more from theology and philosophy with very limited relevance to people working in the corporate world.

It was not until I made the transition into the world of business that I realized how much I did not understand about what business is, what leaders and management teams focus on, what drives their systems and processes and what impact this all has both on individual employees and on the community as a whole. My ability to bring a Christian perspective into the world of business was severely hampered by my lack not just of knowledge, but of lived experience of what it involves.

I was lucky enough to encounter the world of business in an environment that was highly conducive to thinking about these issues. The strategy consulting firm I joined and still work with 15 years later, Second Road, was founded by a Christian, Tony Golsby-Smith, who had already developed some strong views on the subject. Underpinning Tony’s thought was a recognition that modern business practice and management theory has adopted much of the same methodological approaches as modern science (‘the first road’). These approaches were very successful especially in the industrial era, where business success was grounded in the ability to develop efficient, scalable processes for manufacturing and distribution of products to an increasingly global market. However, these methods are far less successful at addressing some of the burning issues that organizations grapple with, especially

¹All scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, New International Version [NIV] (2011).

those that have a strong human and cultural element, as opposed to technical efficiency. These are an entirely different class of problem and require a different approach, a ‘second road’ that can more effectively address them.

Not only does this distinction have profound implications for understanding the dynamics of how businesses operate, but it provides a key to open up a much bigger scope for Christian engagement with the world of business—a scope which can bring Christian perspectives from the margins into the core of business life.

2 Tame and Wicked Problems

The recognition that there are two very different types of problem in the world goes right back to Aristotle (1941) 2500 years ago. In his *Rhetoric*, Book 1, he distinguished between problems where things cannot be ‘other than they are’ (pp. 5–7) (and hence can be subjected to objective external measurement), and problems where ‘things can be other than they are’ (in other words, there are subjective choices to be made between options with no certainty as to the outcomes) (Golsby-Smith 2001, p. 221). In the modern era, the social scientists Rittel and Webber (1973) developed a very similar theory, in which he distinguished between ‘tame’ problems—those that can be solved by a linear process of deduction, and ‘wicked’ problems, which are of a different order entirely.

As impressive as the capability of human beings to use scientific reasoning to confront daunting challenges is, the problems that astronaut Mark Watney was solving in ‘The Martian’ (Kinberg and Scott 2015) would largely fit into Rittel and Webber’s (1973) first category of ‘tame’ problems—situations where it is possible to clearly define what the problem is, and use a linear pathway of cause and effect logic to come up with the ‘right’ answer, or at least a functionally sufficient one.

By contrast, ‘wicked’ problems are not easy to define; ask ten people and they will all give you a different view on the scope of the problem and what needs to be addressed. In this type of problem, there are too many variables to be able to isolate a clear path of cause and effect; the dynamics of the problem are either largely intangible or irreducibly complex. You can not analyse your way to a solution with objective data; the dimensions of the problem are not quantitative, but qualitative. Alternatively, the problem is one relating to a future context where there are no fixed points of data that you can use to determine what the situation will be. ‘Wicked’ problems are far less about scientific method, quantitative analysis and technical know-how, and far more about subjective perceptions, cultural complexities, political dynamics and human unpredictability (Rittel and Webber 1973).

In the world of business, examples of ‘tame’ problems might include ‘How do we improve the efficiency of a conveyor belt?’, ‘How do we write software to safely and accurately transfer funds via mobile phones?’, or, ‘How much could we save if we outsourced our call centre to India?’. On the other hand, “wicked” problems would include things like ‘How do we change a culture of disempowerment and underperformance?’, ‘How do we combine the resources of multiple organizations

to work together to address social disadvantage?', or 'How do we ensure the survival of our organization in an industry that is being disrupted by new technology and agile competitors?'

What I have seen over and over again in my years of work with large organizations and senior leadership teams across a broad spectrum (private, public and not-for-profit) and across many industries is that the most challenging problems businesses have to confront are fundamentally 'wicked' in nature. By highlighting this distinction, Rittel and Webber (1973) have opened up a much wider field of contribution for Christian thinkers, practitioners and educators, taking us from the margins directly into key areas of executive leadership focus and practice, like strategy, innovation, stakeholder engagement and culture. The reason for this is relatively simple. 'Wicked' problems are deeply rooted in the realm of human aspirations, perceptions, relationships, motivations and conflicting beliefs and values—in short, they are grounded in fundamental issues of the human heart. They are not the sort of issues that scientific method and economic analysis can address, and yet they are exactly the sort of problems that are most important to address to ensure the long-term success of senior leaders and organizations. The 'world of business' is a much bigger domain than what can be captured in a spreadsheet, reduced to quantitative data or automated into a mechanical process.

Rittel and Webber's (1973) distinction suggests a much different, more human-centred conception of business—that it can be a powerful, creative vehicle for addressing the situations, problems and opportunities that arise in enabling human societies to develop and thrive. Put within a theological framework, business can be seen as a valid expression of the Genesis mandate to 'be fruitful and multiply' (Gen 1:28), and as an important domain of activity in which human beings are invited to participate as 'sub-creators' within God's created order. Rikk Watts (2017) proposes the provocative view that 'design' is a better lens for understanding God's intentions for us in His world than 'theology', a view that has been shaped to a large extent by his exposure to the practices of 'design thinking' that have been central to Second Road's work as a consultancy and are now gaining widespread traction within the world of business (Jenkins and Fife 2016).

3 Hope, Faith and Love in the World of Business

Seeing business as an expression of human intent and creative agency brings it much more into a domain that Christians can intelligently speak into, and where insights drawn from Christian revelation and experience can be constructively applied. Taking a lead from Prof Smith's (2016) book, 'You Are What You Love', and his focus on recalibrating our attention away from the head and towards the heart, I want to explore three specific heart dispositions that the apostle Paul memorably declared as being central to Christian faith (1 Cor 13:13), and which I think have some interesting applications into significant 'wicked' problem spaces that are at the core of modern business and society in general.

The first of these heart dispositions is hope. Hope does not feel very relevant in a hard-headed business environment that wants clarity and certainty, backed with robust evidence, not mere hope. I am clearly not thinking about hope in terms of a poor excuse for a lack of intellectual rigor. I am thinking of hope in a more holistic sense, about the need for organizations to have a hope and a future.

Many of the organizations I have worked with have a deficit of hope. They are confronted with fundamentally wicked problems about their operating environment, organizational mission, cultural dynamics or future survival. There is often a high level of institutional fatigue and disempowerment arising from a long history of unsuccessful attempts to create meaningful change. Management teams come and go, organization charts get restructured, new ideas emerge but do not take hold, negative patterns of behaviour and internal politics continue despite best efforts to address or ignore them. Many good people have seen their hopes for achieving something significant within the organization founder on the rocks of obstructive egos and entrenched cynicism, and their hearts have grown sick as a result (Prov 13:12).

In other cases, the deficit of hope is not just internal to the organization, but reflects the wider operating environment. Over the last few years, I have worked with the Department of Family and Community Services in New South Wales, the government agency that handles child protection and foster care. These are very challenging domains to administer, linked as they are to seemingly intractable social problems of disadvantage, drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence. Many solutions have been tried at significant cost, along with multiple inquiries into why the system fails to protect abused children, and yet the number of children who are taken into care continues to rise. It is hard to maintain hope when you are confronted on a daily basis by intergenerational cycles of harm, and a longstanding failure of government policy and practice to successfully address the issues.

Christians know a thing or two about hope. The teleological inclinations of the Christian worldview predispose us to believe that progress can be made, that a better future lies ahead, that all things can be made new. We make core assumptions about the value of human enterprise, about the part we play in a divine project to build a creative, productive, sustainable human society. We carry in our hearts a fundamental optimism, rooted in a prophetic imagination—our vision of the Kingdom of God and its promise of a just order, in which the brokenness of our human cultures and social structures can be healed (Brueggemann 2001; Walsh and Middleton 1984).

The starting point for any strategy is a vision of a desirable future state, and a reasonable, if at times improbable, hope that a business, organization or society can move itself there. The role of a leader, Christian or otherwise, is to create a suitable environment in which hope can flourish—both for the organization as a whole, and for those individuals who work within it. This has a very different quality to it than the shallow sloganeering that dominates our current political discourse, a rhetoric based on hype, not hope. Hype takes challenging problems and oversimplifies them, reducing them to linear cause and effect arguments and a silver bullet solution, such as the belief that exiting Europe would solve a plethora of economic

and social ills for the British people. Hope is clear-eyed about the wickedness of the problem space, but is able to look past the challenging realities of the current situation to create a compelling vision of a redeemed future, such as that proclaimed by Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg and by Martin Luther King, Jr in his ‘I have a dream’ speech.²

Twenty years ago, an Australian Lieutenant General, John Sanderson, was commissioned to address one of the most wicked problems imaginable, in both senses of the word. His appointment to lead the UN peacekeeping force tasked with the reconstruction of Cambodia forced him to confront a very challenging question: How do you reunite a country and develop a stable political system in a situation where one of the major players has orchestrated a genocide and traumatized the entire nation? For all his logistical expertise, he knew that the starting point for national renewal was not rebuilding infrastructure, but rebuilding the foundations of the human heart with a vision of hope. The outcomes of his leadership are still regarded as the most successful instance of national reconstruction by the UN in the aftermath of war (Connor 2007; Evans 2012).

If a prerequisite for strategy is a hope-filled vision, then it still needs other heart qualities to see it successfully implemented. Traditionally the leaders of large businesses have been driven by a deep emotional need for certainty, particularly when it comes to making large financial investments in the future of their organizations. Stock market investors, who provide the capital which drives Western market economies, also thrive on certainty and retreat into supposedly safe havens like gold when government policy or unforeseen external ‘shocks’ create a volatile environment. Thousands of hours and millions of dollars are spent on generating business cases and performance metrics, because of a fundamental faith in quantitative analysis and hard data to create a veneer of certainty in an uncertain world. Yet many of the challenges that businesses face are fundamentally uncertain—either because they involve levels of human complexity that cannot be reduced to an algorithm, or because they relate to a future operating environment that does not yet exist, cannot be measured and certainly cannot be predicted with any great confidence (Martin and Golsby-Smith 2017).

If faith in numbers necessarily fails us in these circumstances, then we need to find a different kind of faith to enable us to move forward into the future. For Christians, this faith is founded in a belief that human beings are propelled and equipped with a God-given creative agency to bring about meaningful change (Watts 2017), that mountains can be moved and that pathways can be made straight. Contrary to the view of economists that individual human beings will make rational decisions that bolster their own interests, this faith relies on a confidence that if people are engaged in the right way, they can unite their energies to achieve a desirable common goal, even if that means sacrificing or realigning some of their personal interests.

²Both speeches can be found in Safire (2004).

Nowhere is the need for faith more sharp-edged than in the world of entrepreneurs, who rely on deep wellsprings of faith to motivate and sustain them when their business models are still far from profitable. Entrepreneurs live constantly with the need to have ‘confidence in what [they] hope for and assurance about what [they] do not see’ (Heb 11:1). Those who eschew the comfort of established businesses and corporate infrastructure in favour of working on start-ups, with no clear sense of the final outcome or reward, have much the same spirit as Abraham, who left the city of his youth to go out into the desert and live in tents, without knowing where he was going, propelled by his belief in a land of promise (Heb 11:9).

I suspect there are many parallels to his journey in the emotional journeys and heart dispositions of entrepreneurs. Both entrepreneurs and people of faith need a willingness to question received wisdom, and strike out on non-traditional paths. They have to maintain a strong sense of belief in the value of the journey and its final destination, even in the midst of significant uncertainty about the path to get there. They need a strong personal resilience in the face of voices that question where they are choosing to invest their time and energy and doubt the achievement of the final outcome. In both cases, there is a certain stubbornness and drive that pushes through the obstacles and holds fast to the vision even in the face of setbacks and disappointments.

In neither instance am I talking about blind faith, the illogical and almost obsessive tendency to hold to a path when there is no evidence to support it. Both entrepreneurs and people of faith need to be able to reflect, learn and grow from new insights and experiences. Both will experience failures, but will not give up; instead, they will recognize an opportunity to learn and grow, to discard limited or false assumptions and move to a new, richer perspective. At times they may find that a central pillar of their belief or practice will need to change, that they have to ‘pivot’ to a whole new way of thinking or approaching the problem (Fast Company 2012). This was very much the situation for the early disciples; their encounter with Jesus forced them to rethink the whole Jewish tradition that they were so invested in. One very tangible example occurs in Acts 10:9-16, where Peter has a dream that challenges his fundamental assumptions about the Jewish ceremonial law regarding foods that were unclean. This dream leads directly to an even bigger pivot, where Peter meets with Cornelius and recognizes that the Gospel was for all people, Gentiles included, and not just for the Jews (Acts 10:17-35). Much of Paul’s writings explain the fundamental importance and far-reaching implications of this new understanding. It is easy for us to forget how ‘innovative’ and edgy this was in the first century, and how much risk was involved in advocating this new way of thinking.

So, if hope is the essential heart disposition that underpins vision and strategy, and faith is the key to taking the sort of risks that lead to innovation, what about love? Love is not the sort of word that you hear too often in boardrooms, not at least in the sense of a core heart attitude or disposition towards others that is an essential disposition for success. Passion maybe, in the sense of infectious enthusiasm or a deep-seated satisfaction from doing a certain type of work that feels important or

meaningful. Love of money or success may also rear its head, and yet, contrary to the Gordon Gecko stereotype, the most impressive business leaders I have encountered are not driven by personal ambition or company profits, but by the love of people—their employees, their customers, the communities that they operate in and contribute to economically (De Pree 2003).

Many organizations talk about ‘value creation’, often specifically in the context of creating value for their shareholders. But the businesses and organizations that really make a difference in the world are those who are all about creating value for other human beings. The practice of design thinking, also often referred to as human-centred design, is all about making the world a better place for real people—whether it be through creating a seamless user experience of a product or service, making the working lives of employees less frustrating and more productive, or developing new business ideas (Jenkins and Fife 2016). At the heart of this mode of practice is the concept of empathy—surely an essential component of love—because it is by connecting with the lived experience of another person, and walking a mile in their shoes, that we can gain both the insights that inspire the design of a better way of doing things, and the energy to do it. It is all too easy in the world of business to lose this empathy, to turn customers and employees into an abstract set of data points, performance metrics and financial results. But there is no better way to provoke action and initiate change than to bring organizational leaders face to face with the actual experiences of real people, their hopes and aspirations, their pains and frustrations. In essence, we are taking them out of the quantitative headspace that dominates modern business with its emphasis on data, efficiency, and measurable outcomes and reconnecting them with the qualitative dimensions of the human heart. Love motivates people to innovate and work towards meaningful change.

4 Recommendations for Christian Educators

So what does all this mean for Christian educators? For a start, there is no need to remain at the margins of the business world, trying to find niche areas of relevance. There are heart dispositions that are central to Christian faith that are also central to the world of business. We can have confidence that fundamental Christian ideas such as hope, faith and love are aligned with some of the most important issues and priorities that businesses and organizational leaders are facing. That said, we may well have to find new ways to communicate what our Christian faith and theology teach us about hope, faith and love in new and richer ways, that connect directly with the ‘wicked’ problems that business leaders face and the language that they are using, such as strategic innovation and entrepreneurship.

Second, we could rethink the shape of our business degree programs to place these heart dispositions and the associated modes of strategic leadership and innovation at the core of our curriculum. We should not just copy the curriculum of the secular business schools, and put too much weight on traditional disciplines that

see the world of business through the lens of abstracted numbers and depersonalized management decision-making. We have the opportunity to create a differentiated approach to the business curriculum, one that doesn't just equip people to be cogs in a business machine, but to embrace human-centred heart dispositions, and practices such as design thinking, to make a difference to the world, whether in a large corporation, an entrepreneurial start-up, a government department or a not-for-profit agency. We need to avoid superficial approaches that involve using Bible verses to put spiritual lipstick on a materialistic pig, but instead, bring together deep-seated Biblical priorities into a constructive conversation with business imperatives, processes and leadership challenges—with a view to designing new and better operating models for the twenty-first-century organization.

Third, it means that there needs to be a much greater engagement between the world of the Christian academy and business practitioners. We can take a leaf here out of the book of cross-cultural missionaries, who understand that they need to immerse themselves in the lived experience of other cultures, understanding these communities from the inside out, and then translate their own beliefs and wisdom about life into the contexts, symbols and languages of the people they want to influence (e.g. Kraft 2005; Lingenfelter and Mayers 2003). If academics of all stripes, Christian or otherwise, fail to connect in meaningful ways with the lived reality of the people and complex challenges of the business world, they will not develop either the understanding or the influence they need to make a difference.

As important as science and deductive reasoning will continue to be for coming up with solutions to highly technical problems, both in business and in society, there is a whole other body of knowledge and practice, indelibly connected to human relationships and the human heart, that will be essential if we are going to overcome the most complex problems and create thriving businesses and societies. Christian educators have access to a theological tradition with deep wisdom and insight that can go right to the emotional core of successful business; we just need to break out of the limited epistemological domain that has dominated modern management theory and move forward with confidence that we have something fundamentally important to say.

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Chapter 20

The 5P Model of Missional Business: Background and Description



Rod St Hill

Abstract The 5P model of missional business brings coherence to the business curriculum delivered at CHC Higher Education. It is similar in concept to, yet more comprehensive than Corporate Social Responsibility. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the 5P model and review the background to its development. The model of missional business suggests that Biblical worldview forms a base upon which principles, policies and practices in business are developed. These give effect to the God-given purpose of individual businesses, which purpose leans toward one (or possibly more) of production, people, planet and profit. The outcomes of pursuing purpose have redemptive effect and contribute to the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Each business operates in the context of many stakeholders, including the community (local and national) and the natural environment (by human proxy).

Keywords Business • Ethics • Corporate social responsibility • Business as mission • Missional business • Theology

1 Introduction

A survey in 2014 revealed that 84% of Americans did not know that extreme poverty in the world had declined rapidly in the previous 30 years and 67% thought that extreme poverty had been increasing (Barna Group 2014). The author often asks students in their first lecture if they believe that world poverty is increasing, decreasing or staying about the same. Invariably most are convinced that world poverty is increasing. In fact, between 1990 and 2013 the proportion of the world's population living in extreme poverty fell by more than two-thirds, from over 35% to less than 11% and the absolute number fell by over one billion (World Bank 2018). Much of the reduction in extreme poverty is attributable to economic growth (Chandy and Gertz 2011). Business is a critical contributor to economic growth and

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90% of jobs in the world exist in the private sector (World Bank 2012, pp. 7, 58). Theologian Wayne Grudem (2003) argued that the only long-term solution to world poverty is business because business produces both goods and jobs (pp. 80–81). In doing so, business creates wealth since business pays rents, taxes and wages and provides returns to business owners. In a similar vein, Heslam (2008) argued that material poverty is a theological as well as a social scandal and that business ‘is the primary reason by which, in the redemptive purposes of God, this scandal is addressed. This is because material wealth is the only solution to material poverty, and the only sphere that generates such wealth is business’ (p. 164–166).

For much of its history, the Church has had a low opinion of business. St Jerome (331–420) wrote, ‘A merchant can seldom if ever, please God’, and St Augustine (354–430) asserted, ‘Business is in itself evil’ (see Chewning et al. 1990, p. 4), although as VanderVeen and Porter (2001) argued, St Augustine’s conclusion reflected his conviction that most works were corrupted by sin rather than it being intrinsically evil.

