Johannes M. Luetz
Beth Green *Editors*

Innovating Christian Education Research

Multidisciplinary Perspectives

Springer

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Chapter 1
Innovating Christian Education Research: Multidisciplinary Perspectives—An Introductory Overview

Johannes M. Luetz and **Beth Green**

> *But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.*
> (1 Peter 3:15, NIV).

Abstract Research in Christian education is in its infancy and there is limited published work of a good standard to consult. In order for Christian education research to mature, educators need examples of conceptual, empirical and practice-based research modelled from different disciplinary standpoints and within formal and informal educational settings. This need is addressed by the peer-reviewed edited volume *Innovating Christian Education Research: Multidisciplinary Perspectives.* Unusually, if not uniquely, the book's coherence is not to be found in a single educational setting (e.g. K-12 or higher education) but rather in the carefully curated research chapters that have been meticulously collated in the hope that they may inspire new passionate research pursuits that may collectively combine to building the field of Christian education research. The book editors argue that this strategy is urgently needed for research in the field to mature. This introductory chapter to the book initially presents both project background and overview (Sect. 1.1), then introduces the book structure and chapter contents (Sect. 1.2) and finally details the work's focus and intended contribution to field building (Sect. 1.3). The chapter also elaborates the volume's guiding framework, which divides the book into three

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constituent parts that comprise conceptual perspectives (Part I), empirical research (Part II) and practice-informed research (Part III).

Keywords Christian education research · Field building · Innovation

1.1 Background and Overview

It has been posited that Christian education relies on holistic approaches, which conjoin theory and practice, head and heart, reason and relevance. By helping thinkers to believe and believers to think, Christian education endeavours to effect deep-seated formation and transformation at both the personal and societal levels (Stuart-Buttle & Shortt, 2018; Luetz, Dowden, & Norsworthy, 2018). In the biblical narrative, this holistic approach is perhaps best exemplified by the wisdom texts in which the pursuit of wisdom is inseparable from a rightly ordered, embodied vision of the good. Christian education is, therefore, raised as an important interdisciplinary and interdenominational vocation for lovers, thinkers and doers of God's Word or Logos. This notion has been noted by Norsworthy, Dowden, and Luetz (2018), with reference to Smith (2016a, 2016b) and Leclercq (1992):

> 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 (p. 10).

Towards this pursuit of wisdom, Christian education raises practical and theoretical questions, including (1) What is distinctively 'Christian' about Christian education? (2) Is it something to do with the content, or with the quality of the learning community, or with the institutional mission, or with the pedagogical process itself—or all of these? (3) What are the biblical and theological convictions that underpin our educational theories? (4) Is there room in our institutions for diversities of theological conviction, as well as diversities of educational theory and practice? (5) Is there one Christian worldview, or many? (6) Is there one type of education which is distinctively 'Christian', or are there many 'Christian educations'? (7) Can some types of Christian education be found in secular institutions as well? (8) And what is the relation between theories of Christian education and their practical implementation in our own educational institutions which are highly regulated, and therefore, 'secular' in many of their processes and requirements?

It was against the background of questions like these that the ACHEA Research Conference CHRISTIAN EDUCATION—REASON AND RELEVANCE was hosted by Christian Heritage College (CHC) in conjunction with member institutions of the Australian Christian Higher Education Alliance (ACHEA) and in cooperation with Associated Christian Schools (ACS). Mobilising scholars, practitioners, pastors and postgraduate students from across Australia and beyond, the interdisciplinary research conference both attracted and invited a broad range of leading-edge research contributions on both the theory and practice of Christian education. It ultimately featured research presentations, workshops, panel discussions and invited keynote

addresses that analysed, showcased and/or digested the latest developments in Christian education from a wide range of both institutional and disciplinary perspectives. In calling for papers, the aims of the conference were stated by the conference organisers as follows:

1. Provide research institutions, universities, ACHEA member institutions and colleague colleges, government agencies, NGOs and social enterprises from the region with an opportunity to display and present their diverse works in the field of Christian education;
2. Foster the exchange of information, ideas and experiences acquired in the pursuit of Christian education projects, especially successful initiatives and good practice examples from across the globe;
3. Present and discuss methodological approaches and experiences deriving from case studies and projects, which aim to show how Christian education may be theoretically conceptualised or practically implemented or enhanced;
4. Provide networking opportunities for delegates from diverse professional backgrounds and provide them a platform so that they can establish or refresh their connections and explore possibilities for future cooperation in areas of Christian education.