According to Guinness (2003) the Aristotelian concept of separation between the sacred and secular, given voice in theology by Eusebius (c. 260–c. 340), led to separation of faith and work, Church and business (Chap. 4). The most notable exception to this thinking prior to the Reformation was in ‘The Rule of St Benedict’ which regarded physical labour as necessary for the good of the soul (Benedict trans. 1990, Chap. 48). Consequently, until recently, the Church, especially its Evangelical and Pentecostal branches, has generally shown little interest in theology of work, business and the marketplace.

There was a debate about the proper goals of business in the first half of the twentieth century in both the academic literature and among professional managers. This debate focused particularly on ‘profit alone’ versus ‘profit plus social responsibility’ and was predicated on developments in case law in the United States. Nevertheless, in 1970 Milton Friedman famously declared in the title of an article in the ‘New York Times Magazine’, ‘The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits’. The Church was conspicuously absent in this debate.

One positive development in recent years is the so-called Business As Mission (BAM) movement. According to Rundle (2012) the concept was introduced in the late 1990s and emphasised the missional potential of business in developing countries that were otherwise closed to missionary activity. The objectives of BAM have been described as CSR+, with the ‘+’ being a ‘spiritual’ bottom line expressed mainly in terms of transformation of individuals and communities.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the conceptual model of business, the 5P model of missional business that is the foundation of the business curriculum at CHC Higher Education in Brisbane, Australia and to provide the background to its development. The chapter is structured into four main sections. In the first section, an overview of the theologies of work and business is presented. Then, the BAM model is outlined. In the third section, the 5P model of missional business is explained. Finally, some concluding comments are presented.

2 Theologies of Work and Business

2.1 *Early Attitudes Towards Business*

The quotes from St Jerome and St Augustine noted in the introduction set the scene for development of a theology that separated the Church from work (and later business). Thorough treatments may be found in Guinness (2003) and Knapp (2012) and a shorter overview is in St Hill (2013). A consequence of this theology was that the Church did not much concern itself with the positive potential role that work and business might perform from a spiritual perspective.

According to Guinness (2003) the theology underpinning the sacred–secular divide may be traced to Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea in the early fourth century¹ who asserted a dichotomy between perfect (sacred) and permitted (secular) forms of the Christian life despite its apparent contradiction of Galatians 3:28² (New King James version)³ (Chap. 4). This theology paralleled Aristotle’s separation of the contemplative life from practical employment in agriculture, the trades and commerce. Aristotle condemned the latter as unnatural, unnecessary and inconsistent with human virtue. Both St Augustine and, much later, Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) praised the work of merchants, farmers and craftsmen, but they nevertheless maintained a hierarchical relationship between the sacred life (*vita contemplativa*) and secular life (*vita activa*).

Regardless of theology, medieval Europeans developed trade to the point where commerce was ‘routine, repetitive and as risk-free as possible’ with the pivotal institution being the ‘rational firm’, an organisation created and managed according to ‘calculable rules’ and in which written records were kept (Stark 2005, pp. 106–107). Interestingly:

Nearly all economic activities were regulated or guided by the (Catholic) church. The merchant who imported leather and grain, the brewer who paid his employees, the banker who exchanged his purse of foreign coins, and the monastery that sold land - all had to inquire: what is a fair price? [...] Some theologians made their reputation by adjudicating on these fine points. (Blainey 2011, p. 215)

By the fourteenth century, the Church itself was actually a vast political, social and economic enterprise. Guinness (2003) named the cleavage between the priesthood and ordinary work the ‘Catholic distortion’.

The incompatibility between the Church’s theological and existential positions (among other things), led Luther (1520) to argue for the abolition of rigidly hierarchical and spiritually aristocratic religion. He was adamant that scripture did not

¹Not to be confused with his contemporary, Eusebius of Nicomedia who baptised Constantine the Great and was, for a short time, Archbishop of Constantinople.

²“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ. By extension, there is neither (secular) worker nor priest, especially in the light of Rev 1:6 (To Him) who has made us all kings and priests [...]”.

³All scripture quotations are from the *Holy Bible, New King James* (1992).

justify the distinction between those who had taken holy vows and those who had not. With respect to business, Luther's (trans. 1943) discourse on the seventh commandment ('You shall not steal') was a statement on the ethics of work and business:⁴

It is stealing when a man-servant or a maid-servant is unfaithful in duty and does, or permits, any injury which could easily have been avoided; or when he or she is otherwise indifferent and careless through laziness, negligence, or wickedness [...] I may say the same of mechanics, workman, and day laborers, all of whom act wantonly, knowing not how to cheat their employers enough. In like manner dishonesty is rampant and in full force at the market and in every-day business [...] In short, thievery is a universal art, the largest guild on earth [...]. (cited in Beach and Niebuhr 1955, pp. 256–257)

Let everyone know, then, that he is under obligation, at the risk of incurring God's displeasure, not to harm his neighbor nor take advantage of him in any business transaction. But more than that he is faithfully to protect his neighbor's property and further his interests, especially if he takes remuneration for doing so. (Luther 1520 cited in Beach and Niebuhr (1955), pp. 256–257)

Luther (1520) clearly placed the institutional Church and business on the same level. Calvin (1509–1564, trans. 1949) built upon Luther's foundation, developing a theology of vocation:

(T)he Lord enjoins every one of us, in all the actions of life, to have respect to our own calling [...] (He) has assigned distinct duties to each in the different modes of life. And that no one may presume to overstep his proper limits, he has distinguished the different modes of life by the name of callings. Every man's mode of life, therefore, is a kind of station assigned him by the Lord [...] He only who directs his life to this end will have it properly framed; because he is free from the impulse of rashness, he will not attempt more than his calling justifies, knowing that it is unlawful to overleap the prescribed bounds. He who is obscure will not decline to cultivate a private life [...] The magistrate will more willingly perform his office, and the father of a family confine himself to his proper sphere. Every one in his particular mode of life will, without repining, suffer its inconveniences, cares, uneasiness, and anxiety; persuaded that God has laid on the burden. This, too, will afford admirable consolation, that in following your proper calling, no work will be so mean and sordid as not to have splendor and value in the eye of God. (cited in Beach and Neibuhr 1955, pp. 290–291)

2.2 *The Puritans and Quakers*

Despite the desire of the reformers to rid Christianity of the sacred–secular divide Calvin's (1960) theology of sphere sovereignty, further developed by Dutch theologian and politician, Kuyper (1837–1920) (1880) may have actually accentuated

⁴The "Catechism of the Catholic Church for Australia" (Catholic Church 2012), also deals with the ethics of business (and work) under the heading of the Seventh Commandment. As noted in St Hill (2013), by 1981, with the publication of Pope John Paul II's (1981) "Laborem Exercens", there was convergence between Catholic and classical Protestant (Luther–Calvin) theologies of work and commerce.

the divide. Calvin (1960) argued that God is sovereign over everything, including our private and public lives, and that institutions (the Church and civil government in his ‘Institutes of the Christian Religion’) were God’s instruments for bringing order or structure to society. The Church brought order and structure to spiritual life and civil government to economic life (its role was to protect life, property and liberty although it might also provide roads, schools, prisons and hospitals).⁵ Calvin (1960) was emphatic that the ‘spiritual and inward Kingdom of Christ [...and the...] civil jurisdiction are things completely distinct’, although he argued that the two jurisdictions were not antithetical and that ‘Christian men’ should not avoid service in civil jurisdiction (pp. 1486–1487). Calvin (1960) believed that civil government was ordained by God to bring order into a sinful world until ‘God’s Kingdom [...] wipes out the present life’ (p. 1487). Building on Calvin, Kuyper (1880) addressed multiple spheres in addition to the Church and civil government including the family, science (‘the university’), the arts (‘the academy’), the trades (‘the guild’, equivalent to the business organisation in contemporary times) and labour (‘the trades union’). Kuyper (1880) asserted that each was conscious of the power of exclusive independent judgment and authoritative action, within its proper sphere of operation because God has imposed it. Each was also an instrument of common grace⁶ to the non-redeemed world. Each was sovereign within itself, but God was sovereign over them all. According to Kuyper (1880) God’s will must be expressed in each sphere without transgressing sphere boundaries.

A pertinent contemporary example of how a Kuyperian perspective can perpetuate the sacred–secular divide may be found in Quatro (2012):

[...] (B)usiness is fundamentally about stewarding and prospering creation in line with the Cultural Mandate⁷ articulated in Genesis 1:28 [...] In short, as God’s people in business we are charged with the task of prospering all that God has created [...] This is by God’s design, and it represents His sovereign will for the business sphere of His creation. This is distinct from His design and sovereign will for the Church, where the principal mandate is the Great Commission articulated in Matthew 28. Here God’s people are charged with evangelizing and discipling the nations acting both individually and as the organized church. The obvious lesson here is that God intends for business and the Church to be separate, and yet complimentary spheres of His creation [...] In short [...] *business is fundamentally designed to be a profit-making endeavour* whereby shalom is extended to all business stakeholders. That is, business must be profitable to be sustainable, and, when it is both, all stakeholders share in the shalom (peace and prosperity, with as much wholesomeness as possible) engendered by the business. (pp. 84–85, emphasis added)

What Quatro (2012) argued was that ‘business is business’ and ‘Church is Church’. Business is concerned with profit. The Church is concerned with souls.

The Puritans and Quakers, who built upon Calvin’s (1960) theology, enthusiastically embraced capitalism. Honesty, thrift, industry and diligence characterised

⁵In Calvin’s (1960) words the highest priority for civil government was to “rightly establish religion [...] contained in God’s law” (p. 1488) which meant protecting life, etc.

⁶As distinct from the particular grace which results in salvation of its recipient.

⁷Other authors use the term ‘Creation Mandate’.

their ethics and underpinned their approach to commerce and trade. An important aspect of Puritan thinking was that spiritual and material calling were merged—vocation could now yield both temporal and eternal reward and profit and piety were no longer incompatible. Mangalwadi (2011) provided an insightful case study of Puritan, Cyrus McCormick, who invented a mechanical reaper that transformed the agricultural world:

It is important to note that (McCormick's) work ethic [...] was biblical—not Puritan per se [...] This biblical work ethic, later called the 'protestant work ethic', was driven into Cyrus from childhood [...] McCormick's passion for focused work made him very wealthy, but his work ethic was a product of his religious culture, not his desire for wealth [...] McCormick was nurtured on the biblical idea that through godly and creative work human beings can roll back the curse of sweat and toil and re-establish their dominion over nature [...] Cyrus's family owned slaves, as did so many others of their time. They were products of their era and could have purchased more human labor to bring in their harvests. One difference the Bible made was that it demanded the McCormick's work just as hard as any of their slaves. We know that by the age of fifteen, Cyrus had despaired of seeing people slave in the fields. That's when he resolved to build upon his father's failed attempts to find a better method of harvesting grain. (pp. 319–321)

Despite people like McCormick the Puritan ethic became corrupted as work became separated from calling. According to Guinness (2003):

Overall, the Puritans were magnificent champions of calling. Like the earlier reformers, the best and clearest thinking of them never split the primary call ('by God, to God, for God') from the secondary call ('everyone, everywhere, in everything'). (p. 39)

For Martin Luther, believers answer the call when through faith they serve God in their work, but Calvin sometimes speaks more boldly in equating calling and work [...]. (p. 39)

But what may have been a latent imbalance earlier grows steadily in the Puritan era into a full-grown distortion. Slowly such words as *work*, *trade*, *employment*, and *occupation* came to be used interchangeably with *calling* and *vocation*. As this happened, the guidelines for callings shifted; instead of being directed by the commands of God, they were seen as directed by duties and roles in society. Eventually the day came when faith and calling were separated completely. The original demand that each Christian should have a calling was boiled down to the demand that each citizen should have a job. (p. 39)

By the high noon of the Industrial Revolution the results were complete and devastating. On the one hand, the triumph of secondary callings over the primary calling meant that work was made sacred. Whereas the Bible is realistic about work, seeing it after the fall as both creative and cursed, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries lost the balance. Work was not only entirely good, but it was also virtually made holy in a crescendo of enthusiasm that was later termed 'the Protestant ethic'. 'The man who builds a factory builds a temple', President Coolidge declared. 'The man who works there worships there'. (p. 40).

The same observation was made by Badcock (1998) who identified the reductionist thought of Weber (1905/1976) and Troeltsch (1960) around the turn of the nineteenth century. According to Badcock (1998), they understood 'the doctrine of vocation as if it were a question of secular occupation first' (p. 88). It ought not be surprising that under the influence of Calvin (1960) and Kuyper (1880), during the twentieth century, Church and work/business were effectively isolated from each

other. The result was that the Church had little to say about business, its responsibilities or purpose. Towards the middle of the twentieth-century author and theologian, Sayers (1949), lamented:

In nothing has the church so lost her hold on reality as in her failure to understand and respect the secular vocation. She has allowed work and religion to become separate departments, and is astonished to find that, as a result, the secular work of the world is turned to purely selfish and destructive ends, and that the greater part of the world's intelligent workers have become irreligious, or at least, uninterested in religion. (p. 56)

Sayers' (1949) concern was justified by articles published in influential periodicals. In an article in the 'Harvard Business Review' in January 1968 Albert Carr summarised the central thesis of his book. He asserted that the worlds of business and faith could *never* merge because their ethics were incompatible. In business 'bluffing'—lying, cheating, withholding information and exaggeration—was acceptable because business was like a poker game. In poker, the object is to end up with as much of the other players' money as possible. Similarly, the object in business is to end up with as much profit as possible. For this reason, business and faith could not be reconciled. There could be no 'conversation' between business and the Church.

In 1970 Milton Friedman's article, 'The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits', was published in the 'New York Times Magazine'. Its title, summarised his position, although he qualified the title in the body of the article—'while conforming to the basic rules of society, both those embodied in law and those embodied in ethical custom' (Friedman 1970, p. 122), or more explicitly, 'so long as (business) stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud' (p. 126). Friedman (1970) argued that it was the political system whose role it was to tax and spend in pursuit of social objectives such as pollution abatement or implementing training schemes for the long-term unemployed. He believed that it was wrong for managers to spend on social objectives because that was something either they or stockholders could do as individuals.⁸ If managers did so, they were effectively taxing stockholders and deciding how to spend the proceeds. This, he pointed out, was 'taxation without representation'. If managers desire to do 'good' they should do so as private individuals.

Friedman's (1970) approach was echoed by Quatro (2012) who used a case study (Chattem Inc) to illustrate his argument that Christians who are corporate executives carry out their 'Great Commission' activities as individuals through the Church not through the corporation in which they are employed: 'They don't engage in business activity with the underlying goal of proselytizing or discipling colleagues, or invest Chattem resources in parts of the world that don't offer a comparative advantage. This would undermine profit and disenfranchise stakeholders alike [...] (p. 85).

⁸Friedman (1970) used the agency theory of the corporation as his model of the owner–manager relationship.

2.3 *Emerging Theologies of Work and Business*

With this history it ought not be surprising that the Church and business have had, at best, an uneasy relationship. Against this background John Knapp's 'How the Church Fails Businesspeople: And What Can be Done About it?' was published in 2012. Knapp argued that the Church is not clear in its teaching on business, vocation and money and that it still seems to adhere to the idea that there is a hierarchy of vocation with full-time ministry at the top, the 'helping professions' next, and employment in business, government and other occupations at the bottom. Clergy and missionaries are the 'stars' who operate in the realm of the sacred while people employed in business, government and other occupations operate in the lesser realm of the secular. The helping professions straddle both. Those whose occupations are 'secular' exercise faith publicly on Sunday, but exercise it privately on Monday. Knapp (2012) argued that we can do this because of 'our human capacity to move with ease from one social role to another, conforming to the expectations that come with each, yet seldom allowing ourselves to confront the inconsistencies this creates in our lives' (p. 71). This creates loss of authenticity and, often, a collapsing of identity into the occupational role. Knapp (2012) suggested a redefinition of the word *vocation* that brings it back into alignment with the reformers—'an all-encompassing call to discipleship in every area of life. (All) (w)ork is service to God in the ongoing creation and ordering of the world' (p. 94). His 'moral theology for work' in Chap. 6 was based explicitly on Micah 6:8 and Matthew 22:37-39. 'This is the heart of the Christian vocation of discipleship' and, in business, 'The practical application of this ethic may be found in God's requirements of justice, kindness, and humility' (Knapp 2012, pp. 101–102). Knapp went on to argue that the important role of the Church in equipping Christians for the workplace has been neglected as if there are no moral challenges for Christians in their work. The implication is that the Church has not exercised influence on business in terms of its responsibilities and purpose.

In the midst of the increasing separation between Church and business, a number of authors began to make inroads into the entrenched position of the Church. Catholic and Protestant (mainly Evangelical) theologians began to question the *status quo* and propose new ways of thinking. The list in Table 1, although not exhaustive, contains a number of the seminal publications from around 1990 to the present grouped loosely according to their leaning towards theology of work and theology of business.⁹ It is impossible in this chapter to review the literature listed in Table 1 in detail because it is quite diverse and covers multiple theological traditions.

It is clear from the contributions listed in Table 1 that recent developments in theology of work establish that it has both intrinsic and instrumental value. Work is good in and of itself and work makes other good things possible.

⁹As noted this list contains books that are theological in focus. There are many others that are written in a 'popular' style that have been omitted from the list.

Table 1 Theological publications on work and business

Theology of work	Theology of business
<p>Badcock (1998). <i>The way of life</i>. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans</p> <p>Cosden (2004). <i>A theology of work: Work and the new creation</i>. Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster</p> <p>Keller (2012). <i>Every good endeavour: Connecting your work to God’s plan for the world</i>. London: Hodder & Stoughton</p> <p>Novak (1996). <i>Business as a calling: Work and the examined life</i>. New York: The Free Press</p> <p>Onkonkwo (2012). <i>Finding meaning in business: Theology, ethics and vocation</i>. New York: Palgrave Macmillan</p> <p>Palmer (1990). <i>The active life: A spirituality of work, creativity, and caring</i>. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row</p> <p>Stevens (1999). <i>The abolition of the laity: Vocation, work and ministry in Biblical perspective</i>. Carlisle, UK: Send the Light</p> <p>Stevens (2006). <i>Doing God’s business: Meaning and motivation for the marketplace</i>. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans</p> <p>Volf (1991). <i>Work in the Spirit: Toward a theology of work</i>. New York: Oxford University Press</p>	<p>Alford and Norton (2001). <i>Managing as if faith mattered</i>. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press</p> <p>Chewning (1989). <i>Christians in the marketplace: Book 1. Biblical principles & business: The foundations</i>. Carol Stream, IL: NavPress</p> <p>Chewning (1990). <i>Christians in the marketplace: Book 3. Biblical principles & business: The practice</i>. Carol Stream, IL: NavPress</p> <p>Grudem (2003). <i>Business for the glory of God</i>. Wheaton, IL: Crossway</p> <p>Hill (2008). <i>Just business: Christian ethics for the marketplace</i> (Rev. ed.). Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press</p> <p>Rae and Wong (2004) <i>Beyond integrity: A Judeo-Christian approach to business ethics</i> (2nd ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan</p> <p>Stackhouse et al. (1995). <i>On moral business: Classical and contemporary resources for ethics in economic life</i>. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans</p> <p>Van Duzer (2010). <i>Why business matters to God: And what still needs to be fixed</i>. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic</p> <p>Wong and Rae (2011). <i>Business for the common good: A Christian vision for the marketplace</i>. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic</p>

Work has intrinsic value because it has eschatological significance. Volf (1991) asserted, ‘The significance of secular work depends upon the value of creation, and the value of creation depends upon its final destiny’ (p. 93). Cosden (2004) mounted a detailed case that *all* of creation was subject to ‘the fall’ in Genesis 3 and that, therefore, *all* of creation will be ‘resurrected’ in eternity. Essentially, Cosden (2004) argued that Adam, being himself created ‘from the dust of the earth’, was necessarily an integral part of the physical creation. It is significant in this context to note that the Hebrew *adam* is etymologically closely related to *adama*, the dust from which he was formed. Adam united heaven (by virtue of the *imago Dei*) and earth (the rest of creation in its entirety) and was responsible for the earth. This responsibility is clear in the delegation by God to humanity to ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth’ (Gen 1:28) and given effect when ‘the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it’ (Gen 2:15). When Adam fell spiritually he took with him that which was joined to him and for which he had responsibility. The inevitable

outcome was the curse on the ground recorded in Genesis 3:17-19. Since God's purpose in the earth today is to redeem *all* of creation (see Wright 2006, Chap. 12; 2010, Chap. 3) human beings work cooperatively with God and in partnership with 'nature' in that purpose. In the full consummation of the Kingdom of God even 'the distinction between "work", "rest", and "play" will disappear' (Cosden 2004, p. 170). This gives work eternal significance and, therefore, intrinsic value.