Coming from a broad range of cross-sectoral areas and disciplinary backgrounds, conference delegates included (1) career researchers at universities, colleges and research centres; (2) NGO affiliates and private sector representatives; (3) members of social enterprises or social justice movements and (4) education practitioners, historians, consultants and other people interested in the topic.

Last but not least, a further aim of the research conference was to document and disseminate a selection of some of the leading-edge research and praxis available today. To this end, arrangements were made to publish an edited peer-reviewed book with a 'best-of' selection of innovative Christian education research. The book you are now holding in your hand is the fruit of these extensive editorial efforts.

Most chapters included in *Innovating Christian Education Research: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* were first presented and discussed at the above-named conference, which was held at the iconic State Library of Queensland (SLQ) in Brisbane (31 July to 2 August 2019). The conference included research presentations by scholars affiliated with Universities and Christian Colleges and Seminaries in Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Canada, Zambia and the USA. In total, 50 contributions were presented by delegates affiliated with more than 40 institutions. Further, the research conference also featured invited keynote addresses by Prof Beth Green, Rev Dan Paterson and Dr. Shirley Hoogstra.

At this point, it is worth mentioning that the book is not a 'conference proceeding' but rather features only a curated selection of some of the innovative research and practice available today in the area of Christian education. Hence, shortlisting chapters necessitated a painstaking process of weighing papers for inclusion in the book, including on the basis of their degree of innovation, scholarly/scientific rigour, prospects for practical application and consistency with the editorial objectives of the book as agreed with the publishers. To this end, shortlisted papers underwent peer review by between one to four reviewers per chapter. In addition to this editor-initiated peer review process, all papers were subsequently sent out for a further

round of publisher-initiated blind peer review. This process occasioned more revisions, refinements and resubmissions, and ultimately culminated in the final line-up of 23 chapters, which this volume presents in three parts.

In synthesis, the stated aim of the book project is to make a timely contribution to building the field of Christian education. Set within a contemporary twenty-first century context, its chapter contents speak directly from and to the heart of Christian education. A 'sneak preview' of these contents will be outlined next.

1.2   Book Structure and Chapter Preview

The book is organised as follows. Part I features conceptual perspectives and comprises research that develops theological, philosophical and theoretical discussion of Christian education (Chaps. 2–13). This agrees with how the book is presented online at https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9789811588556. Part II encompasses empirical research that examines data to test theory, answer big questions and develop our understanding of Christian education (Chaps. 14–18). This agrees with how the book is presented online at https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9789811588556. Finally, Part III reflects on contemporary practice contexts and showcases examples of emerging research agendas in Christian education (Chaps. 19–24). This agrees with how the book is presented online at https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9789811588556.

1.2.1   Part I: CONCEPTUAL—Research that Develops Theological, Philosophical and Theoretical Discussion of Christian Education

1.2.1.1   Section One—Synoptic Overview

One of the assets of the Judeo-Christian tradition upon which Christian education draws is the concept of wisdom, an embodied and holistic way of knowing within community ordered towards flourishing. Wisdom personified in the ancient texts is hard-working, rigorous, contemplative, dialogic and uncompromisingly committed to a bigger story about what is good against which actions, desires and thought are to be weighed. Christian educators, however, are also children of their own times. Prominent writers in the field such as Smith and Smith (2011), have called attention to some of the problematic ways in which Christian educators have imported assumptions from our contemporary economic, political and scientific stories without appropriate reflection and criticism. This section gathers together writers who have exhibited wisdom by drawing on theological, philosophical and theoretical approaches to bring contemporary stories about education back into conversation with the Christian story.