Work also has instrumental value, at least when it is paid work. Work provides the means of access to the necessities of life for one's household and to participation in community life. Work is the means to prosperity, which, in Biblical terms, is 'provision for the day'. Both temporal and eternal significance are accorded work as a means of providing for oneself and one's household in the New Testament (see 2 Thes 3:10-12; 1Tim 5:8). Paid work also provides one with the capacity to attend to the needs of others. In Matthew 25:31-46 Jesus states that when judgment comes there will be a separating 'as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats' based on how people have met the needs of the hungry and thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the prisoner (all those who are oppressed). All of these have needs but no way of meeting them. Jesus demanded that that out of their prosperity people must support their 'neighbours' in need. The instrumental value of work is celebrated in the 'virtuous wife' of Proverbs 31. She 'willingly works with her hands', she 'considers a field and buys it', 'from her profits she plants a vineyard', she 'does not eat of the bread of idleness' and she 'provides food for her household and a portion for her maidservants', 'she extends her hand to the poor', 'she is not afraid of snow for her household'.

This sketch of the emerging theology of work is important because it comprehensively counters the notion of the sacred-secular divide. It makes a strong case for the importance of work from a sociological point of view. It is folly to expect humans to leave their spirituality 'at home' when they go to work because this is tantamount to expecting people to exist as dual beings.

Complementing the recent development of the theology of work has been the development of the theology of business. Much paid work is organised per medium of business. In this chapter 'business' is defined as any institutional arrangement (organisation structure and relationships) that sustains a production process which transforms various resources (natural and human-made) into useful goods and services that are sold for profit in a market, either physical or virtual. Businesses are ubiquitous and range in size from one or two people (or a family) barely eking out a living to massive global conglomerates employing many thousands of workers. The vast majority of businesses in the world are micro (less than 10 employees), small (10-49 employees) or medium (50-249 employees) enterprises (Airaksinen et al. 2015; Kushnir et al. 2010).

Van Duzer (2010) argued, drawing from the reformers, that theologically business and the associated institutions of the market are 'powers' that bring order where there would otherwise be chaos (pp. 144-150). This confers intrinsic value upon business. Theologically the role of business reflects the role of God in creation. In the creation record, God brought order into an earth 'without form, and void' (Gen 1:2). It might have been in a state of chaos following a great catastrophe,

perhaps the fall of Satan (the creation–reconstruction view, see Is 45:18; Ezek 28:11-19) or it might have simply been unorganised nothingness (a ‘void’). The chronological progression of creation itself indicates order—day and night, heaven and earth, vegetation, sun, moon and stars, fauna, and humankind (Gen 1:3-31). At the end of each of the creation days, God declared that what He had made was *good*. On the sixth day, He declared that all He had made was *very good*. The Hebrew is *ṭôb* which is good in the broadest possible sense: Moral, aesthetic, pleasurable, favourable, a state of well-being or wholeness in a situation or thing. This latter sense is used in Genesis 1. It is a similar concept to *shalom*. The Hebrew word is usually translated *peace* but means much more than that. It has connotations of health, prosperity and wholeness (and restoration of same) in every area of life. The relevance to business is that business and related institutions, including the market (where and how exchange takes place), bring order to what would otherwise be chaos or nothing. Thus, business has intrinsic value.

Business also has instrumental value. As noted above, business is an institution that transforms resources into goods and services that contribute to human flourishing (or in the language of economics, satisfies wants and needs). Profit is a given in this theology because it is understood as a necessary condition for sustainability of a business (Russell 2010, p. 36). This is, perhaps, most obvious in the theology of the BAM movement that was developed in the first decade of this century by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization¹⁰ and Youth With A Mission (YWAM)¹¹ and is now being expressed as ‘Corporate Social Responsibility Plus’ or ‘CSR+’ (Adams and Raithatha 2012; Tunehag 2009). The ‘plus’ is an additional spiritual bottom line couched in terms of the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20).¹²

Contribution to human flourishing is the source of profit, which is to be ‘enjoyed’ (see Ps 128:2; Prov 10:4, 14:23; Ecc 5:18). However, in the Biblical context to enjoy profit is not to merely accumulate it, but to use it for the common good or what Hill (2008) refers to as ‘compassionate use of wealth’ (Chap. 15, p. 234). Quaker George Cadbury used profit from his chocolate business to build the village of Bourneville for his workers, brewer Arthur Guinness founded the first Sunday schools in Ireland (see Wigley 2012), and, more recently, the Broetje family

¹⁰The 2004 Forum for World Evangelization, held in Thailand, established an Interest Group on BAM and published its findings in “Business As Mission” (Tunehag et al. 2005). Under the auspices of the Lausanne Movement and World Evangelical Alliance there was a BAM Global Congress in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in April 2013.

¹¹YWAM in Chiang Mai, Thailand, offer short courses in BAM and a Business Discipleship Training School (see <http://www.businessasmission.com/>). YWAM published a best-selling book on BAM in Baer (2006).

¹²The quadruple bottom line of CSR+ is: Sustainable financial profitability, positive social impact, positive environmental impact, and positive spiritual impact (Adams and Raithatha 2012, p. 39). The CSR component bears little resemblance to the 10 elements of the United Nations Global Compact on Corporate Social Responsibility (see <http://www.unglobalcompact.org/>) which, in turn, is not given much exposure in recent CSR reference books such as Benn and Bolton (2011) or Crane et al. (2008). There is one chapter in the latter that is devoted to spirituality as a basis for CSR.

(First Fruits of Washington) have built 100 homes that are available to their workers at subsidised rental,¹³ and Paladin Corporation is sponsoring the All Shall Prosper Movement.¹⁴

Some authors have addressed the intrinsic value of business. Two recent contributions are Miller (2008) and Van Duzer (2010). Miller (2008) developed a robust case for understanding business as a moral enterprise, based largely on Catholic literature.¹⁵ The elements of moral enterprise include entrepreneurship and innovation that ‘create new opportunities and enable more dignified standards of living’, investment which ‘help(s) create social cohesion by bearing risk, thus enabling salaried workers to think long term, both economically and socially, and become rooted in their communities’, and wealth creation which lifts people out of subsistence, providing opportunity for leisure activity that ‘contributes to the cultural good of society’ (Miller 2008, p. 117). Miller (2008) added to these a set of virtues necessary for anyone participating in business that has spillover effects in family and community life. All of these benefits are ‘natural’ positive externalities, he argues, that are *intrinsic* to the nature of business.

3 Business as Mission (BAM)

3.1 *Brief History of BAM*

Knapp (2012) offered a ‘moral theology of work’ based on Micah 3:8 which exhorts ‘man’ to ‘do justice’, ‘love mercy’ (or kindness) and ‘walk humbly with your God’. Hill (2008) offered a similar theology for business (‘holiness’, ‘justice’ and ‘love’). Wong and Rae (2011) concluded their book with a number of case studies of businesses that operate along the lines suggested by Knapp (2012) and Hill (2008). They classify a number of ‘movements’ among businesses that ‘offer a powerful witness to the need for business to be an active partner in solving social issues as they seize upon the power of economic competition and the profit motive (although often in tempered form) to encourage innovation and discipline in ways that donor-funded and government entities cannot. Business has a unique capacity to bring innovative products and services to scale quickly, transfer knowledge between various market segments and geographical areas, and operate sustainably [...]’ (Wong and Rae 2011, pp. 253–254). A specific development along these lines, and one that incorporates concern for social justice and the environment is Business As Mission or BAM. BAM is an approach that rejects explicitly the idea that profit is *the* purpose of business.

¹³See <http://firstfruits.com/>.

¹⁴See <http://www.paladincorp.com.au/>.

¹⁵Miller (2008) uses John Paul II’s (1991) “Centessimus Annus” extensively.

The early development of thinking on BAM culminated at the ‘2004 Forum for World Evangelization’, hosted in Pattaya, Thailand, by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. Following the forum a number of relevant publications ensued, specifically the reports on ‘Globalization and the Gospel: Rethinking Mission in the Contemporary World’, and ‘Marketplace Ministry’ (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization 2005a, b, c). Some years later the Lausanne Committee and YWAM sponsored the second global BAM Think Tank process, a year-long period of international consultation that culminated in the BAM Global Congress in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in April 2013 with subsequent publication of a vast range of reports.¹⁶ A good summary of the development of BAM is available in Rundle (2012). Seminal books on BAM include Rundle and Steffen (2003), Yamamori and Eldred (2003), Eldred (2009), Baer (2006), Johnson (2009), and Adams and Raithatha (2012).

By the time of the second global BAM think tank process, which began in 2012, the working definition of BAM was expressed as follows:

- Profitable and sustainable businesses;
- Intentional about Kingdom of God purpose and impact on people and nations;
- Focused on holistic transformation and the multiple bottom lines of economic, social, environmental and spiritual outcomes;
- Concerned about the world’s poorest and least evangelized peoples. (St Hill et al. 2013, p. 1).

3.2 *More than CSR*

It is well beyond the scope of this chapter to summarise or critique the voluminous literatures on the responsibilities of corporations and theories of the corporation both of which might be regarded as the ‘parents’ of CSR. Useful sources relevant to the theme of this chapter are volumes edited by Aras and Crowther (2010), Crane et al. (2008), and Moon et al. (2010).

For the purposes of this chapter CSR is defined in the context of the stakeholder theory of the firm (Freeman 1984), loosely described as balancing the interests of people (society), the planet (environment) and profit (shareholders) as coined by Elkington (1998). CSR is ‘about working with businesses, within the existing political and economic landscape, to make companies adopt ethical guidelines, incorporate stakeholder concerns, and more efficiently internalise the costs externalised onto the environment and society’ (Gill 2008, pp. 460–461). Importantly, this approach assumes that businesses generally produce external costs to society and the environment and CSR is a form of (voluntary) internalisation of those costs.

The relevance of CSR to BAM is obvious in the definition above. Business provides the institutional structures in which humans act as co-workers (some use

¹⁶Reports can be accessed at <http://bamthinktank.org/reports/>.

the term co-creators or sub-creators) with God and we have delegated authority and responsibility for the redemption of all of creation - this includes both human society and the environment, the latter most emphatically since it was pronounced by God at creation to be 'good' (see Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). That this is so can be readily seen in the many Biblical injunctions regarding both social justice and the environment. The following is a sample list:

- Not withholding 'grain' (Prov 11:26)
- Leaving some produce for gleaning by the poor (Lev 19:9-10; Deut 25:19-21)
- Not oppressing the poor (Deut 24:14-15)
- Practicing the tithe of the third year (Deut 14:28-29, 26:12)
- Paying wages daily (Lev 19:13; Mal 3:5), paying wages owed (Jam 5:4), paying a just wage (1 Tim 5:18)
- The 'hard working farmer' to partake of the first of the crops (2 Tim 2:6)
- Observing the Sabbath day rest (Ex 31:12-17)
- Maintaining good practice in workplace health and safety (Deut 22:8)
- Using accurate weights and measures (Lev 19:35-36; Deut 25:13; Prov 11:1, 20:10, 23)
- Protecting another's productive assets (Deut 22:1-4)
- Observing the Year of Jubilee in which most real property was restored to its original owner (Lev 25:8-55)
- Not lying (Lev 19:11; Prov 12:22, 21:6; Eph 4:25)
- Not muzzling the working ox (Deut 25:4)
- Not denuding the land (Deut 20:19-20)
- Not killing breeding stock (Deut 22:6-7)
- Observing the fallow of the Sabbath year (Lev 25:3-7)
- Being kind to livestock (Ezek 34:1-8).

This analysis establishes a connection between Christian spirituality and CSR. Taken together, the theologies of work and business provide support for the notion that the Church and business are closely connected by their common call to ministry. Both institutions are relevant to the creation mandate and the Great Commission. With respect to the latter, it is worth noting that although the emphasis has long been on salvation, verse 20 of Matthew 28 is 'teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you [...]' which, it is safe to say, includes the principles and practice of social justice.

In Adams and Raithatha (2012), BAM was characterised as CSR+ following Tunehag (2009):

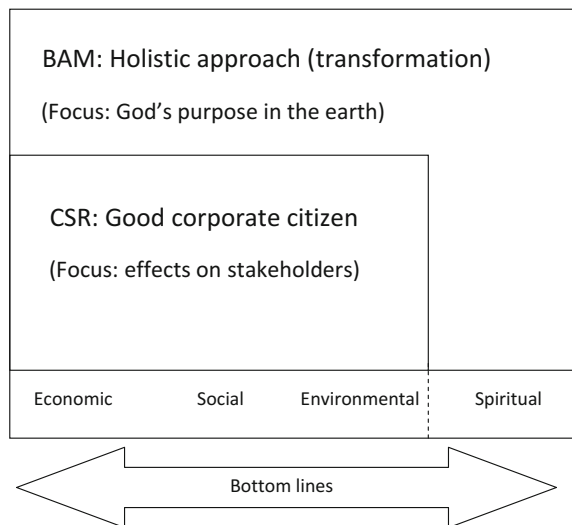
In a limited business paradigm the primary or sole focus is on maximizing profit for the owners. The growing corporate social responsibility (CSR) movement emphasizes accountability to society as a whole for the "triple bottom-line" impact of social and environmental outcomes as well as financial results. *BAM affirms all of these but also includes a 4th bottom-line, intentionally revealing and honoring Christ and seeing Him transform lives through business.* BAM is CSR+, as it were. The + can also be seen as a cross – putting everything under the Lordship of Christ'. (p. 11, emphasis in the original)

Adams and Raithatha (2012) argued, ‘Broadly, and perhaps crudely, speaking, in the pre-modern period the Church shaped society, in the modern period the nation-state shaped it and in the contemporary, or post-modern, world society is shaped by business [...] If it is business that shapes the world, then why can’t the Church work in and through business to shape the world for good and for God?’ (pp. 13–14). Figure 1 provides a representation of BAM as CSR+.

According to Fig. 1, BAM is focused on God’s purpose in the earth and seeks holistic transformation of people and communities in the context of four bottom lines, namely economic (including profit), social, environmental and spiritual. BAM is more than CSR which focuses on effects on stakeholders and seeks to express good corporate citizenship in the context of three bottom lines, namely economic (including profit), social and environmental. Although approaches to measuring outcomes in the economic, social and environmental areas are fairly well developed, spiritual metrics are not. Suggestions at the BAM Global Congress focused on spiritual practices of personnel within the BAM and indicators of evangelism within communities (see H* et al. 2014).

Two observations might be made concerning the model. It is clear that BAM rejects the idea of the sacred–secular divide. BAM is intentionally business enterprise with a missionary orientation. Its concern for welfare of the poorest peoples motivates concern for social and environmental outcomes. This is commendable, but it presents a theological problem because the theology of work and business described above imply that the bottom lines in CSR are *all* theological in nature. Therefore, it seems inappropriate to model the spiritual bottom line additively as a separate bottom line. Furthermore, the emphasis of BAM on the poorest and least evangelised peoples limits its geographical scope. Therefore, it is

Fig. 1 Conceptualization of BAM (Source St Hill et al. 2013, p. 28, with permission from BAM Global)



appropriate to develop a model in which the spiritual bottom line is actually infused into CSR. This is why the 5P model of missional business was developed at CHC Higher Education. In the following section this approach is outlined.

4 The 5P Model of Missional Business

4.1 Introduction

Van Duzer (2010) set himself the task of answering the question, ‘Specifically, can we say that business activities—analysing balance sheets, manufacturing products, marketing goods, providing performance reviews—in and of themselves further God’s kingdom? Does business have an *intrinsic* as well as *instrumental* purpose?’ (p. 25, italics in the original). His answer is an emphatic *yes* based on the twofold role of business in God’s creation mandate: To provide the community with goods and services that will enable it to flourish¹⁷; and to provide opportunities for employees to express their God-given creativity (Van Duzer 2010, p. 42).¹⁸

The 5P model of missional business used at CHC is quite simple conceptually. It asserts that central to the existence of the missional business, is the idea that God has a specific purpose for each business entity. That purpose will be outworked in the context of production, people, the planet, and profit. Each missional business will be configured differently in that the weightings on the different elements of purpose will be different. One missional business will be more focused on profit than another; one missional business will be more focused on solutions to environmental issues than another; and so on. However, no matter the configuration the missional business will be engaged in the Great Commission. Figure 2 illustrates the model.

4.2 Purpose

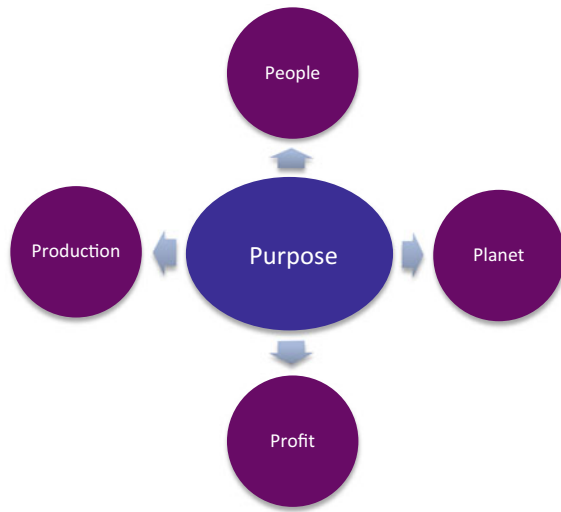
Bretsen (2008) argued that the faithful corporation moves beyond the secular responsibilities of either public or private interests to being:

a vehicle for fulfilling the creation mandates and advancing the kingdom of God for the glory of God [...] making a profit for shareholders and satisfying stakeholders are not ends in themselves or even a means to broader goals such as maximising societal wealth through efficiency gains or greater corporate social responsibility, but instead are a means to greater ends. (p. 134)

¹⁷*Flourish* is used by Van Duzer (2010) in connection with fulfilling the Edenic blessing of Genesis 1:28 both individually and collectively (p. 39).