The chapters in this first section are grouped in the following way. Chapters 2–7 specifically engage with the question of what Christian Education *should* be. Another way of explaining this is that they hold out for us the goods of Christian education and the ways in which they should shape thinking and, form hospitality, sense of place, enquiry, community and vocation. Chapters 8–11 critique the neoliberal social imaginary and the consequences for education, making a case for a Christian response in policy and research. Chapters 12 and 13 deal directly with the question of how Christian education ought to respond to aggressive secularism regarded, together with hyper-individualism, as one of the features of a neo-liberal secular social imagination. The majority of these chapters address Christian higher education, but this discussion is equally important for K-12 Christian education and, Chaps. 5, 10 and 13 particularly reflect on the K-12 context.

In Chap. 2, Green uses Taylor's concept of the social imaginary to invite Christian educators to update their conceptual language and framework. Stephens makes the case in Chap. 2 that Christian education should cultivate hospitable thinkers. In Chaps. 4 and 5, Iselin and Norsworthy consider Imago-Dei, the distinctive calling of humanity to bear the image of God, in relation to place and vocation. In Chap. 6, Beech proposes a framework for online learning that seeks to root knowledge and community in a worldview deeply formed by biblical wisdom. In Chap. 7, Konz extends the theme of how to live in community by examining the theological and pedagogical model that Bonhoeffer built for his seminary; Konz argues that Christo-ecclesial unity is a powerful counter-cultural marker of Christian education. In Chap. 7, Leopard explores how a distinctive Christian imagination might shape research methodology in education. He examines the Straussian Grounded Theory Method (SGM) and proposes a relational yet pragmatic, ethical framework for the formulation of redemptive and restorative research aims in Christian education. Chapter 7 extends the discussion by offering a critique of the neoliberal social imaginary. Austin and Perry map out just how insidious the influence can be for Christian providers located in systems of educational choice. Australia has one of the largest government funded systems of educational choice in the world and this is an important chapter for anyone not familiar with the context of Christian education in Australia or with neoliberal systems of educational choice. In Chaps. 10 and 11, Murison and Greentree offer extended reflections on the consequences of neo-liberalism and economic rationalism for the formation of graduates and the identity of Christian schools operating within the Australian system. Greentree's literature review is part of an ongoing graduate research project and illustrates a good way to frame contemporary sources and debate. Chapters 12 and 13 by Dalziel and Benson close out this section with a very practical consideration of how Christian educators ought to respond to the challenges of aggressive secularism as they impact the science curriculum and institutional religious freedom in Christian schools and colleges.

1.2.1.2   Section One—Itemised Chapters

In Chap. 2, Green (2021, pp. 21–31) explores how Christian education might be practiced in today's "secular time" as set against institutions like the church and universities that are "creatures of an older time". Green posits three conceptual distinctions that might serve Christian institutions of higher education well as they reimagine their vocation: "Imagination rather than worldview, pedagogy rather than curriculum and, distinctively rather than uniquely Christian."

In Chap. 3, Stephens (2021, pp. 33–46) extends the work of Alan Jacobs on enabling people to disagree charitably, to avoid stereotyping and caricature and to foster virtuous conversations in which people persuade rather than domineer. Building upon the insights of virtue epistemology, a theological ethic of hospitality, and consideration of the "implied reader" of Scripture, Stephens demonstrates that Christian tradition and Christian Scripture resource Christian teachers for the task of "forming students to practice both rigour and humility, conviction and charity, fidelity and open-mindedness."

In Chap. 4, Iselin (2021, pp. 47–60) posits that Christian education, as person forming communities, should seek to "curate, cultivate and celebrate implacement, particularly in a contemporary age where a haunting sense of placeless-ness shapes our current generation." By exploring principles of "place making in Christian education", Iselin invites Christian educators to restore a theology of place within the academy by considering "how geography, location, community and neighbourhoods are actually part of a grander story of God's sovereign purpose in and through creation."

In Chap. 5, Norsworthy (2021, pp. 61–73) "presents a case for Christian Higher Education (CHE) which values the development of a Personal Passionate Profession." Building on the work of LaBoskey's notion of a Passionate Creed, Norsworthy's concept facilitates engagement "within a particular context and vocation to be an expression of God's redemptive work [while acting as] the mirror in which reflection about our vocation occurs so that it is gently, continually and strategically nudged toward being more intentional and strategic for the Kingdom of God."

In Chap. 6, Beech (2021, pp. 75–88) responds to the problem that "little research or reflection has considered how to provide an online learning experience that is not only effective and transformative, but that also flows from a biblically faithful approach to education." Beech "reviews current literature, practices and models of online learning in order to consider aspects of biblically faithful models for fostering transformative Christian online learning communities of co-allegiants discovering the truth to bring about redemptive change."

In Chap. 7, Konz (2021, pp. 89–103) "investigates one possible means by which Christian Higher Education Providers (CHEPs) might follow after and attest to Christ: a shared commitment to Christocentric unity both within and between Christian Higher Education institutions." Drawing on the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Konz argues for Christian higher education providers "to embrace an intentionally Christo-ecclesial unity as a counter-cultural marker of Christian higher education."

In Chap. 8, Leopard (2021, pp. 105–125) evaluates the history of Straussian Grounded Theory Method (GTM) as an interpretivist revision of classical GTM. Leopard's discussion and analysis intends to "help educational researchers negotiate diverse cross-cultural situations, avoid the dead-end frivolity of secular, naturalistic assumptions and integrate the distinctively Christian elements of a vibrant, living faith into Straussian GTM and other qualitative research methodologies."

In Chap. 9, Austin and Perry (2021, pp. 127–144) grapple with the ambiguity inherent in the terms 'research' and 'scholarship', which the authors posit "is often left to individual institutions and various interest groups to define". Using an Australian case study, their chapter argues that "holistic understanding of both research and scholarship, and the relation between them, helps to orient institutional efforts towards positive impact and engagement for constituents and end-users."

In Chap. 10, Murison (2021, pp. 145–157) posits that "neoliberal, economic rationalist policies of many western countries have increasingly seen education become a servant to market forces and held accountable for its contribution to economic development." Importantly, the resultant regulatory dictates risk undermining the broader concepts of human flourishing that are foundational to Christian education. The chapter proposes embedding human flourishing in the development of graduate attributes as an appropriate and expansive strategy and response.

In Chap. 11, Greentree (2021, pp. 159–174) "explores how Australian Christian Schools wrestle with competing purposes" and the manifold "demands from various stakeholders including government, churches, parents, teachers, students, school boards, higher education providers and employers." Using discourse analysis and an "order of worth framework to look at representations of value and purpose", Greentree highlights "some of the foundations and purposes of Christian Schools, and how these relate to the neoliberal purposes that underpin much of current educational policy."

In Chap. 12, Dalziel (2021, pp. 175–192) "considers issues related to secularism and pluralism, including international legal agreements and national laws on human rights issues." Drawing attention to the "rise of a new 'sexual fundamentalism' in some western societies that can run counter to beliefs in religious freedom", the chapter considers "issues of offence and harm arising from different views of sexuality and religion, and a related problem of 'concept creep' for definitions of harm. It concludes with a school comparison based on a different set of ethical issues (an ethically founded vegan school) as a 'turnabout test', and reflections on future issues for Christian education."

In Chap. 13, Benson (2021, pp. 193–219) explores the question: "If revelation and reason are positioned as polar opposites, is religion irrelevant to the study of science?" Grappling with issues such as "methodological atheism" and "secularist indoctrination", the chapter argues for "appropriate multidisciplinarity" that incorporates sacred texts in secular middle-school science: "Scriptures in Science can illuminate foundational cosmologies that awaken wonder and warrant investigation of the natural world."