¹⁸Van Duzer (2010) defines the instrumental purpose of business as to support the Great Commission either directly by creating a forum for evangelism or indirectly by using profit to support evangelism (p. 24).

Fig. 2 The 5P model of missional business



These can be related to the three ‘Great’ principles in the Christian life. These are the Great Invitation (‘Follow Me’), the Great Commandment (Love God, love your neighbour as you love yourself), and the Great Commission (Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations). In Matthew 6:33 Jesus exhorts us to ‘seek first the kingdom of God’, which embodies all of these ‘Greats’, and demands that missional business is kingdom-oriented.

There are several approaches possible. Both Stevens (2006, p. 80) and Russell (2010, pp. 22–23) use the taxonomy suggested by Bang (1998), although Russell adds two further categories. Business may be involved in the Great Commission on the following levels: *Business for* mission (funding mission with business profit), *mission in* business (evangelising employees), *business as a platform for* mission (using work as a means of channelling mission throughout the world), *business in* missions (using business to proclaim Christ in cross-cultural settings usually with a focus on unevangelised parts of the world—the ‘10/40 window’), and *business as* mission or BAM (using business to express the mission of God in the world). Rundle and Steffen (2003) define Great Commission businesses in terms of intentionality of witness and the *missio Dei* being their strategic mission. In all instances business is an instrument for mission in one way or another. BAM is the most comprehensive because God’s mission in the world is to ‘let His kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven’ (Matt 6:10). That there is a ‘now but not yet’ character about the Kingdom is recognised widely by theologians. That there is a ‘now’ element to the Kingdom motivates BAM businesses to minister in four areas of brokenness—creation (the environmental sphere), relationships (the social sphere), abundance (the economic sphere), and spiritual (the fractured relationship between humans and God). Missional business may be thought of as BAM in any

socio-economic context and is not restricted to the poorest and least evangelised nations. Missional business is integral to God's mission in the world, the *missio Dei*¹⁹.

In missional business it is asserted that business (including associated institutions such as the market) is the primary means by which God provides material blessing and, therefore, social justice to people. Deuteronomy 28 is often referred to as the 'blessings and curses' chapter. It is significant that most of the blessings (Deut 28:1-13; see also Deut 11:13-15; Mal 3:8-11), are focused on the business of agricultural production and associated processing of the produce. 'Mana from heaven' is not mentioned at all in the blessings, indicating that miracles are not God's primary means of delivering material blessing. Certainly, the original context was family-owned farms, but it is not hard to imagine the context of large enterprises. There were, to be sure, some very large family farming operations in Old Testament times anyway (e.g. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all had large households and herds/flocks). Thus, in Old Testament times business was a means of material blessing. It had instrumental value then and it does now.

New Testament Christians are not subject to the law as is made clear in the epistles to the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians and Hebrews. However, Jesus made it clear that the law has not passed away. Rather it has been fulfilled in Him (see Matt 5:17-18) and written in our hearts (see Is 51:7; Rom 2:15; 2 Cor 3:1-3). We receive the blessings of Deuteronomy 28 by faith in Christ through which we obtain grace, not by the obeying of the law per se. Faith and grace do not make business and work redundant, but give us confidence that through business and work we will experience prosperity, which, rightly understood, means 'provision for the day'. This sounds remarkably like Deuteronomy 28:1-13 where material blessing is associated with business and work. Work is clearly intended for the New Testament Church. This is emphatically clear in 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 and 1 Timothy 5:8 where both temporal and eternal significance are accorded work in terms of providing for oneself and one's household.

Business and work are not only for material blessing for oneself and one's household. There is also a social justice aspect because the needs of others can be met out of one's prosperity. In Matthew 25:31-46 Jesus explains that when judgement comes there will be a separating into sheep and goats based on how people met the needs of the hungry and thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the prisoner. All of these classes of people have material needs and no means to satisfy them.²⁰ Clearly, all of these are our 'neighbours' (see Luke 10:25-37) and Jesus demands of us that out of our prosperity we take care of them. Thus, business provides the prosperity out of which the welfare of others is taken care of (See also Eph 4:28). This is private welfare (as opposed to public or social welfare).

¹⁹The BAM literature is not always clear about this mission, but virtually all authors address the 'now but not yet' Kingdom of God. Wright (2006, 2010) wrote extensively about the mission and included comment about how BAM contributes in 2010, Ch. 15; see also Daniels (2012).

²⁰Visiting the sick and the prisoner would have entailed more than fellowship because food, clothing and other sustenance were not provided and this is so today in many countries.

There is a third way in which business has instrumental value. Out of our prosperity, we sustain the institutional Church. 1 Corinthians 9:13-14 states that those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel. How can they 'live' by the gospel if those to whom they preach do not give to them? This is reflected in Paul's exhortation in Philippians 4:14-19 and in 1 Timothy 5:17-18. This scripture can be understood in the light of Numbers 18 where it is prescribed that Aaron and his sons were to have the offerings for their sustenance (but no inheritance in the land) and the Levites were to have the tithes for the operations of the tabernacle (but also no inheritance in the land). We are to sustain those who work in the ministry from our work (Wong and Rae 2011, p. 45). 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 speak about generosity in giving to Church communities suffering lack. Again, this is an example of the instrumental value of business. It is another example of private welfare. In this case, giving is in proportion to prosperity.

Given the discussion above, it would be foolhardy to believe that all missional businesses would be 'look-alikes':

It is reasonable to assume that not all businesses have the same kingdom purpose, just as not all Christians have the same gifts and calling. Scripture affirms that we can know both God's general will and His specific will for certain situations (Rom 12:2, Col 1:9, Heb 13:20-21). Business owners and/or managers should diligently seek the Lord for wisdom and knowledge of His purpose for their business. For some it might be to provide finance to His church or missions; for another it might be to be a blessing to individuals or the community through provision of paid employment; or another might be gifted with inventiveness or technologies that are of environmental or productive benefit; or it could be to evangelise within a community or industry. The purposes of His kingdom are manifold and dependent upon our ability. If we humbly allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit in all our dealings, we shall be the sons of God (Rom 8:14), for it is only to sons and daughters that is given the inheritance (Prov 13:22; Ezek 46:16-17). Consistent with God's relational nature and love for His created order, is the notion that whatever purpose a business has, it will ultimately be for the good of all the people involved (Rom. 8:28). (Wigley 2012, pp. 5-6)

4.3 Production

The role of business as a power that brings order where there otherwise would be chaos was outlined in Sect. 2.3 above. Business and related institutions, including the market (where and how exchange takes place) bring order to what would otherwise be chaos or nothing. This is eloquently explained in Friedman and Friedman (1980) who used the example of a pencil to illustrate how the price mechanism in a competitive market where people are free to engage in exchange ensures that the activities of thousands of people are coordinated (Chap. 1). Without such coordination (order), the pencil would simply not exist.

It may seem incongruous to quote Friedman and Friedman (1980) in the context of *shalom*, but the power of business in a free market can be directly linked to *shalom* theology. Firstly, it is noteworthy that the Promised Land was Canaan, which literally means *merchant, pedlar or traffic* (in the sense of trade). It was

God's intention that His people would inhabit the land that was the meeting point of the world's trading routes and would carry out trade according to His design. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to consider in detail God's design for trade, but in summary the Bible reveals God's vision for business activity to occur in an economic system where private property is clearly defined and enforced, where all relationships and transactions are conducted with the utmost integrity, where exchange is voluntary, where there is a commitment to work, and where there is basic social welfare and extensive private welfare.²¹

Van Duzer (2010) drew attention to Paul's letter to the Colossians, in which he says, 'For by Him all things were created [...] visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created by Him and for Him [...] and in Him all things consist' (Col 1:16-17). Van Duzer (2010), drawing on a number of theologians, notes that powers, originally created as 'good' by God, include 'structures, worldviews, institutions and other orders that give shape to the world we live in, or, alternatively, to spiritual forces that inhabit these structures and orders' (p. 145). Business, its structures, and free-market economic systems are or animate 'powers' that maintain order in the earth and allow for the flourishing of humanity.²² Although Van Duzer (2010) does not refer to them, Calvin and other Reformers interpreted work-business as service to God in the ongoing process of ordering the world.

4.4 People

'Then God said, 'Let us make man²³ in²⁴ Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth'. So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him: male and female he created them [...] Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good [...]' (Gen 1:26-27, 31; see also Gen 5:1-2, Ps 8:3-8). The image or

²¹There is no 'manifesto' for either a capitalist or socialist economy in the Bible, but there are over 2,350 verses on money, possessions and economic activity including 25 on contracts, 19 on economic crimes, eight on taxation, 15 on Tort law, 14 on slavery, 24 on inheritance and distribution, 25 on social security, and six on interest and loans. There are over 450 references to work, although many of them are not uniquely applicable to business and the market.

²²It is relevant to note here that an alternative translation of Genesis 1:26 is, "Let us make man *as* our image". If this is the correct translation then, in the light of dominion authority, humankind is representative or symbolic of God's reign, which is associated with *shalom*. Thus business, its structures and free economic systems as 'powers' exercised by humans are intended to symbolise God's reign. In this context Van Duzer (2010, p. 145) quotes St Augustine (trans. 2000), "The peace of the celestial city is the perfectly ordered and harmonious enjoyment of God and of one another in God. The peace of all things is the tranquility of order" (p. 690).

²³The Hebrew here makes it clear than 'man' is generic, referring to male and female.

²⁴The Hebrew preposition can also be translated *as*.

likeness of God (the *imago Dei*) clearly cannot be interpreted in the normal sense because God is Spirit (Jn 4:24) and making material images of God was expressly forbidden in the Law (Ex 20:4-6). Instead, the image or likeness has traditionally been interpreted in terms of the character of God. God is creative (He thinks), relational (He feels), purposeful (He wills) and moral (He chooses). To the extent that business requires or allows the exercise of the *imago Dei*, which God declared to be ‘very good’ (Gen 1:31), business may be said to be intrinsically good.

In business, there are opportunities for people to discover, deploy and develop their creative capacities. This is obvious in many functions and processes in business such as production, research and development, marketing, logistics, strategic and operational planning, change management, budgeting, sales, customer service, human resources management, project management, environmental management and general management. In fact, it is hard to conceive of any kind of work in business that does not require or allow for creativity, except, perhaps, for mundane, repetitive production line work where the operator is unable to perceive her or his creative contribution to the finished product.

There are many opportunities to create meaningful relationships in business. Indeed, meaningful relationships are the essence of business. Kantzer (1989) argued, ‘By creation, human beings are social beings, never intended to be alone. Because of our social nature, we are specialised (each person is in one sense unique), interdependent, and therefore, necessarily dependent on exchange. Exchange is built into our very nature. And this *is* business’ (p. 24). Stevens (2006) argued along similar lines, ‘[...] (B)usiness originates within the ecstatic (outgoing) life of God as Sender, Sent and Sending. God enlisted the first human creatures in that mission by calling them to build community, to unlock the potential of creation, and to fill the earth. Since resources are not evenly spread throughout the globe and human beings are created for interdependence, fulfilling that first call would necessarily involve trade’ (p. 204). Miller (2008) observed, ‘Business requires individuals to come out of themselves and “collide” with other persons from many different backgrounds and nationalities’ (p. 119). Drawing on Covey (1989) he listed a social skill set that individuals develop through these ‘collisions’, namely adaptation, negotiation, compromise, synergy, empathetic listening and seeking to understand the other. These are all skills associated with the development and maintenance of functional, meaningful relationships.

Each business is also its own community. Business and competition are usually paired in the mind, but it is important to understand that while markets might be competitive, a business is itself a ‘nonmarket’ because it is characterised by cooperative rather than competitive relationships among individuals and departments (Coase 1937). People who belong to a business cooperate in the cause of a common goal and in so doing develop relationships,²⁵ many of which expand

²⁵Van Duzer (2010) rejects the notion that “a business exists to ‘nurture relationships’, to ‘foster community’ or words to that effect” on the ground that “Making community-building a first-order *purpose* of every business stretches the institution of business too far from its fundamental character” (pp. 42-43, italics in the original).

beyond the boundaries of the business. Although some elements of relationship are codified in position descriptions, codes of conduct, values statements and organisation charts, there is much that is informal including many aspects of the culture of the business ('the way we do things around here') and the organic emergence of leaders, leadership being associated with personal attributes and behaviour rather than a position in the organisation chart.

People derive purpose in business. Businesses produce goods and services that bless those who buy them. Economists use the word 'utility' in the same sense that theologians use 'blessing'.²⁶ A Christian finds purpose in blessing others. This gives effect to the second great commandment, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself' (Mk 12:31; Rom 13:9; see also Lev 19:18). To give a concrete example, a production line worker in a car factory would find purpose in contributing to the safest, best value-for-money car to come off the production line. A university lecturer would find purpose in preparing learning resources that deliver the best possible learning experience and develop assessment tasks that reveal each student's attainment of objectives justly. This is neighbour-love in practice.

In addition to finding purpose in expressing neighbour-love, in business we can give effect to the exhortation in Colossians 3:17, 23 that whatever we do to do it 'in the name of the Lord' or 'as to the Lord'. Wong and Rae (2011) characterise work as being intrinsically good because it is an altar 'where we bring our gifts, skills and talents to offer up *in service to God*' (p. 46, italics in the original). Arguably, work done in the name of the Lord is an example of what the Bible means by the expression 'good works'.²⁷ Work is ordained by God (Gen 1:26-28, 2:4-15; Ps 8:6), inspired by God (Is 28:23-29), and for the glory of God (Matt 5:16). The Christian is called to be ready for every good work that circumstances allow (2 Tim 2:21; Tit 3:1) and it is a poor witness when a Christian is 'disqualified for every good work' (Tit 1:15-16).

God is a moral being and humans are moral beings, meaning that they have the capacity (freedom and rationality) to make choices. This is implied by Joshua's challenge to Israel. '*Choose* for yourself this day whom you will serve' (Josh 24:15, italics added), the strong exhortation throughout Proverbs regarding wisdom, learning and knowledge (see, for example, Prov 1:1-7, 2:28-30, 16:16) and is manifest in Jesus (Is 7:14-15). Miller (2008) argued that business provides an incubator for moral development: 'The ability of business to help people 'grow up' and become responsible members of society is something almost taken for granted' (p. 118). He suggested that business can be a 'school of virtue' especially with respect to 'prudence' (knowing how much to risk and when and understanding the

²⁶If not in the same sense, then at least analogously.

²⁷'Good works' are often thought of in terms of charity or ministry. However, 'good works' are identified by "behavior appropriate to the new life in Christ following our entry into it by faith alone", behavior consistent with a right standard (Biblical ethics governing economic and social relations), a right motive (neighbor-love), and a right aim (God's glory) (Marshall et al. 1996, pp. 425, 1249). Thus charity, ministry, family and community life, and employment in business are all good works when undertaken in a way that is consistent with the new life in Christ.

long-term importance of honesty and trust). He also argued that business imparts competence in collaboration. Both prudence and collaboration are embodied in the choices people make. To the extent that prudence and collaboration in the business context spill over into family and community life, business may be said to be intrinsically good.

It is worth noting here that the intrinsic value of business exists whether or not the business is a ‘Christian business’ or a ‘business run by Christians’. Business is intrinsically good because in business is expressed the *imago Dei*. Although a Christian business might be more aware than a non-Christian business of God’s purpose for business and be more intentional about policies, processes, structure and culture that obviously reflect that purpose, missional business can be practiced by Christians in a very wide range of contexts. One example might be a manager who seeks to create opportunities for staff to discover hitherto unknown creative capacities thereby helping them with personal, professional and possibly career development. Another might be an induction officer who puts effort into integrating new staff members into the workplace community. Yet another, might be a manager or employee who models neighbour-love within the workplace community.²⁸ A Christian CEO may have the opportunity to influence a whole organisation in a way that enhances the lives of all employees and other stakeholders. One such example is Bakke (2005) who developed ‘The Joy at Work Approach’ to organisation design, structure and decision-making.

Even competitors are made in the Lord’s image and have the same intrinsic value, so how might we compete righteously, yet not inhibit our enterprise and creative capacity? It should be an imperative for the Christian in business to maintain the witness of God’s love for their competitors as individuals. ‘There is a difference between trying to do a job better than others, on the one hand, and trying to harm others and prevent them from earning a living on the other hand’ (Grudem 2003, p. 65).

4.5 Planet

That human beings are divinely assigned the role of steward of all of God’s creation is clear in the Creation Mandate (see Gen 1:26-28; Ps 8:4-8, 115:16). Green (2010) argued that, in the light of archaeological discoveries, the Hebrew word *eden* is best understood as ‘luxuriance, abundance, fertility’, a place of ‘lush vegetation’ (p. 271). ‘Gardeners cultivate the soil for their own benefit, but they use the earth in a way that preserves and protects it for future use. The gardener image captures a

²⁸The author was once Dean of a faculty of business at a public university with about 120 staff and 11,000 students. At the conclusion of his contract one of the staff, not a Christian, said simply, “You allowed a lot of healing”. That was the result of a deliberate strategy of implementing godly management practices based on the kind of wisdom in Proverbs and compassion (mixed with an economist’s commitment to efficiency).

delicate balance. It recognises a legitimate utilitarian use of the environment by humans, but the need to preserve that environment for future productivity ensures that human ‘taming’ of the land (Gen 1:28) does not devolve into a rapacious and destructive model for dealing with the earth [...]’ (Green 2010, p. 272).

Despite this, there is no doubt that, for most of the history of the Church the relationship between humanity and the rest of creation has been seen as combative rather than cooperative. Since the late nineteenth century Evangelicals and Pentecostals, in particular, have focused on ‘saving souls’ rather than caring for the whole of creation. The focus has been on ‘subdue’ and ‘have dominion’ *out* of the context of ‘tend and keep’. It is understandable that White (1967) argued for a complete break between contemporary environmentalism and the Judeo-Christian heritage. However, it is noteworthy that the word ‘subdue’ does not even appear in the blessing God pronounced upon Noah and *all* of creation in Genesis 8 after the flood, something the Church apparently did not notice. One interesting departure from this pattern is related by Nash (1989). In 1338, the Bishop of Bamberg was required to pledge that he would take *both* the people and the forests under his protection. So was his successor 60 years later. It is doubtful, however, that this was the result of deep theological reflection because, at the time, the woodlands that provided food, fuel and building materials were under serious threat from deforestation (Nash 1989, p. 32). In more recent history, the founding of the Christian Socialist movement in England around the middle of the nineteenth century was prompted by the appalling conditions endured by the working class and environmental despoliation (see Solomon 2013, Chap. 9).

4.6 Profit

Profit has been addressed at a number of points in this chapter, especially in the theologies and BAM sections. Some additional points are made here. ‘Profit is like oxygen’ (Eldred 2009, p. 18). Just as a person dies without oxygen, a business is unsustainable if it does not make a surplus above its expenses. Without profit, a business has no internal funds, nor access to external financial capital that it needs to grow and serve effectively (Van Duzer 2010, p. 170). Profit is also a blessing to the entrepreneur. ‘The people will curse him who withholds grain, but blessing will be on the head of him who sells it’ (Prov 11:26). ‘Blessing’ connotes prosperity, including financial prosperity.