1.2.2   Part II: EMPIRICAL—Research that Examines Data to Test Theory, Answer Big Questions and Develop Our Understanding of Christian Education

1.2.2.1   Section Two—Synoptic Overview

The Wisdom tradition texts of the Bible place as much emphasis, if not more, on our practice, as they do about the ways we think. Practical wisdom does not eschew conceptual knowledge but takes into account the ways in which practice may form it. This is the first of two sections in the book in which authors investigate many of the theological, philosophical and theoretical themes presented in section one through real-world engagement with educational research and practice. The individual contributions of the chapters stand in their own right, but together this collection offers two important examples for educators interested in bringing Christian formation and educational practice together. First, section two gathers together empirical research in which authors demonstrate how to design data collection, analysis and reflection guided by Christian practices. Almost all of the chapters are case studies, all are qualitative and all are concerned with expanding learning, being and doing in real educational settings. This leads to the second contribution of this collection; the use of empirical research to bring contemporary stories about education into conversation with the Christian story.

The chapters do this as follows; Chap. 14 by Gowan and Minor Bridges investigates teacher perceptions of holistic student formation in a Christian higher education setting in Australia. A particular emphasis of this chapter is the tension between different models of Christian education practice imported by the teachers and the diversity of a student body which includes international students from other faith backgrounds. Chapter 15, by Tucker and Luetz is a rare example of research set in the context of informal adult education; it analyses a pilot education programme bringing art therapy to maximum security prisons in Australia. A strength of this chapter is that it brings together rigorous analysis using both psychological instruments and New Testament exegeses. Chapter 16, by Butcher and Norsworthy also focuses on how engagement with biblical text might reshape professional learning; it is a case study of staff development at a tertiary Christian education provider in New Zealand. In Chap. 17, Kemp also develops the theme of the Christian story as a formational educational narrative, but this time the focus is on student formation through a case study of curriculum design. Chapter 18 moves the discussion of distinctively Christian formation into leadership practices; Chapman presents findings from her MA research into training requirements for entry-level ministry-ready Pentecostal leaders. All of these chapters share in common a commitment to use empirical research to reshape practices of Christian education in ways which challenge the narrow stories of utility and reductionism which they find in the western educational context.

1.2.2.2   Section Two—Itemised Chapters

In Chap. 14, Gowan and Miner Bridges (2021, pp. 223–240) use "Excelsia College as a case study of the challenge of building a distinctively Christian higher education institution, especially in the context of the increasing secular nature of higher education in Australia, the diminishing Christian student market and challenges brought about by the growth in international student enrolments." Using interviews, the qualitative study scrutinises staff perceptions "in light of psychological theory and Trinitarian theology."

In Chap. 15, Tucker and Luetz (2021, pp. 241–271) take a fresh look at prison ministry in the context of contemporary incarceration and recidivism in Australia. Given the high illiteracy rates within prisons where only a few inmates can read, art therapy is highlighted as an effective communication tool and therapeutic practice. "The analysis presented in this chapter synthesises lessons learned from developing and implementing the 'Change the Design of Your Life' art therapy programme in Queensland prisons. Experiences and lessons gathered in this chapter will be useful for educators, policymakers, practitioners and chaplains serving the cause of social prison ministry in Australia and beyond." The pilot study is underpinned and supplemented by New Testament perspectives.

In Chap. 16, Butcher and Norsworthy (2021, pp. 273–288) present a case study on how Bethlehem Tertiary Institute (BTI) in New Zealand used the books of Nehemiah, Ephesians and 1 Peter to frame a way of forming a community of staff to outwork its vision to be a faithful expression of the Kingdom of God on earth. Drawing on scripture, the characteristics of humility, hope and hospitality were identified as formational. BTI now uses the phrase "I work better because I work with you", analogous to the Maori proverb "Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi—with your basket and my basket, the people will flourish."

In Chap. 17, Kemp (2021, pp. 289–303) sheds light on how this private Year 7–13 Presbyterian school is able to design its own Christian education (CE) curriculum without the pressure of assessment from an external body. Kemp describes the dynamic process of review and innovative implementation of new content and relevant pedagogy and explores a theoretical imaginarium of narrative. The curriculum is conceptualised by three intertwined narratives (the students', the institution's historical, and the biblical narrative) [and] is illustrated using three unique lessons from years 9, 11, and 12."