Profit does not simply ‘happen’. Consistent, sustainable profitability requires diligent planning (including market research, strategic and operational planning, and budgeting) and godly wisdom in decision-making. In short, profit requires the virtue of prudence. Profit is also an aspect of good stewardship:

In teaching both the parable of the minas (Luke 19:13) and the parable of the talents (Matt 25:14-30), Jesus affirms that ‘good stewardship, in God’s eyes, includes expanding and multiplying whatever resources or stewardship God has entrusted to you’ (Grudem 2003, pp. 42-3). The virtuous wife of Proverbs 31 is commended for profiting from buying and

selling land (v.16) and also from what is produced or manufactured (v. 18). Profit in itself should not be the goal, but it can be a measure as to whether or not a business is meeting the needs and wants of the market, and doing it effectively. (Wigley 2012, p. 8)

It can be expected that different businesses will record different levels of profitability depending on the specifics of their God-given purpose. One missional business might be highly profitable and assigned by God to underwrite the local Church or a Christian ministry. Although it is not easy to find case studies on such businesses, the author is privately aware of a number of businesses that are major contributors to local churches and ministries (such as a Christian music and arts festival and Christian radio station). Another missional business might be established in a low socio-economic locality and assigned by God to provide employment and training opportunities for people who might otherwise face long-term unemployment. BAM practitioners are often involved in such enterprises. One that is known to the author that operates in a country closed to missionaries and where religion is illegal employs and trains in the coffee importing, roasting and retailing business (and sponsors a ‘congregation’ of 500 people). Yet another, might be located in a low-income country and assigned by God to transfer technology to indigenous businesses.

4.7 Missional Business in Context

In Fig. 3 an alternative conceptualisation, associated with missional business, is represented. In this conceptualisation, the foundation of business is Biblical worldview. Biblical worldview informs the principles, policies and practices within the business. These include all functions within the business including governance, business development, strategy, finance and administration, human resources management, production, marketing and professional development. The overriding context in which all these functions are executed is God’s purpose for business that is outworked in the areas of production, people, planet and profit. The elements within the triangle represent the flow of principles, policies and practices within the business. The elements outside the triangle represent stakeholders in the business. These include not only employees, managers, and shareholders, but also suppliers and competitors. All are either affected by and/or affect the business in one way or another.

A specific example will help clarify the model. As explained above, a Biblical worldview holds that human beings are created in the image of God and are, therefore, creative, relational, teleological and moral. In the human resources function, the underlying principle might be, ‘This business accepts the Biblical conceptualisation of human beings as being made in the image of God’. The policy on job design (which refers to a job’s content or specific duties, responsibilities, reporting lines and tasks) provides that wherever possible a job will incorporate creative (problem-solving) components (it will not be too heavily routinized), a job

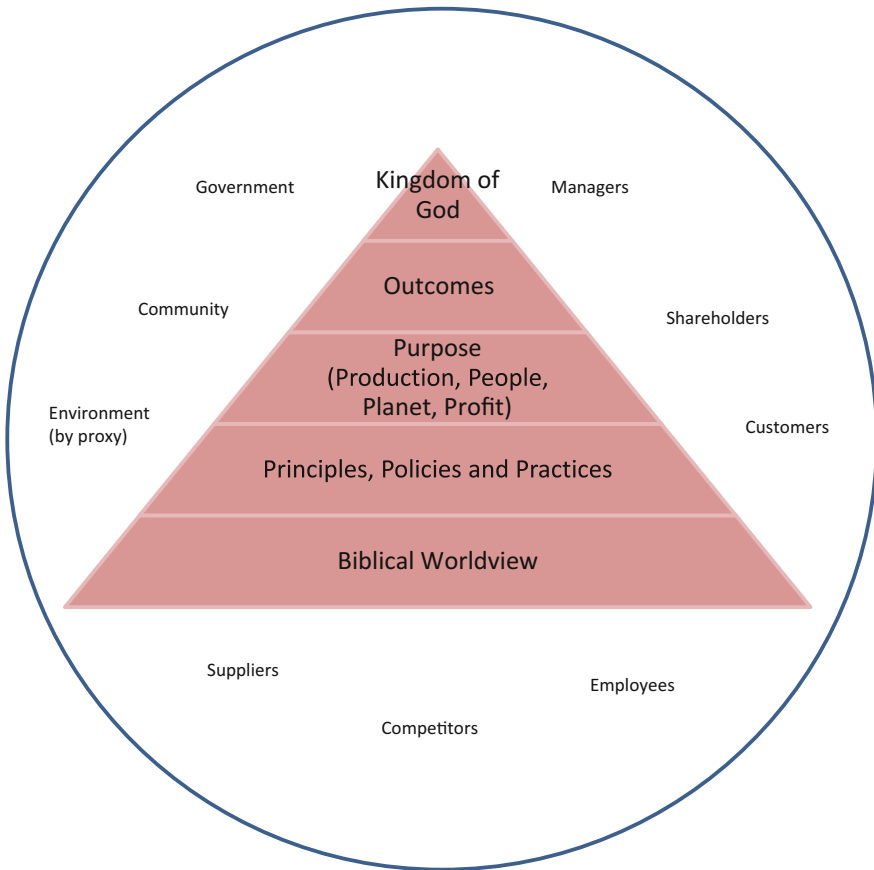


Fig. 3 The missional business model (Adapted from St Hill et al. 2013, p. 29, with permission from BAM Global)

will be team-oriented to allow for relationship, the contribution of the job to the business's overall objectives will be clearly specified (it will be explicit about purpose), and it will allow as much autonomy in decision-making as possible. The practice of working within the business will be biased as much as possible towards delegation with decision-making authority, responsibility for outcomes and whatever training or professional development is necessary (with managers still being held accountable) as opposed to assignment, which is allocation of tasks that are performed under supervision. This will afford the employee with opportunities to develop morally. Overall this example represents a good practice approach to human resources and is consistent with Alford and Naughton (2001). Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to review research on employee job satisfaction, Table 2 summarises the results of a survey of 600 employees in the United States (Society for Human Resource Management 2016). The data illustrate a divergence between importance to the employees of elements of the *imago Dei* and their

Table 2 Employee job satisfaction, United States

Element of <i>imago Dei</i>	Element of job satisfaction	% respondents 'very important'	% respondents 'very satisfied'
Creativity	Opportunities to use your skills and abilities in your work	55	37
	Immediate supervisor's respect for your ideas	49	37
	The variety of your work (e.g. working on different projects, using different skills)	35	30
	The work itself (it is interesting, challenging, exciting, etc.)	48	34
Team orientation	Teamwork within your department/business unit	43	26
	Teamwork between departments/business units	39	21
Understanding of purpose	Meaningfulness of job (understanding how your job contributes to your organisation's mission)	43	34
	The contribution your work has on the overall business goals of the organisation	39	30
Autonomy in decision-making	Authority and independence to make decisions	46	32

satisfaction. On the basis of this survey, there appears to be some improvement needed. One would hope that future research will demonstrate a statistically significant difference between missional businesses and others.

Principles, policies and practices determine how the business fulfils its purpose in the areas of production, people, planet and profit. In this approach, it is understood that the specific purpose of a particular business will address all four of these, but could well be biased more towards one area than another. The example of Cyrus McCormick in Mangalwadi (2011) illustrates a focus on production (in his case production of the mechanical reaper which was, in turn, motivated by his strong desire to rid agriculture of the drudgery of reaping by hand) (pp. 319–321). With respect to people, there is a subset of BAM that focuses on providing meaningful and sustainable paid employment to girls and women in developing countries who would otherwise become trapped in the sex industry.²⁹ In the case of planet, there are (perhaps surprisingly) BAM practitioners who consult with clothing and textile businesses in Bangladesh to help them reduce pollution of waterways.³⁰ Finally, in the case of profit, there are businesses that intentionally focus on profit that they use

²⁹These are referred to as 'freedom businesses'. Details may be found in Tunehag et al. (2013).

³⁰Personal knowledge of the author. It is too dangerous for the consultants to be revealed as Christians. Incidentally, the Bangladeshi businesses are actually keen to reduce their environmental impact (partly because it is often feasible to reduce costs at the same time).

to support the Church and/or parachurch activities or ministries.³¹ Some individual businesses provide millions of dollars of support over time.

The outcomes of missional business reflect the purpose of God in the world which is the redemption of all creation. Missional business provides the institutional infrastructure that embodies the theology of work that has been developed since about the 1980s. In so doing missional business addresses the interests of many stakeholders including employees, customers, shareholders (owners), suppliers, government (directly, e.g. the tax department or indirectly via regulatory bodies, e.g. the environmental agency), the community in which the business operates (the host community) and the broader community, and competitors.

5 Concluding Comments

A broad range of literature has been acknowledged in this chapter, but necessarily so. The Church's overall neglect of the matters at the heart of business generally and CSR particularly arose from its historical suspicion and, at times, downright rejection of business as a worthy pursuit. The Reformation saw the status of work raised and the sacred–secular divide weakened, although it has not disappeared in contemporary times. Unfortunately, the ultimate effect of Puritanism was to separate work from 'the one who calls' and thus weaken the spiritual significance of work. This chapter summarises recent developments in the theologies of work and business and suggests that the Business As Mission movement is a response to these theologies. However, the chapter suggests a different approach to understanding business theologically compared to that associated with BAM. BAM is practiced in developing countries, specifically those in which the poorest and least evangelised peoples live. However, there is a need for business in countries at all levels of development to be instruments of God's purpose in the world. The strength of the model of missional business is that Biblical worldview forms a base upon which principles, policies and practices in business are developed. These give effect to the God-given purpose of individual businesses, which purpose leans toward one (or possibly more) of production, people, planet and profit. The outcomes of pursuing purpose have redemptive effect and contribute to the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Each business operates in the presence of many stakeholders, including the community (local and national) and the natural environment (by human proxy).

The concept of missional business provides fertile ground for curriculum development within a Christian context. Its advantage over the BAM model is twofold. First, it may be characterised as 'BAM everywhere', not only in the poorest and least evangelised areas of the world. Second, it models spiritual matters,

³¹Personal knowledge of the author.

not as additive, but as infused into the very purpose of business as it is outworked in the areas of production, people, planet and profit.

A weakness of the 5P model is that it is not clear how empirical assessment of the success of missional businesses might be determined. The model is not ‘one size fits all’, so the weights given to the elements of purpose will be different for each business. There might be significant divergences between intentions and outcomes on the part of missional business practitioners, so that the mix of elements intended and achieved might differ. Nevertheless, as Wigley (2012) suggested, there might be value in adapting the balanced scorecard approach for the context of missional business. Missional business could prove to be a fertile area for research in the future.

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Chapter 21

Reimagining Christian Formation in Online Theological Education



Diane Hockridge

Abstract As theological colleges offer an increasing range of study programs online, questions remain about whether graduates of theological colleges are adequately formed for Christian life, leadership and service if they complete theology degrees entirely online. This is the challenge facing the educational designer and faculty members at Ridley College, Melbourne, Australia as they reimagine the design of online degree programs to enable and enhance the spiritual, ministry and character formation of students. This chapter describes a doctoral research project based at the college which is exploring Learning Design principles and practices that can be applied to online course design to address student formation. Drawing on insights from learning theory and educational research in the field of Learning Design the project is designing, implementing and evaluating online degree programs, units of study and learning tasks in three cycles over three years at Ridley College, with a view to identifying Learning Design principles and practices for student formation. This chapter describes progress in two key areas: The first relates to the identification of types of learning that are helpful for formation and how this impacts on design decisions; the second relates to the question of how to evaluate the impact of the implemented learning designs on student formation. The chapter closes with some brief comments on the implications of the first evaluation cycle and insights gained for future implementation cycles.

Keywords Formation · Learning design · Online learning · Pedagogy
Theological education

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327

1 Introduction

Are graduates of theological colleges adequately formed for Christian life, leadership and service if they complete theology degrees entirely online? In recent years, educational technologies have enabled the expansion of traditional distance education programs to support remote, regional and other theology students who, for a variety of reasons, wish to pursue part-time, flexible and online study options. There has been much corresponding discussion in theological colleges and in the literature about the merits of online theological education, and particularly whether an online education can adequately address the formation of students (e.g. Asumang 2016; Hess 2010; Hockridge 2013; Maddix and Estep 2010; Ogilvie 2009). There have also been a number of empirical studies on student formation in online theological education (e.g. Babcock 2002; Graham 2002; Heinemann 2007; Hussey 2015; Lowe 2010a, b; Naidoo 2011; Nichols 2014; Sorenson 2007). There has, however, been limited empirical research on how online learning design can contribute to student formation in Australian theological higher education.

This chapter describes progress in an Australian doctoral research project which is designing, implementing and evaluating online undergraduate and graduate theological degree programs which aim to address student formation. In particular, the Formational Learning Design project aims to apply insights from learning theory and educational research in the field of Learning Design¹ to the design of online theological degree programs. It aims to identify Learning Design practices, principles and approaches for formational learning that can be applied particularly in online learning environments. To do so, it is asking educational questions such as What kinds of learning are conducive to formation? What kinds of pedagogies are conducive to formation? How can these be applied to an online learning environment? How can we evaluate the impact of our learning designs on student formation?

The understanding of ‘student formation’ that undergirds the Formational Learning Design project is that formation involves more than cognitive and intellectual understanding and that being formed is an ongoing process of change and transformation that involves the whole person (Banks 1999; Farley 1983; Lane 2010; Sherlock 2009). It also understands formation to be about more than personal belief and spirituality; it is fundamentally a question of identity, and how one’s identity shapes character and practice. A formative theological education is, therefore, one that enables students to explore how they understand and live out their identity in Christ; in relation to themselves, God, God’s people and God’s

¹The field of Learning Design is relatively new. This chapter adopts the capitalization practice recommended in the “Larnaca Declaration on Learning Design”, (Dalziel et al. 2013), using capitals for ‘Learning Design’ when referring to the field, and lower case ‘learning design’ when referring to a specific instance of a design for learning.

world.² A formative theological education is one that impacts the whole person, forming identity which results in transformed character and practice. The aim of the Formational Learning Design project is, therefore, to work out how online courses can be designed to enable this type of holistic student formation to occur.

In this project, the researcher, in the role of online educational designer, is working with a team of faculty members at Ridley College, Melbourne, Australia. For over 100 years, Ridley College has been offering theological education courses, mostly on campus. Historically, Ridley College has had a strong commitment to formation of students (Adam 2009; Lane 2010). When the college recently decided to develop fully online degree programs it wanted to ensure the online programs would be conducive to student formation, which made the college an ideal context in which to conduct the Formational Learning Design research project.

The project is using a design-based research approach (Barab 2006; DBR Collective 2003; McKenney and Reeves 2012; Reeves et al. 2005; Van den Akker et al. 2006) to design, implement and evaluate an online program of study, which is being implemented in three cycles over three years (2015–2017). The researcher is working with participating educators in small design teams with the aim of creating spaces, opportunities and relational contexts to enable and enhance the holistic formation of theological education students. Learning Design decisions are recorded in the form of design conjectures and their implementation as key design elements, the impact of which is being tracked by collecting data from students, via online questionnaires, interviews and student learning artefacts and from participating educators via journals and interviews.

This chapter describes progress in two key areas. The first key area relates to the identification of types of learning that are helpful for formation and how this impacts on design decisions regarding the overall online program structure (and choice of learning tasks). The second relates to the question of how to evaluate the impact of the learning designs on student formation. This section describes the development of a set of formational indicators which are being used to articulate formational learning aims and a set of design conjectures which together are being used to evaluate whether these aims are being achieved.

2 Designing for Formational Learning

To enable the holistic formation of students the project is employing a three-stranded design approach which draws on learning theory and insights from theological education literature and practice. According to Mayes and de Freitas (2013), three main perspectives can be discerned in learning theory—Cognitive, associative and

²I acknowledge my colleague Dr. Graham Stanton's contribution to the development of this four-part approach (known by God, knowing God, belonging to God's people, serving God's people) which is being used to structure the online "Guided Spiritual Formation" program at Ridley College.

situative. These three perspectives reflect shifts in learning theory and teaching practice over the past few decades but they also reflect the complexity of the learning process itself, recognizing that people learn in a variety of ways: Cognitively (building knowledge and understanding, constructing intellectual frameworks); associatively (building component skills into extended performance) and situatively (developing identities and roles) (Beetham 2013). The theological education literature reflects a similar understanding of learning. Research undertaken by Foster et al. (2006) suggests a formative education will involve a combination of three ways of learning, or what the authors call cognitive, practical and normative apprenticeships, which together address the whole person. Though not mapping directly, these three perspectives relate to the often-used ‘head, heart, hands’ approach of theological educators (Foster et al. 2006; Shaw 2014; Smith 2010).³

The design approach taken in this project combines these insights into a three-stranded design approach which considers how design decisions relating to the online environment, course structures as well as chosen pedagogies and learning tasks might provide ways for students to learn cognitively, practically and situatively. It aims to provide educational experiences that contribute in a balanced way to student formation by finding ways to engage not just students’ minds but their bodies and practices, and their life, work and ministry contexts to contribute to the formation of their identity in Christ. The application of this three-stranded design approach enables a consistent approach to addressing student formation at all levels from curriculum or program design, through individual unit or subject design, down to individual learning tasks. It is being applied to the program or degree level structure by incorporating opportunities for students studying online to learn and practice relevant theological and ministry skills and to place them in contexts in which they can develop their ministry identities and roles as part of an online degree program. Existing recommended undergraduate and graduate degree pathways at the college did not sufficiently provide these opportunities for online students so the course structure was modified to add required units in ‘Guided Spiritual Formation’. Online students are also strongly encouraged to complete at least one ‘Supervised Theological Field Education’ unit alongside required Bible, language and Christian thought units.

The three-stranded design approach (cognitive, practical, situative) is also being applied to the design of individual units and learning tasks. Recent research in distance and online theological education (Hussey 2015; Nichols 2014) indicates that students attribute formation to a wide range of educational experiences, not just ‘formation specific’ units or activities. Therefore, in developing the suite of online units the design team recognizes that, regardless of whether a unit is considered to be a ‘Bible’ unit or a ‘Christian thought’ unit, or a ‘ministry and practice’ unit, there will be cognitive, practical and situative ways of learning that can be fostered in each of these. For example, the newly designed Bible units include in addition to cognitively oriented learning tasks like reading, deliberate cultivation of exegetical

³A fuller overview of the literature and explanation of the three strands or perspectives described here can be found in Hockridge (2015).

skills through demonstration and practice (practical) and learning tasks that ask students to connect and apply their learning in their life and ministry contexts (situative). Units in ‘Guided Spiritual Formation’ require the use of critical thinking and personal reflection (cognitive) as well as learning with a mentor, and engaging in spiritual practices (practical and situative).

The three-stranded design approach helps designers and educators to think about how students studying entirely online might be engaged more than just cognitively. One concern that has been raised by some theological scholars is that learning online could be a disembodied experience (Kelsey 2002; Roels 2004). Kelsey (2002) argued that learning and teaching, and particularly learning and teaching about God, inherently involves the bodily presence of teachers and students to one another and questioned whether ‘virtual’ is just a euphemism for ‘bodiless’? A number of theological scholars take issue with Kelsey’s (2002) conclusions about embodiment and distance or online learning. Gresham (2006) argues that online education can be incarnational without being embodied, and Hess (2000, 2005) reminds us that students remain embodied while learning online. Indeed we remain embodied whatever we do, whether studying online, going to church or playing sport. And it is important for designers and educators to remember that while students may study online they do have a life outside the online environment. Rather than framing the discussion in terms of questions of theological anthropology the more relevant issue for online learning designers and educators is that they remember to design for and relate to online students as embodied learners.