In Chap. 18, Chapman (2021, pp. 305–330) explores the type of leadership training required to produce 'entry-level, ministry-ready pentecostal leaders' in the context of the International Network of Churches (INC) in Australia. Employing qualitative approaches, the research investigates the observations and experiences of 17 active and seasoned ministry leaders to probe key characteristics and competencies of leaders-in-training. The findings reveal key characteristics, competencies and skills deemed essential in ministry-relevant leadership training.

1.2.3 Part III: PRACTICE—Research that Reflects on Contemporary Practice Contexts and Showcases Opportunities for Future Christian Education Inquiry

1.2.3.1 Section Three—Synoptic Overview

The practices of wisdom exemplified in the ancient texts of the Old Testament are holistic. They expect understanding to be formed in habits of heart and mind and action. They assume that human beings are bound in relationship to the transcendent, to the natural world and to each other and they reflect on this interdependence. This may well be why they have endured amid very different philosophical imaginations. Holistic practices of wisdom also hold out a helpful corrective to the contemporary preoccupation with the self. By reflecting on practice and context, the chapters in section three of this collection expand and challenge our educational imagination to consider our relationships with sacred text, the natural world, sexuality, culture and those who are differently abled. Importantly, they also probe timely opportunities for future research.

In Chap. 19, Patterson opens the conversation up with a practical discussion of how to tell the Christian story in ways that engage with a new cultural world formed by the secular technologies and philosophies explored in section one of the collection. Buxton, Luetz, Shaw address in Chap. 20 the lack of attention given to creation care and the natural world in Christian education. They reclaim the pedagogies of embodied learning which were familiar, as they note, to the ancient Hebrews, the early church and indigenous societies. In Chap. 21, Robinson, Stirling and Barendse argue that holistic sexual education is needed as a part of Christian education. Their chapter reflects on a programme designed to help high school students in Australia, to think critically about pregnancy and abortion. In Chap. 22, Nelson and Luetz review the emerging literature regarding inter-cultural competency and suggest that in Christian education settings true unity in Christ should allow for cultural differences to live together in loving harmony with each other. This aim is both time*ly* and time*less* as racial inequity remains a ubiquitous contemporary crisis. By charting opportunities for future research on immersive educational experiences with, and importantly, *in* other countries and cultures, the authors seek to engender and propagate more inter-culturally sympathetic human behaviours. In Chap. 23, Gosbell examines the practices of Universal Design for Learning in Christian higher education, particularly seminary education. Gosbell also contends that Christian education should be a place where diversity is welcomed and the chapter reflects on the ways in which a universal design pedagogy would benefit all students, not just those differently abled. Chapter 24, concludes the collection with a courageous reflection on sexual addiction. Seyed Aghamiri and Luetz also argue that Christian education is a context in which practices of wellness, happiness and community can be re-formed to benefit the flourishing of society.

1.2.3.2 Section Three—Itemised Chapters

In Chap. 19, Paterson (2021, pp. 333–349) explores avenues for communicating the Christian story in the midst of "the questions and challenges introduced by our unique cultural moment." Paterson, who is a speaker for Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, posits that when making significant decisions, "the social science literature bears out a complex relationship between facts and feelings as to how people form resilient faith." In short, Paterson's discourse analyses "the relationship between the attractive 'what' of the Christian story and the compelling 'why' in giving reasons for our hope."

In Chap. 20, Buxton, Luetz, and Shaw (2021, pp. 351–376) address the need for educational strategies to increase awareness of—and active participation in—creation care initiatives to address the environmental challenges now confronting God's good but groaning creation. Following a two-pronged rationale for creation care based on the scientific biophysical imperative and the biblical/theological mandate to value and care for the natural world, the authors offer a brief survey of seminary syllabi that demonstrate progress in educating for creation care. The final part of the chapter presents embodied pedagogical approaches as a means to the above stated end.

In Chap. 21, Robinson, Stirling, and Barendse (2021, pp. 377–393) present a mixed methods case study outlining the inception, development, implementation and outcomes of a youth education programme titled Perspectives, which engages students in conversations about abortion issues. Following the development by Brisbane pregnancy support centre Priceless House, Perspectives has been piloted and run for five years in two Christian co-educational schools with Grade 10–12 students. Recent surveys of Australian students in Grades 10–12 showed that around half are sexually active, and therefore, face a possible risk of unintended pregnancy. This makes Perspectives a timely complement to conventional sex education.

In Chap. 22, Nelson and Luetz (2021, pp. 395–422) expound the significance of research into intercultural competence (IC) as a "new kind of literacy", which the authors argue has never been in higher demand. The discourse features a comprehensive review of the literature that exposes critical knowledge gaps and identifies fertile opportunities for future research among high school students, both in Australia and beyond. The discussion draws on the established tradition of theological interpretation, and on the authors' personal international and inter-cultural background and experiences, both of which underpin the paper in areas of introduction/rationale and conclusion/outlook. A postscript reflects on the prospects for nurturing inter-cultural competency in a COVID-19 world.

In Chap. 23, Gosbell (2021, pp. 423–442) explores Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a framework for teaching and learning that gives all students equal access to education. While typically considered specifically for students with disabilities and learning difficulties, the benefits of UDL approaches are also beneficial to other stakeholder groups. In the final section, Gosbell gives a "theological rationale for why the inclusion of students with disability should be a priority for theological education" and provides examples of practical classroom application.

In Chap. 24, Seyed Aghamiri and Luetz (2021, pp. 443–468) cast the research spotlight on sexual addiction (SA) and hypersexual disorder (HD) as contemporary phenomena that the public remains poorly educated about. The analysis digested in this chapter converges around the finding that Christian education (CE) stakeholders have not yet had the intrepidity to meaningfully confront this issue. The treatise rests on a comprehensive literature study, which the authors have supplemented with corresponding critical analysis. The synthesis suggests that religious/spiritual beliefs strongly impinge on both SA/HD aetiology and recovery prospects. Charting pertinent perspectives, challenges and opportunities, the authors argue for more thematisation of SA/HD within CE environments so that understanding of SA/HD can be mainstreamed and normalised—rather than moralised—for the greater good of both sufferers and society.

1.3   Book Focus and Intended Contribution

In synthesis, the book aims to progress and innovate conceptual, empirical and practice-informed research agendas to build the field of Christian education research.

In short, *Innovating Christian Education Research: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*:

1. Includes comprehensive theologically informed case studies that offer insights into a range of K-12 and higher education contexts;
2. Advances theoretical discourses and programmatic perspectives to shape Christian formation, information and transformation;
3. Explores the relevance and applicability of Christian education to real-world praxis contexts, including in prison ministry, sexual addiction counselling, workplace practices, learning disabilities, intercultural competence, pregnancy perspectives and environmental sustainability, among others;
4. Develops timely research proposals and explores opportunities for future research, including in areas of conventional and unconventional curricula and leading-edge pedagogies;
5. Asks questions and grapples with ethical questions facing different Christian education stakeholder groups, including teachers, students, researchers and diverse communities of practice.

By probing these and other timely issues and questions through multidisciplinary research and scholarship, Christian education is shown to be progressively reliant on holistic approaches which conjoin theory and practice, head and heart, reason and relevance. By helping thinkers to believe and believers to think, this book seeks to stimulate constructive dialogue about what it means to be distinctively Christian and relevant today. In this sense, Christian education is reformulated in this volume as an important interdisciplinary and interdenominational vocation for lecturers, researchers and scholars, professionals and practitioners alike.

With chapter contents intentionally solicited and focused around the title *Innovating Christian Education Research: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, the book purposely occupies unconventional research space and thereby aims to make its unique contribution to field building.

Research in Christian Education is in its infancy and there is limited published work of a good standard to consult. In order for Christian education research to mature, educators need examples of conceptual, empirical and practice-based research modelled from different disciplinary standpoints and within formal and informal educational settings. The coherence of this book is not to be found in choosing an educational setting (e.g. K-12 or higher education) but in selecting examples of research approaches (empirical, conceptual and practice-based) that will inspire others to passionately pursue research while raising the quality of their own work in response. The editors argue that this strategy is urgently needed for research in the field to mature. The process of working with some first authors and aspiring academics to construct chapters that contribute to this way is an important feature of this collection. This is also a significant part of the rationale for the book and should be noted as a defining feature of the volume's intent. If this collection becomes a benchmark for future conferences, then the book would achieve an important outcome in relation to field building.