Hall’s (2010) analysis of the purpose of bodies is helpful in this conversation. She suggests that the ultimate aim of our bodies is to show God’s indwelling presence and bear fruit, and one of the main implications is that we should take relationships seriously. In this sense, she puts the emphasis on the purposeful functions of the body rather than the location of the body. This focus on purposeful function can be applied to thinking about learning design for learning experiences where people do not meet bodily with one another. It leads us to ask relevant design questions like how can we create an environment where students can communicate meaningfully and relationally with one another or what learning tasks might foster meaningful connection with others? There are many excellent ideas and examples of good practice in this area which we will not repeat here (e.g., Delamarter et al. 2007; Hege 2011; Lowe 2010a, b; Maddix et al. 2012; White 2006). One example of how this is being applied in the Formational Learning Design project is the online ‘Guided Spiritual Formation’ program in which students are asked to engage in and reflect on a range of spiritual practices that also engage the body, both individually and corporately, such as ‘walking and talking’ or engaging in daily prayer with another. This recognizes the potentially formative impact of learning in and through actual bodily practice (Calhoun 2005; Smith 2009) and is just one example of how we are applying a design approach that aims to engage the whole person, in order to help form identity in Christ.

The situative strand of the design approach aims to ensure online students’ interpersonal and ministry skills are developed, practiced and nurtured in a relevant ministry context. Drawing on situated learning theory (Jonassen and Land 2000;

Lave 1991) and the theological education research of Graham (2002, 2003), Lowe and Lowe (2010) and Nichols (2015), the Formational Learning Design project aims to incorporate the potential of the students' wider context for learning. As Graham (2003) says, the particular form that formation takes 'is determined by the community[ies] of practice to which the student aspires to belong' (p. 68). Lowe and Lowe (2010) point out that each of our online students has a set of family, work and ministry contexts, or ecosystems, in which they are constantly engaging and being formed. Lowe and Lowe (2010) encourage theological educators to seek ways to extend the impact of formal learning into students' everyday contexts. As does Nichols (2015), whose research into distance theological education points out there is great potential for 'situated theological distance education' which finds points of connection and engagement with students' Church or community context for learning. Some ways in which these are being addressed in the Formational Learning Design project are by setting authentic learning tasks that ask students to reflect on and apply their learning in real contexts and requiring online students to practice ministry skills and receive feedback from others. By including such learning tasks we can engage the potential of the students' wider context in supporting their learning. In the Formational Learning Design project we intentionally include student peers in online forums, peer review, group tasks; individual mentors in the 'Guided Spiritual Formation' program; ministry supervisors in the 'Supervised Field Education Program'; individuals within their Christian communities who agree to provide feedback and support; as well as one or more tutors to guide the students through the online learning materials. The situative strategies employed and their impact on student formation will be reported at the conclusion of the research project.

3 Evaluating the Formative Impact of the Implemented Designs

Design-based research aims to evaluate the impact of the implemented learning designs on the desired educational outcomes, usually via iterative cycles of implementation and evaluation (Barab and Squire 2004; DBR Collective 2003; McKenney and Reeves 2012; Van den Akker et al. 2006). A particular challenge for the Formational Learning Design project has been to work out how we might evaluate firstly whether our formational outcomes have been achieved, and secondly, to what extent any reported student formation is a result of the implemented design solution.

A variety of tools and scales can be used to measure religious belief, spirituality and spiritual development. While these tools may be useful in other research contexts they only measure perceived spiritual development not how that development is related to the learning design. Empirical research projects that have investigated student formation in a particular educational context usually develop evaluative tools specific to the context being investigated (e.g., Babcock 2002; Hussey 2015; Naidoo 2011). An examination of existing tools found none that were

appropriate for the purposes of assessing the impact of specific learning design elements on student formation for this project.

The researcher and design teams are therefore developing and applying an evaluation approach which:

- Identifies ‘formation indicators’ or descriptors of the actions and characteristics that we would expect ‘formed’ students to practice and display, and uses these to assess how students are being formed.
- Identifies ways in which we teach/support/develop students towards these indicators. These are our ‘design conjectures’, which are then implemented in the online learning designs.
- Develops a data collection approach to gather data on the impact of the online learning experience on formation: To what extent are the desired ‘formation indicators’ present in students, what design elements impact in what ways, and how does this relate to our design conjectures?

It is expected that this evaluation approach will enable the researcher to track the impact of specific design elements and to ascertain whether the formative impact that students are describing is related to the implemented learning designs and consistent with the desired formation indicators. It is explained in more detail in the following sections.

3.1 Identifying Formation Indicators

The first stage in developing indicators of formation was to identify the desired formational outcomes. This was achieved in a series of design team and faculty meetings which aimed to clarify the college’s formational goals by workshopping questions like What do we mean by formation? What do we expect a formed person, (particularly a graduate of our college), will be like? This process identified the following five main areas in which we expect and desire to see students growing and developing:

- A. Developing and applying theological understanding.
- B. Developing dispositions and patterns of behaviour helpful for personal spiritual growth and maturity.
- C. Developing dispositions and patterns of behaviour helpful for Christian leadership and ministry.
- D. Developing skills and proficiencies for Christian leadership and ministry.
- E. Integrating learning into a sense of identity in Christ.

For each of the key growth areas, we proposed corresponding ‘formation indicators’ to describe what this might look like in terms of student learning. Some examples are included in Table 1. The full list of formation indicators will be refined through the second and third design cycles and the final list of formation indicators will be available in the final research report.

Table 1 Sample formation indicators

Area of growth	Sample indicator (what students do/demonstrate)	Sample design conjectures (how we teach/support/develop)
A. Developing and applying theological understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies theological understanding in real contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set problem-based learning tasks or tasks requiring application of understanding to a current issue/context
B. Developing dispositions and patterns of behaviour helpful for personal spiritual growth and maturity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages in productive self-reflection and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach action-reflection learning model which students use in guided reflection tasks
C. Developing dispositions and patterns of behaviour helpful for Christian leadership and ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits willingness to receive and learn from feedback from others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervised ministry experience, with feedback • Intentional mentoring relationship
D. Developing skills and proficiencies for Christian leadership and ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and practicing Biblical interpretation and teaching skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning tasks requiring practice and feedback • Supervised ministry practice, with feedback
E. Integrating these into a sense of identity in Christ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulates personal sense of identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunity for guided reflection

This table provides a small set of examples extracted from a larger set of formational learning goals and indicators being developed by the project design team

It should be noted that these broad level formational goals were developed for the Ridley College context. While one might expect some commonality of formational goals among theological colleges, specific formational learning aims will vary according to institutional and denominational goals and priorities, as Hussey (2015) notes. For example, some theological colleges prepare students for ordination in a specific denominational context which may include specific requirements for leadership in that denomination. The general trend in theological colleges in Australia is towards a diversification of the student body and a decrease in the proportion of students studying to be ordained (Sherlock 2009). At Ridley College, around 15% of the student cohort are preparing for ordination, with the remainder preparing for non-ordained ministry or employment in a variety of contexts, or studying for personal development. Presently, students on the Anglican ordination track must complete a specialized two-year program on-campus with Ridley's Anglican Institute.

3.2 How We Design and Teach to Support or Develop the Indicators (Design Conjectures)

Having identified a preliminary set of formational goals, the next step was to work out what pedagogies were implied or might be used to develop a learning design

that contributed to student formation. In the early design team planning meetings, a number of pedagogical approaches were considered, drawing both on the experience of the participating educators and on a range of educational and theological education literature (Herrington et al. 2010; Kolb 1984; Osmer 2008; Schön 1987; Shulman 2002). A small sample of some indicators and corresponding pedagogies is included in Table 1.

These identified pedagogical approaches were applied to the design of the first cycle of new online units. For example, one indicator for learning area B (developing dispositions and patterns of behaviour helpful for personal spiritual growth and maturity) is that an individual engages in productive self-reflection and evaluation. One way in which educators can encourage this is by teaching students how to use an action-reflection model of learning. The Formational Learning Design project employs this in the online ‘Guided Spiritual Formation’ and ‘Supervised Field Education’ units. The action-reflection model of learning (Gibbs 2013; Osmer 2008) is introduced via the online learning materials and students are asked to practice it by engaging in a variety of theological reflections on ministry incidents, using a guiding set of questions, and receiving feedback from their supervisors, peers and their tutors.

In Learning Design terms, the use of the action-reflection model as an intentional process to facilitate student formation is a ‘design conjecture’ (Sandoval 2014). In the Formational Learning Design project, these ‘design conjectures’ encapsulate the design teams’ ideas about pedagogies. Sandoval (2014) argues that getting educators to articulate design conjectures clarifies design intentions, helps explicate what the features of the design are expected to do and how they are expected to work together to produce the desired learning. According to Sandoval (2014), design conjectures are about how a design functions and take the general form ‘if learners engage in this activity (task + participant) structure with these tools, through this discursive practice, then this mediating process will emerge’ (p. 24). In the Formational Learning Design project, we refer to the ‘mediating process’ as a ‘formation indicator’. Continuing with our above example of action-reflection learning, the formation indicator (or expected mediating process) is that the student engages in productive self-reflection and evaluation. Our design conjecture is that teaching students to use an action-reflection model will contribute to this goal. To evaluate our design conjecture we next need to find a way to look for evidence both that this indicator of formation is present in students and also find a way to determine whether its presence is connected to the implemented pedagogical approach.

3.3 Data Collection Methods to Evaluate the Learning Designs

The formation indicators and design conjectures can serve as tools for evaluation and for developing an approach to data collection. As descriptors of the actions,

attitudes and characteristics that ‘formed’ students are expected to display and practice, formation indicators serve as a proxy for student formation and can be used to assess whether students are being formed. Goertz (2012) proposes that such indicators allow researchers to work out what data needs to be collected when dealing with complex concepts. He suggests it is helpful to view complex concepts (like democracy) within a three-level framework: The ‘basic’ or theoretical level, a secondary level which is the constitutive dimensions of the concept and a third indicator/data level or operationalization level. Goertz (2012) argues this is helpful for research because it is at the third level of indicators that we can make connections between concepts and data collection: ‘Data can be gathered at this level which permits us to categorize whether or not a specific phenomenon, individual or event falls under the concept’ (p. 6).

The design conjectures summarize the way in which pedagogies which we propose will be conducive to student formation. Using a process of ‘conjecture mapping’ recommended by Sandoval (2014), we can map out how we will include these pedagogies in our learning design, what desired outcomes will look like and how they might be observed or measured. In this way, conjecture mapping is helpful in the learning design process as it enables designers to describe how design elements will be embodied. And it can also provide a means of evaluation which can be linked to data collection. Conjecture maps can thus ‘help to sharpen the focus of analysis and evaluation on relevant elements of the learning design’ (Sandoval 2014, p. 24) and provide a means of tracking and testing our design ideas. Sandoval (2014) recommends that in order to test design conjectures designers and educators need to have methods that can identify whether the expected mediating process does in fact emerge and that can provide evidence to trace that process back to designed elements. Applying this to our example of action-reflection learning above, if we can find evidence not only that students engage in productive self-reflection and evaluation but also that this has occurred as a result of the implemented pedagogical approach (in this example, action-reflection learning) we have some evidence that the implemented design solution is impacting on student formation.

The researcher, therefore, designed a set of qualitative data collection instruments to look for evidence of the formation indicators and the impact of the design conjectures embodied as design elements in the online units. At the end of each design cycle, students who have completed the online units are invited to participate in an online questionnaire together with follow-up interviews which ask students to describe in what ways they have been formed and to identify specific elements of their learning experience that had a formative impact. This enables the researcher to link the student formation being reported to the learning design and the design conjectures and, therefore, to evaluate the impact of the learning design on formation.

Student data is also being collected, with student permission, in the form of student learning artefacts which include submitted assignments, self-evaluative assessments, learning journals and online forum contributions. The learning artefacts are used to provide an additional and less direct means of assessing the

existence of formation indicators and impact of design elements. Where the questionnaires and interviews ask students to actively reflect on their online learning experience and their own formation, most of the learning artefacts do not. Yet, they can be examined for evidence in the student work indicating growth in the desired formational areas and for evidence of the impact of design elements, including assessment items, on formation.

Data on students is also collected in the form of ‘third-party’ reports for students enrolled in the ‘Guided Spiritual Formation’ and/or ‘Supervised Field Education’ units. Where students give permission, the feedback reports from their mentors or supervisors are accessed. These can provide third-party confirmation (or otherwise) of the formational development of the student.

Last, data is also being collected from the educators involved in the Formational Learning Design project in the form of educator journals which ask them to reflect on the design process and in the form of educator interviews, as well as researcher notes on design planning meetings and decisions. It is expected that this data will assist the researcher in drawing conclusions regarding Learning Design approaches and principles that are helpful and effective in online Learning Design practice for student formation.

These various types of data are being collected at the end of each cycle of implementation, converted where necessary into digital text format and coded using Nvivo software. Student responses to the online questionnaire and interviews, their learning artefacts and any third-party reports are examined for evidence of formational growth in the key growth areas and also for evidence of to what extent this is attributed to particular design elements and the design conjectures. It is expected that collecting and analysing such data over three cycles of implementation will enable the researcher to draw some conclusions about ways in which the implemented learning design is impacting on formation, which in turn will enable conclusions to be drawn about helpful pedagogical practices for student formation in online learning environments.

4 Preliminary Comments from First Evaluation Cycle

At the point of writing, one cycle of implementation and evaluation has been completed and so it is not possible to draw definitive conclusions. However, analysis of first cycle student data shows that students reported that their online experiences are having a formative impact and were able to identify specific design elements which are contributing to this. Indicators of formation were found in all five desired formational growth areas. For example, this student’s response evidences some of the characteristics we recognize as necessary for Christian ministry, and thus evidences growth in the *ministry dispositions* area:

Being a distance student has meant a lot of online interaction. There are skills I have been developing through this that have been beneficial, not only in my current work, but also in my broader life and ministry. These skills include: respect for the opinions of others,

learning how to respond in grace, gentleness and love to those who oppose my thinking or who are difficult, patience with those who are slower to learn, the value of sharing ideas and learning from one another, reading between the lines, the need to encourage others and empathise with the frustrations and struggles of others, not dominating discussions, the humility of being corrected 'publicly', the balance between expressing what I know but not intimidating others.

In the above example, the student links the development of these ministry dispositions with their experience of the online interactions within online discussion forums. In an example related to the action-reflection model mentioned earlier, this student connected the application of the action-reflection process with *personal spiritual growth*:

I met with my mentor yesterday and we spent a very helpful time together looking at a situation that had occurred for me the previous day in a ministry context. I went through the four outlined stages for reflection and discussion, and [my mentor] was able to share some helpful godly counsel and wisdom on the matter. I have ongoing personal work to do with God as a result, but it highlighted a particular area in my personal and spiritual growth in which God seems to be working at the moment.

These examples are included here as illustrations that student participants in the first cycle of implementation reported formational growth in a variety of categories which they attributed to a range of elements within the online courses in which they participated. As we continue to collect data, we expect we will find patterns and connections between student formation and various design elements which will enable some conclusions to be drawn about how we might design online learning to contribute to student formation. A more detailed report of the findings will be available on completion of all three cycles of implementation and evaluation. At this point, we can comment on some implications of the evaluation of the first cycle of implementation in relation to learning design practice.

4.1 The Development of Formation Indicators Helps Designers and Educators to Clarify Their Desired Formational Outcomes

Clarity around expected formational outcomes is necessary if theological colleges expect that holistic formation of students will be an outcome of their courses. Outcomes-based education encourages educators to set learning outcomes, and then work out how to help students achieve those learning outcomes and how to assess whether they have achieved those outcomes (Biggs and Tang 2007). While outcomes-based approaches are now widely used in theological course design in Australia it seems they are not applied so readily to formational outcomes. This may be partly due to tensions inherent in the Australian theological higher education context. In the United States, theological programs of study offered by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation, an associated non-governmental accrediting agency. In this context,

it is fairly straightforward to establish standards for Christian formation, which the ATS has done (Commission on Accreditation 2015).

In Australia religious and theological education has historically sat outside the mainstream secular university context (Sherlock 2009). But in recent years the Australian higher education context has shifted and now, in order to be accredited (and entitled to funding), all higher education degree programs must comply with the broader framework of the Australian Quality Framework (AQF) and the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Association (TEQSA), the Federal government accrediting agency. Theological institutions in Australia, therefore, need to work out how to express their holistic formational aims in this context and how to demonstrate these aims are being achieved. Theological educators need to continue to develop clarity around formational outcomes. Identifying formation indicators is a means of furthering clarity and also a means of evidencing progress towards these outcomes.

4.2 The Use of Formation Indicators Provides a Means of Evaluating Our Formational Goals

Indicators provide a means of assessing a multidimensional concept by articulating it in ways that can be evidenced in empirical data. By articulating how we expect formational goals will be manifested in terms of student formation the formation indicators provide clarity about what we are looking for when we ‘measure’ student formation. In this way, the formation indicators are a key part of evidence-based design for formation in online learning. Using indicators enables us to assess student formation not only using self-reported measures but to include multiple data sources (student artefacts, third-party reports) in assessing formation.

4.3 The Use of Design Conjectures and Conjecture Mapping Is Helpful in Tracking the Impact of Key Design Elements

Any learning design includes multiple design elements and many ‘moving parts’, each of which can contribute to (or detract from) learning in multiple ways and in combination with other parts in even more ways (Dalziel et al. 2013). One of the challenges for design-based researchers is to identify and track which elements of the learning design impact on learners and in what ways. Articulating design conjectures and mapping how they are implemented in the learning designs is proving helpful in tracking the impact of the various pedagogies and design elements involved in a complex project such as the Formational Learning Design project.

4.4 Design Conjectures and Conjecture Mapping Can Be Used to Identify Helpful Learning Design Practices and Principles for Student Formation

The ultimate aim of the Formational Learning Design project is to develop design principles and recommend pedagogical approaches that may be helpful for theological educators in developing online courses that address student formation. Our design conjectures identify pedagogical practices that support and develop student formation and equip students with processes and practices that we believe to be helpful for formation and, in this way, are a step towards developing design principles and sharing design ideas.

5 Conclusion

This chapter has described two of the ways in which the Formational Learning Design project is applying insights from the field of Learning Design to the challenge of designing online theology courses that will contribute to the holistic formation of students. Learning Design for holistic formation of students needs to find ways to engage not just students' minds but their bodies and practices, as well as their life, work and ministry contexts to contribute to the formation of their identity in Christ. The three-stranded design approach, described in this chapter, involves intentionally designing for cognitive, practical and situative learning. This design approach impacts on design decisions at multiple levels including the overall online program structure, the design of individual units of study and the choice of pedagogies and learning tasks. The application of the three-stranded design approach aims to enable the provision of educational experiences that contribute in a balanced way to holistic student formation.

The second part of this chapter described how the Formational Learning Design project is evaluating the impact of the learning designs on student formation using a set of formation indicators to help assess student formation and design conjectures to articulate and track the impact of chosen pedagogical approaches. Evaluation of the first design cycle indicates that the implemented design solution is having a formative impact on students. The research project will continue to evaluate the impact of the implemented learning designs over two further cycles and will continue to refine the design approach and the formation indicators. It is expected that the evaluative methodology being used in the Formational Learning Design project will enable the researcher to make theoretical links and draw conclusions about how the Learning Design elements relate to formation. It is expected this research will result in the formulation of Learning Design principles and pedagogies for formation that can be applied, not only in online learning contexts but to theological education Learning Design more generally.

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Part V
Promoting Reconciliation in a Changing
World: Social Justice, Environmental,
Historical, and Global Perspectives in
Education

Chapter 22

Teaching History for a Moral Purpose: Wilberforce as Evangelical Hero



Mark Stephens

Abstract William Wilberforce is a particular kind of evangelical hero. His efforts to secure the abolition of the British slave trade mean he is held up as a paradigm for evangelical influence in politics and culture. Yet the use of idealised heroes in history teaching is morally problematic and leads to a distorting of history. Using the example of Wilberforce as our point of reference, this study demonstrates the need for historians to tell stories from the past that incorporate sufficient complexity and ambiguity. This does not mean we cannot celebrate Wilberforce's testimony, instead it means recognising the surprising, and often unpredictable, ways positive social progress is created by means of a whole host of historical factors, only one of which is individual effort. By attending to all the historical data, history teachers enable students to better understand their own agency within a complex world.

Keywords Wilberforce · Historiography · Ethics · Moral formation
Evangelicalism

1 Introduction

From its very beginnings in antiquity, history has always stood in a complex relationship with morality. To what degree should history be a moral exercise, furnishing us with ethical insights, and parading before us villains and heroes to praise or condemn? Christian historiography is deeply enmeshed in this debate, because believers have often sought validation for their contemporary praxis by appealing to examples within history. For evangelicals there is perhaps no better example of this phenomena than William Wilberforce. In contemporary evangelical discourse Wilberforce functions as a moral exemplar *par excellence*, whose anti-slavery achievements provide a paradigm for cultural change (Hunter 2010, p. 38; Nicoll 2016; White 2008). But the modern appropriation of the Wilberforce

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story raises questions concerning the role history should play in ‘fostering moral intelligence’ (Miller 2010, p. 15). Is there a danger that historical knowledge will be subjugated as a means to an end, where historical facts are merely recruited for inspirational goals?

This chapter argues that the first responsibility of a history teacher is to be a historian, as opposed to being a pastor, a preacher, or even an activist (Gorman 2004, p. 111; LaGrand 2010, p. 194). In simple terms, one must honestly seek to understand the past before one can meaningfully apply it. At the same time we will also argue that historical truth-telling is never simply done for the sake of the historian, nor only for the sake of knowledge itself, but rather historiography is a morally significant practice in which the knowledge of past reality can be deployed for the accomplishing of present good. Accordingly, the study of history can be meaningfully oriented towards the love of God and neighbour (Howard 2006, p. 29; McKenzie 2013, pp. 6–8). Our investigation will proceed in four sections. First, we will situate our analysis of Wilberforce within the broader discussion of morality and historiography. Second, we will summarily outline the case for Wilberforce as a worthy hero of Christian history. Third, we will then articulate a range of concerns which potentially destabilise a ‘heroic’ reading of Wilberforce. Fourth, we will then offer a revised account of how one might discern moral lessons from the past in ways which are both faithful to the task of history, and formative for our contemporary praxis.

2 The Problem of Morality and Historiography

To begin with, it is helpful to situate our specific topic within the broader theoretical discussion of morality and historiography. It is well known that in antiquity the purpose of history was often configured in terms of its moral benefit (Walsh 1955, p. 369). Livy’s (1912) preface to his history of Rome furnishes us with a classic example:

There is this exceptionally beneficial and fruitful advantage to be derived from the study of the past, that you see, set in the clear light of historical truth, examples of every possible type. From these you may select for yourself and your country what to imitate, and also what, as being mischievous in its inception and disastrous in its issues, you are to avoid. (Book 1. Preface, p. 10)

However, this belief in the ethical value of the past was significantly challenged in the nineteenth century, when Leopold von Ranke famously reduced history to the task of showing ‘what actually happened’ (Howard 2006, p. 23). This dispassionate and ‘objective’ vision of history sees moral concerns as a potential distorter of the historical task because moral considerations compel the historian to play a role they are ill-equipped to perform (Evans 2002, p. 330; Walsh 1955). Yet, in recent decades, there has been something of a ‘moral turn’ in historiography (Cotkin 2008). For one thing, it is clear that we inevitably bring our ethical perspectives to

the task of history, embedded as they are within the subjects we choose, the periodisations we employ, and the narrative shape we create (Cotkin 2008, p. 314; Frederick 1998, p. 222; Gorman 2004, pp. 114–115). Indeed, irrespective of whether we are conscious of it, our historical constructions always have relevance to the present, because memory is fundamental to our sense of self, of community, and even our horizons of possibility (Cotkin 2008, p. 312; Howard 2006, p. 30).¹ But the ethical turn in historiography involves more than moral relevance because questions have also been asked about the moral responsibility of the historian. Is it right for a historian to treat the Holocaust dispassionately? Is it legitimate to stand aloof from the atrocities of Rwanda or the history of civil rights in America? (Cotkin 2008, p. 301; LaGrand 2010, p. 188).

Yet, the moral turn in historiography brings with it a range of complexities. Chief among these difficulties is the tendency to reconfigure historical narrative as an instrumental means towards an ethical end. In so doing, historical facts are recruited for hortatory purposes, with the potential for the complexity of the story to be elided in order that a clearer moral can be discerned (Cotkin 2008, p. 301). It is not that the story did turn out this way, and we can perhaps draw certain lessons, it is that the story must conform to an ‘a priori scheme of historical righteousness,’ because we already know the lessons that must be learned (Howard 2006, p. 25). In our specific case, the question needs to be asked as to what degree our memories of Wilberforce *must* take a particular narrative shape, or a particular construction of causality, in order for them to serve their inspirational ends. Looking at it from the opposite side, how fatal would it be if we were to admit new data, or to reconfigure the basic narrative? To a consideration of these issues, we now turn.

2.1 *Wilberforce as Abolition’s Hero*

Prima facie, a strong case can be made for the essential role played by evangelicals like Wilberforce in British abolitionism, such that abolition was the ‘consequence of a divinely guided confluence of Christian thinkers towards social change’ (Ryden 2001, p. 348). Following in the footsteps of evangelicals like Granville Sharp (Davis 2006, p. 234; Wallace 1998), and working alongside fellow evangelicals like Thomas Clarkson and the ‘Clapham sect,’ Wilberforce became a key player in abolition, whose brilliant oratory and strategic alliances enabled the effective translation of popular support into concrete parliamentary proposals (Tomkins 2007, p. 58; Wolffe 2006, p. 188). Thus, it was Wilberforce who continually introduced abolition bills into parliament, and it was Wilberforce who was particularly applauded when abolition eventually passed in 1807 (Tomkins 2007,

¹See, for example, the work of C. Vann Woodward (1955), whose history of segregation in the American South helped to destabilise the ‘illusion of permanency’ that surrounded *de jure* segregation. In so doing, the horizons of possibility in the present changed (LaGrand 2010, p.203).

pp. 159–171). Crucial to the question of Wilberforce’s Christian influence is the place of morality as a prime motivator for the abolitionist cause. Although abolitionists were careful to include pragmatic arguments against slavery, much of their rhetoric was explicitly moral in tone, and oftentimes prioritised Christian principles as a chief reason for abolition (Bradley 1983, p. 41; Drescher 1990). As Wilberforce himself said in 1791: ‘Never, never will we desist till we have wiped away this scandal from the Christian name’ (cited in Wright 1817, p. 278). It is on the basis of evidence such as this that many see abolition as an evangelical achievement, with Wilberforce as the central hero.

2.2 *Problems with a ‘Heroic’ Reading of Wilberforce*

The idea that abolition can be regarded as an uncomplicated parable of Christian social reform can, however, be challenged. Indeed, the apportioning of responsibility for abolition remains a hotly contested topic within contemporary historiography (Palmer 2009; Richardson 2007), so much so that bicentennial commemorations of abolition were sometimes disturbed by protesting voices (Prior 2007; Tibbles 2008).

First, there is the necessity of addressing concerns of race, in particular, the silencing of African voices (Kerr-Ritchie 2008, p. 537; Richardson 2007, p. 979). To be fair, the influence of some African writings, such as those by Olaudah Equiano and Ottobah Cugoano,² have usually been acknowledged as formative (Coffey 2007, pp. 109–110). But in many other respects, Africans have largely figured as ‘passive’ actors in the drama, whose only significant role was to play the victim. Such an approach ignores the sporadic, yet significant, instances when slaves actively resisted their masters, be it revolts on the slave ships or revolts on the plantations (Morgan 2007, pp. 127–147).

Second, we must question the degree to which *evangelicals* alone can be held responsible for the anti-slavery movement. Excepting the Anglican evangelical Granville Sharp, it is well known that the origins of religious anti-slavery in Britain lie with the Quakers (Wolffe 2006, p. 188). In addition, once the movement had gathered pace, it included not only evangelicals but also Latitudinarian Anglicans and even Unitarians (Coffey 2007, p. 108). But to characterise anti-slavery as only a religious movement would also be to ignore the way thinkers and activists outside the Christian fold played a vital role. It has often been noted that anti-slavery sentiments were already present in the work of both French and British philosophers (Anstey 1972, pp. 307–311; Tomkins 2007, p. 79).

Third, the tendency to prioritise Wilberforce as the chief hero of the movement tends to narrow our focus on the ‘elite transactions’ of parliament (Drescher 1994, p. 138). This inevitably elides the role the wider British populace played in exerting

²For example, Cugoano (1787/2013) and Equiano (2003).

extra-parliamentary pressure for abolition, including the use of mass petitions (Walvin 2007, p. 13), as well as sugar boycotts, where more than 300,000 ordinary people were convinced to abandon the consumption of West Indian sugar (Palmer 2009, p. 1040).

Fourth, it is necessary to ask to what degree economic factors played a role in abolition. In the 1940s, Eric Williams famously argued that abolition happened only because it was economically expedient to do so (Williams 1944). Whilst this thesis was effectively demolished by Drescher (1977) in his work *Econocide*, this does not mean that economic factors were entirely unimportant. Prior to Wilberforce, Adam Smith³ had already articulated economic arguments for free labour as one part of his broader anti-slavery sentiments (Swaminathan 2007, p. 488). Furthermore, despite the moral rhetoric of the abolitionist cause, they also argued that the ending of the slave trade would have the additional advantage of being both economically and politically prudent (Tomkins 2007, pp. 61, 81–83, 104, 122, 156).

Fifth, the success of abolition was also influenced by geopolitical factors. On the one hand, it is commonly recognised that the Anglo-French conflicts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century played a crucial role in stalling the parliamentary impetus towards abolition. The fear of ‘Jacobin’ radicalism, and the need to concentrate the nation in a time of external threat meant that slavery became a marginal issue throughout the 1790s (Morgan 2007, pp. 164–165; Walvin 2007, pp. 16–17).

Together, this diverse collection of factors gives us pause in attributing abolition to the agency of just one man, or even the agency of just one group (evangelicals). Can we authentically read this as a case of one ‘man who changed history?’⁴ Furthermore, the driving impulse to discover a ‘hero’ in the story raises larger questions about the ways we want to engage and use the study of history as a formative practice.

3 The Role of History Teaching in Moral Formation

Our individual fields of educational endeavour are not simply informative, they are formative. That is, we use the knowledge we discover as a means to understanding our identity, clarifying our purpose, and shaping our ‘way of being’ in the world (Dowson 2014, p. 43). Given that we are creatures who crave narrative (Smith 2013, p. 108), who find concrete examples speak louder than abstraction, it is entirely understandable that we want to locate heroes from the past as a compass for navigating our present. But what role should history teaching play in this process?

³For example, Smith (1976/1776).

⁴Here I am quoting one of the taglines to the advertising surrounding Apted’s (2006) film “Amazing Grace”. Other taglines include “Every song has its story. Every generation has its hero,” “One voice changed the lives of millions,” “The incredible true story of one man’s fight to change the world,” “One man led a movement that changed the world.” (see IMDb 2006).

Expressed negatively, what are the spiritual and moral deformations that result when history is not practiced well? It remains for us to sketch out a proposal, with the narrative of Wilberforce functioning as something of a case study.

First, it is entirely legitimate for us to celebrate the agency of individuals, and their positive contribution to a broader historical process. None of the preceding discussion should be taken to mean that Wilberforce was a negligible influence in abolition's success. On the contrary, we can affirm with historians such as Christopher Brown and David Brion Davis that specific individuals, inspired by a profound Christian vision, were essential in the confrontation and dismantling of an unjust institution (Brown 2006, p. 29; Davis 2006, p. 239). In this sense, Wilberforce's life is a powerful instance of Christian *testimony*, in which we can see how a disciple from the past managed to practice 'their faith deeply in response to and engagement with the dominant culture.' (Sanders 2011, p. 168). But studying history for *testimony* is different than studying history for *heroes*. 'Heroification,' to borrow James W. Loewen's (2007) phrase, leads to a distorted historiography because it inevitably leads us to elide difficult details which do not fit our inspirational narrative (pp. 11–30).

Any historian who has spent much time with their primary data realises that in every instance 'a number of factors have to be taken into account' (Rigby 1995, p. 227). Instead of trying to attribute historical change to idealised heroes, the discipline of sociology reminds historians to examine not only the role of individuals but to consider also the place of community-building and network formation in cultural change (Hunter 2010, p. 38). Moreover, such a focus on community-building resonates deeply with the communitarian impulses of Christian belief and practice (Sanders 2011, p. 170). In our case study, to cast abolition as singularly the result of Wilberforce's influence is not only historically fallacious, it manifests an individualistic bias. Abolition could reasonably be attributed to Quakers, slaves, philosophers, politicians, businessmen, as well as the broader populace of England. Without the intersection of broader networks and communities, individual moral sentiments would have proved insufficient (Hunter 2010, pp. 72–74).

Additionally, historians serve the purposes of formation by attending to the way context shapes possibility. As we have already indicated, Wilberforce agitated for change in a favourable intellectual milieu (however, much Parliament might have been resistant). This confirms what James (1938/1980) once said: 'Great men make history, but only such history as it is possible for them to make' (cited in Richardson 2007, p. 971). If our desired goal is to form students to be transformative agents in their own multifaceted situations, a history teacher serves students best when they unveil how historical agents were influenced and constrained by their context (Cotkin 2008, p. 294). Our point is not to deny the formational possibilities of historical knowledge and historical example. But historical knowledge can only be *appropriately* formative when due attention is given to the importance of larger networks, and the influence of the wider context.

4 Conclusion: Telling Stories with Sufficient Complexity and Ambiguity

Although it might initially seem to dull the possibilities for inspiration, among the central gifts that historians bequeath to the world is telling stories of the past with sufficient complexity and ambiguity. With regard to complexity, historians must never take shortcuts, instead, they need to unpack social change in all its rich detail (Howard 2006, pp. 32–33). In our particular example of abolition, by recognising that a range of historical agents were at work, we create space to see the mysterious working of God’s common grace, and the diverse ways any historical character can potentially image their Creator in whatever social location. Simplistic accounts of past cultural change leave students insufficiently equipped to deal with the complexities of the present, and the way God’s common grace *could* be at work in our midst. In trying to reperform a ‘heroic’ identity, students may ignore the need to construct networks and institutions that build the capacity for cultural change, or to consider how their context shapes the horizons of possibility. From our case study of Wilberforce, a multifaceted story of abolition affirms a range of formative ‘insights,’ such as the patient work of politics, the strategic use of status and institutional power, the popular dissemination of an ethical and practical vision, and the unexpected power of seemingly minor acts of resistance.

A second task of history teaching is to include a sense of ambiguity, inasmuch as we recognise the provisional character of all historical reconstruction, and the need for humility about our interpretations (Howard 2006, p. 28). New data can be discovered, or new angles on existing data provided, which substantially reconfigure our favourite narratives. Indeed our stories of the past are only ever *an* account of the facts, never the account (Frederick 1998, pp. 230–231). Woe betide us if, like Job’s comforters,⁵ we feel entitled to interpret exactly how God was or was not at work in a particular situation (LaGrand 2010, p. 195). As Reinhold Niebuhr (1965) stated: ‘While the drama of history is shot through with moral meaning, the meaning is never exact [...]’ (cited in LaGrand 2010, p. 197). Yet the ambiguity is not only epistemological, but also moral. By moral ambiguity, I do not mean the idea of a relativist ethics, instead, I mean the moral ambiguity that understands the line between good and evil cuts through every human heart (Plantinga 2002, p. 49). A mature theological anthropology warns against identifying sentimental heroes, for we should expect to find good people sometimes doing evil, and bad people sometimes doing good (Gorman 2004, p. 115; LaGrand 2010, pp. 196, 199). Hence, the fact that Wilberforce’s anti-slavery principles may have been inconsistently applied in his dealings with Sierra Leone should be both lamented *and* expected (Olsen 2010). It is yet further proof that history is constructed from the crooked timber of humanity rather than the perfection of idealised heroes. Historians need to reject the tendency to interfere with the past in a desire to

⁵See the Book of Job. All scripture quotations are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version* (2011).

make a difference in the present (LaGrand 2010, p. 208). By teaching history well, we can find a better way to produce knowledge for the common good, and can configure historiography as a practice which is formative for both self and society.

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Chapter 23

Songs of Orientation: Cultural Liturgies, the History Classroom and the ‘Winter Christian’ of Discontent



Richard Leo

Abstract This chapter seeks to discuss the advantages and pitfalls of critiquing societal and cultural liturgies within history education as a means to shaping a ‘Winter’ Christian ‘social imaginary’. Teachers gravitate, through either curricular directive or quality pedagogy, towards using cultural liturgies from society at large in implementing the curriculum in their classroom. Critical curricular and/or pedagogical practices that immerse students into wider societal stories, myths and values that unconsciously shape the society in which they live develop significant skills of analysis and critique. Carrying these skills into faith worlds may seem to create, in a polar model of faith, individuals of low faith/high complaint dispositions. The psychologist Beck (J Psychol Christ, 26(1):68–78, 2007, The Authenticity of Faith, 2012), provides a ‘circumplex model’ of faith in which he identifies a ‘Winter Christian’ as a faith practitioner with a high communion/high complaint distinctiveness, or, someone who is finely attuned to any disconnect between the teachings and practice of faith perspectives. Beck’s model provides a framework for a teacher to integrate skills of historical criticism whilst developing a coherent Christian ‘social imaginary’ in the classroom.

Keywords History education · History pedagogy · History curriculum
Worldview education · Social imaginary

1 Introduction

The topic for the day’s lesson was the Boxer Rebellion in China in the early twentieth century. It was Year 10, just before lunch. The lesson, in all honesty, was not a particularly inspiring one. As a session, its primary purpose was to provide context and background for the students on the complexities and conflicts that existed within Chinese society in the years of Civil War, the Long March and other

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357

events leading to the creation of Communist China in 1949. To guide students through understanding the historical period, a heavily word-based textbook with limited opportunity for student engagement in historical skill development was being loosely used. It was chosen for the class text as it was the only resource that was available as a class set on the topic at hand.

By now, many teachers, and not just of history are probably recognizing an all too familiar classroom setting, especially with regards to limited resourcing. This text was noteworthy for a unique and graphic photograph depicting a public beheading during the Boxer Rebellion in the streets of Shanghai, China in 1901. It was this photograph, however, that captivated a particular group of young men who were struggling to maintain attention. The anticipated hand was raised, and I was expecting (and had prepared for) a question that addressed cultural sensitivities and traditions surrounding beheadings in traditional China. Instead, the student asked, ‘Why did the author choose to include this photo in the textbook?’. Initially, the question threw me as I was expecting a question along the lines of one that was dealing with the intricacies of the topic at hand. On delving further with the student, it became apparent that the query was attempting to understand, not the historical context depicted and why the beheading took place, but the historical narrative being presented and why the publishers would choose to include this image in a school textbook. Essentially, he was evaluating the historical narrative of the publishers and by implication, the historical narrative of my classroom.

2 The Narrative We Present

Without realizing it, this student was engaging in philosophical discussion on historical representations, a debate that started with Hayden White (1973) and questions about what is ‘narrative’ in history (Green and Troup 1999). Recently, Munslow (2007) has added to the debate by arguing that the metacognitive ‘story space’ of the represented narrative is essential to how we retell and share the information of the past. He argues humans understand our reason for existence only within the structures of ‘narrative making’ within the story space. The past becomes constructed by the historian who invites the consumer of the historical narrative to step through and visit. He says that historians adopt the use of the ‘story space’ to create the means and methods that allow historical consumers to visit this constructed understanding of the past:

The story space clearly references a part of the once real world, but in that reference the historian chooses to invoke who said what, who did what, assumes there are mechanisms which will explain to us why they did it, what agencies and structures operate[d], what events were significant and which were not, and which theories and arguments will be applied to explaining the meaning of it all. (Munslow 2007, p. 18)

Whilst he insists on the critical practices of history as essential to the construct of the ‘story space’, it is the final comment that is crucial. He argues that the ‘story

space' hinges on how the 'meaning of it all' gives a justification for why the events described occurred. Munslow (2007) wants us to understand that in telling history, and by using our critical faculties to do so, we must also identify the story into which 'our history' belongs. For a person of faith, and a teacher of history, this is an exciting framework in which to work as it hints that even the story space of our classroom can be shaped by larger meta-frameworks of faith and living.

Lewis' (1950–1956/2001) 'Narnia' stories¹ and how he practiced 'myth' and history in these stories can help us understand this way of thinking. For Lewis, a 'myth' in the 'Narnia' stories, 'is not a false story told to deceive, but a story that [...] resonates with the deepest structures of reality, and [...] has an ability to connect up with the human imagination' (McGrath 2016, para. 5). According to McGrath (2016), Lewis' 'Narnia' stories 'are about finding a master story—the story that makes sense of all other stories, which then must be embraced because of its power to give meaning and value to' (para. 13). Adopting this premise in the history classroom can show us that our own histories are part of something greater. The stories of our past are part of a larger 'story space', which helps us understand how we fit in the greater scheme of human history, and to discover the difference we can make.

2.1 *The Winter Christian*

The role of the history teacher, however, is not just to provide students a grand narrative of a 'story space' but also to instill the critical faculties that allow decisions about how this narrative is to fit together, if at all. The Rationale for the Australian Curriculum for History concludes, by saying that 'historical inquiry develops transferable skills such as the ability to ask relevant questions; critically analyse and interpret sources; consider context; respect and explain different perspectives; develop and substantiate interpretations, and communicate effectively' (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA] 2010–2018, para. 2). In other words, the history educator has a responsibility to instill in their students an innate ability to be constantly questioning the received story space, not just of the history classroom, but to use these 'transferable skills' in their wider experiences of living. Or, as Hoepper (2007) notes, the teacher needs to 'avoid proselytizing' and respect the individual's right to learn by holding independent views and values (p. 29).

Christian teachers should be encouraged that the heritage of their faith supports a critical way of thinking. The inspiration behind the title for this chapter came from a commentary by Brueggemann (1984) on songs of lament in the Scriptures. He writes:

¹A series of seven children's stories published 1950–1956. Later published as a complete collection.

It is a curious fact that the church has, by and large, continued to sing songs of orientation in a world increasingly experienced as disoriented [...] It is my judgment that this action of the church is less an evangelical defiance guided by faith, and much more a frightened, numb denial and deception that does not want to acknowledge or experience the disorientation of life. (Brueggemann 1984, p. 51)

He continues by noting that the lament psalms and other similar songs of sorrow are not regularly featured in the expression of liturgies of faith communities because ‘faith does not mean to acknowledge and embrace negativity’ (Brueggemann 1984, p. 52). The underlying assumption of this ‘denial and cover-up’ is that such songs are an expression of faith problems which works against ‘the wishful optimism of our culture’ (Brueggemann 1984, p. 51). He goes so far as to suggest that their lack of usage implies that God has somehow exhibited a ‘loss of control’ (p. 52). Rather, he argues, their usage should actually suggest, within the boundaries of a trusting community, an ‘act of bold faith’ (p. 52). Brueggemann (1984) suggests that their usage actually become ‘songs of new orientation’ (p. 123) that allow a fruitful expression of the complexities and sometimes unanswerable questions of life. In the same way that songs of lament can allow Christians to work through problems of faith, so engaging with difficult questions of how history is presented can assist students of history to engage with larger meanings in the story space.

At a simplistic level, one could argue that the role of the history teacher is to both build an understanding of how the student’s world fits together whilst at the same time provide the skills with which to tear it down. Beck’s studies in the field of psychology and religion may be helpful in shedding some light on the paradoxical roles that may play.

Beck (2012) developed the concepts of ‘Winter’ and ‘Summer’ Christians as a way to describe how believers (and his studies have only focused on Christianity) engage with their faith as part of a religious community. He found that pastoral descriptions of faith engagement tend to fall into a bipolar model where an individual’s religious engagement is low faith/high complaint at one end and high faith/low complaint at the other as shown in the figure (Fig. 1).

Beck (2007) found this model to be insufficient. His research was identifying individuals who, whilst showing personality characteristics that were highly critical, or high complaint, were still strongly connected and engaged with their faith communities, and thus were also high faith. In response, he developed a bipolar model of religious engagement and developed a ‘Communion/Complaint Circumplex Model’ (Fig. 2). To this model, he added quadrant labels that described the characteristic responses he was seeing in his data.



Fig. 1 Beck’s (2007) bipolar model of faith engagement (Copyright by Christian Association for Psychological Studies, Inc. Shown with permission)

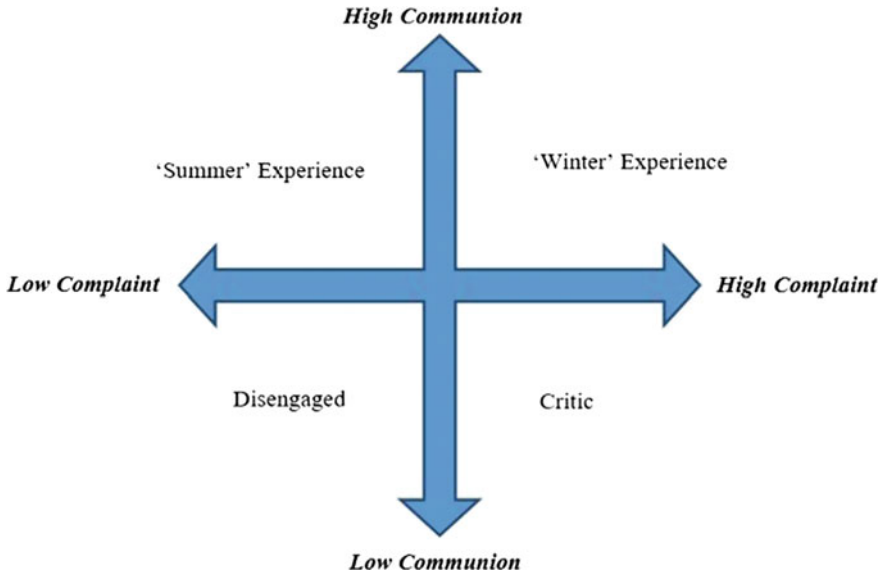


Fig. 2 Beck's (2007) communion/complaint circumplex model with quadrant labels (Copyright by Christian Association for Psychological Studies, Inc. Shown with permission)

He used the terms 'summer' and 'winter' to describe the religious experience of the participants in his research. A 'summer' experience is where an individual sees very little to question or critique in their experience of a religious community whereas Beck (2007), suggests that the 'winter' faith experience is one that expressed a general discontent, or disappointment with God within their relationship with the divine. He does note that research needs to be undertaken to determine if this perspective is 'seasonal' or more of an inclination to a 'spiritual temperament'. Despite the reservation, the general concepts are helpful to describe the paradoxical role of a critical history teacher.

Beck's (2007) circumplex model shows us that it is also possible to remain engaged with the larger myth or story space whilst required by the curriculum. His model shows us that a teacher who manages to implement the curriculum as described by the 'Rationale' of the 'Australian Curriculum: History', would be best described as a 'Winter History Teacher'—someone who both models and teaches how to be highly critical of the historical story space, yet also one who remains highly engaged in the practice of history as a discipline that is 'fundamental to understanding ourselves and others' (ACARA 2010–2018, para. 1).

2.2 Cultural Liturgies

Campbell (2016), in his interview with J. K. A. Smith, describes how in the West:

we have learned to inhabit the world as if it were ‘disenchanted’[...] the default setting of industrialised countries (or elites within other countries) is a kind of presumed naturalism (para. 13) [...and that] we need to recognise that our loves are habits that are formed by the practices we are immersed in. We learn to love [...] because of the rituals and ‘liturgies’ that we are immersed in. And we need to recognise that there are all sorts of cultural practices that are actually love-shaping - love de-forming - rituals that, at an unconscious level, are teaching us to love rival gods. (para. 7)

Smith proposes that in becoming aware of the ‘practices we are immersed in’, or our cultural liturgies, a history teacher can guide students to engage the larger stories that we tell ourselves (the *mythos*) (interview cited in Campbell 2016, para. 7). Taylor (2004) would describe it as our ‘social imaginary’, or, the ‘largely unstructured and inarticulate understanding of our whole situation’ (p. 25). These cultural liturgies can assist in developing our cultural re-enchantment with the *mythos*, especially in a secular age where larger framing stories can be disregarded. How communities use popular songs to process grief and shock after terrorist attacks give interesting insights into how a cultural liturgy such as a public ritual can shape historical story spaces.

When Paris, France, was attacked by terrorists in 2015 a young man from Germany hauled his piano across the country to the streets of Paris to play a moving tribute to the victims of the shootings on the footpath outside the theatre where the attack occurred. He was not the only one. The pop/rock band Coldplay also did something similar when commencing their concert that weekend. Both acts chose the same song, Lennon’s (1971) ‘Imagine’ with which to make their tribute. Another terrorist attack in Manchester, England in 2017 saw the citizens of Manchester use the hit song ‘Don’t Look Back in Anger’ from the Mancunian rock band Oasis to perform a similar ritual. These choices are interesting for a discussion of how cultural liturgies can ‘re-enchant’ ‘mythos’ in our society.

Lennon’s (1971) song is an answer to the perennial question of ‘how do we learn to live in peace with one another and eradicate war and conflict?’. His answer to that question imagines a utopia where human differences and convictions have been eradicated forever. In singing Lennon’s famous song together, communities responding to the Paris attacks were gnawing at the reality that many people of different faiths recognize—evil committed in the name of religion is a poor excuse for the soul of the faith. Christians, for example, are often amongst the first to admit that events such as the Crusades, inquisitions, wars between nations, treatment of refugees, murder and destruction of native peoples and cultures—to name a few—all in the name of Christianity throughout the ages is not a true reflection of the teachings of Jesus. Lennon (1971), however, does provide a visionary and utopian song that uses the internal resources of being human as the solution. It is a perspective that connects with many people. This is where the skills and perspective of the Winter Christian Teacher can come to the fore. We can work with our students

to explain and critique how Lennon promotes a secular humanist *mythos* that reinscribes a humanist approach into the Western psyche.

When Mancunians chose the Oasis song ‘Don’t Look Back in Anger’ (Gallagher 1995), that community was doing something similar. In contrast to Lennon (1971), this song does not promote a utopian vision, but still reinscribes a humanist *mythos* in society. It is more reflective, and whilst Noel Gallagher, who wrote the song has acknowledged that he does not know what the song is about, the song still resonates with a sense of grief and longing for something that has been lost. The lyrics repeatedly vibrate with pathos for something that is missing. Musically, the opening chords are directly taken from ‘Imagine’ (Hurry et al. 2001), and guitarist Gallagher (1995) admits that lines about bed-led revolutions are inspired by Lennon and his famous bed sit-ins for peace (Simpson 2003). As the song progresses, the plea to avoid looking in anger is repeated as a self-reinforcing action that serves as a message of hope to heal the depressive sense exhibited in the song. By choosing these songs to sing in the streets, communities were actually performing ‘love-forming’ rituals as cultural practices that moved participants and sympathetic observers towards an identity shaped by a secular humanist *mythos* for processing the grief experienced by disorientation caused by terrorist acts.

The Canadian philosopher Taylor (2004) would describe these liturgies as essential for the construction of a ‘social imaginary’ (p. 25). As Smith (2009) puts it, we do not think our way around the world, rather, we feel our way around the world. History academic Sanders (2011) writes how he has experimented with implementing cultural liturgies in the history classroom to understand historical social imaginaries. He based his work on Dykstra (2005) who found that:

The practices of Christian faith turn out in the end not primarily to be practice or efforts. They turn out to be places in the contours of personal and communal lives where a habitation of the Spirit is able to occur. And it is this that is the cause of their power and meaning. (p. 64)

Sanders (2011) describes how he was able to practice rituals (cultural liturgies) inspired by the period of history he was teaching in his course on Western Civilization. There are quite obviously natural parallels here between the history of a society directly shaped by Christian practices and the implementation of these practices. The question arises, for the Winter History teacher, of what to do when the parallels are not as obvious. An example from the field of Australian History, a significant focus of study in the ACARA (2010–2018) History curriculum, may suffice in helping to provide some guidance.

This chapter was written in the country town of Longreach in Central Queensland, Australia, and gave me the opportunity to reflect on how a local example can provide opportunities for the Winter History teacher to critique and build a Christian ‘story space’. Stranded due to a combination of weather and car troubles, I took the opportunity to visit the Stockman’s Museum, a place listed as one of the Q150 Heritage Locations due to its significance in telling the story of the early European pioneers of the region of Central Queensland.

The Museum itself is an extremely interesting and professional presentation that, through several displays across multiple floors, celebrates the success of the pastoral pioneers of the Central Queensland region. Starting with a room called ‘Our Story: Aboriginal Workers in the Pastoral Industry’, the museum guides the visitor through a series of displays that focus on European Pioneers, life on outback properties, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, and finishing with a focus on the skills of the stock workers. These displays are well researched with a wealth of historical information, both primary and secondary, on display and easily engage a range of age groups. The critique, however, is not with the quality of the story space presented, but with what is not presented. Here, as both a person of faith and as a teacher of Australian History, the identity and practices as a Winter Teacher can be utilized.

The early twenty-first century saw a bitterly fought debate, known as the History Wars, in Australian politics, media and academic circles on how Australian history should be interpreted (Macintyre and Clark 2003). In extreme, the two camps were described as a ‘Three Cheers’ view, a ‘summer’ approach to the Australian story, or the ‘Black Armband’ view, a ‘winter’ approach to the national historical narrative. The former emphasized the successes of European settlement, whereas the latter wished to foreground the more harmful aspects of European settlement, especially regarding the Indigenous experience. Despite commencing with a room that focuses on Aboriginal workers in the pastoral industry, the story space of the museum is notably lacking in telling a more comprehensive history of the beginnings of the pastoral industry in Central Queensland. The reason here is that the story space of the museum is located firmly in what has become referred to as the ‘Three Cheers’ version of Australian History.

The area around Longreach was opened up from 1859 when Queensland became its own colony, separated from New South Wales. In the decades that followed, the pastoral industry became the economic, social and political mainstay of the region. The Stockman’s Museum, however, acknowledges this expansion as a peaceful development. What the museum does not acknowledge is that this seemingly ordered expansion occurred at the expense of what is regarded as some of the ‘bitterest years’ of Queensland’s frontier wars. From 1859 to the mid-1860s, the pastoral industry expanded because of a war that ‘saw many hundreds of whites and it seems tens of thousands of Aborigines killed as the original inhabitants were swept from the land’ (Lehane 2014, p. 155). These frontier wars were framed within a colonial ideology of *terra nullius*, or land belonging to no one. This concept was struck from Australia’s legal system with the Mabo decision by the High Court of Australia in 1992. Flannery (2003) describes how the display at the museum reinforces the story space of the ‘founding lie’ of *terra nullius*:

our worship of the self-reliant stockman neatly sidesteps the fact that the men of the cattle frontier were the shock troops in our Aboriginal wars [...]the only wars ever fought on Australian soil – thousands of men, women and children were killed in battle or murdered in cold blood. (p. 6)

The Winter History Teacher can see this a bold opportunity to engage students in the discipline of history through allowing them to engage with the traditional, ‘Three Cheers’ view of Australia’s past. At the same time, the skills of history demand that a healthy dose of critique is required and some balance to the historical tale can be brought to bear. The ‘winter’ approach can then allow students to safely engage with differing perspectives on the pastoral expansion of the region and bring added nuance to the story space presented. For Christian teachers who attempt to do this, there is the added imperative of modelling how it can be done through engaging the larger myths of Christian perspectives, in this case, God’s care and concern for the poor, oppressed and those who face injustice. A Winter Christian Teacher of History can, therefore, introduce the laments of the frontier wars to inculcate the story space of pastoral valorization at the Stockman’s Museum and model for students a more nuanced and balanced understanding of Australia’s past and present.

3 The Winter Christian and the Blues

The Winter perspective, as a cry of disorientation described in Beck’s (2007) model, suggests that for some, negativity may be needed as a feature of their faith practices. This view is expressed by Hewson (1999), better known as Bono, of the band U2. For him, the Winter Christian identity of abandonment and displacement:

is the stuff of my favorite [sic] psalms. The Psalter may be a font of gospel music, but for me it’s in his despair that the psalmist really reveals the nature of his special relationship with God. Honesty, even to the point of anger: ‘How long, Lord? Wilt thou hide thyself forever?’ (Psalm 89) or ‘Answer me when I call’ (Psalm 5). (Hewson 1999, p. viii)

As a musician and public commentator or participant in significant historical events in recent Western history, he sees the advantage of being in a place of both high communion and high critique. To do otherwise is to sing songs of orientation that are either the ‘Blues without gospel [which] leads to endless despair, [or] gospel without blues [which] leads to self-deception’ (Blount 2007, p. 242). The Winter Christian perspective, especially in the history classroom is one that can encourage and develop the skills required to bring a balance to the story space and the *mythos* that shapes it. As this perspective is practiced, an orientation that allows students to engage and form an awareness of injustice that has occurred throughout the past is formed. As they form this awareness they can begin to situate within a larger *mythos* of a community that orientates its faith towards the ultimate faithfulness of God.

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