Moreover, the title *Innovating Christian Education Research: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* also insinuates that processes of innovation and field building are very much ongoing/continuing rather than complete/attained, wherefore the verb 'Innova*ting*' seemed to be more appropriate (to lead the title) than the adjective 'innova*tive*' in relation to 'Christian Education Research'. Furthermore, the subtitle 'Multidisciplinary Perspectives' expressly insinuates breadth and diversity of disciplinary approaches and perspectives, which also forms an integral part of this project's intent. Importantly, this subtitle reflects that venturing into uncharted and unconventional research terrain through multidisciplinary research approaches is deliberate rather than coincidental or eclectic to the book's stated aims. The editors hope that the book's forward-facing outlook will secure its relevance as a useful resource for many years to come.

In concluding this introductory chapter, the editors hope that the book will appeal to a broad and diverse readership of graduate and postgraduate students, scholars, teachers, change leaders, school administrators, theologians, career academics and education practitioners who will derive encouragement from its fresh, appealing, challenging and forward-looking invitation to progress Christian education research by daring to venture courageously into uncharted research spaces with the intention to pioneer and to innovate.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the diverse range of authors, both for their willingness to share their expertise and experiences, and for their willingness to revise, refine and improve their chapters to rise up to the manifold reviewer requirements. At this juncture, a special note of thanks also goes to all those anonymous peer reviewers who have given generously of their time and expertise but who cannot be individually identified and thanked by name.

With a line-up of 23 chapters as rich in novelty, diversity, relevancy and originality as you are now holding in your hands—and with three diverse parts promising a broad range of conceptual, empirical and practice-informed research dimensions, it is our joy and privilege to present to you *Innovating Christian Education Research: Multidisciplinary Perspectives.* We hope that you will enjoy a delightful and perhaps even delectable time of reading, rumination, reflection, inspiration, imagination and—most importantly—research *motivation* to keep innovating!

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Part I
Conceptual: Research that Develops Theological, Philosophical and Theoretical Discussion of Christian Education

Chapter 2
Present Tense. Christian Education in Secular Time

Beth Green

Abstract The Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor describes our present secular society as inhabiting time differently. Our age is no longer embedded in what he describes as 'higher time' with a divine foundation and the idea that the society was constituted in something that transcended contemporary common action, or the 'present tense'. Institutions like the church and university are creatures of an older time, so how do we practice Christian Education in secular time? This chapter posits three conceptual distinctions that might serve Christian institutions of higher education well as we reimagine our vocation: Imagination rather than worldview, pedagogy rather than curriculum and distinctively rather than uniquely Christian. (Pearl Jam fans should note that the 'Present Tense' reference is intentional).

Keywords Higher education · Pedagogy · Faith

2.1 Our Cultural Moment

The Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor (2004), posits that 'secularity has something to do with the way people inhabit time' (p. 93). Our age is no longer embedded in what he describes as 'higher time' with a divine foundation and the idea that society is constituted in something that transcends contemporary common action (Taylor 2004, p. 93). Taylor argues that what binds people together in secular time is a common action, to put it another way, all we have is the present tense.

Present Tense is the title of a song by the Seattle rock band Pearl Jam; it's grey literature but it is worth taking a closer look at the lyrics to explore the context in which the institutions of university and church find themselves in secular time imagined in this way. A quotation is included below but if you have the opportunity to do an internet search for the full lyrics this is a worthwhile exercise.

- Do you see the way that tree bends? Does it inspire?
- Leaning out to catch the sun's rays… a lesson to be applied…

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- Are you getting' something out of this all-encompassing trip?
- You can spend your time alone re-digesting past regrets oh…
- Or you can come to terms and realize
- You're the only one who can forgive yourself, oh yeah…
- Makes much more sense to live in the present tense…

(Vedder and Mccready 1996).

The institutions of church and university are curious creatures in secular time. To borrow Pearl Jam's description, they 'offer ideas on how this life ends… an approach and a way to live' that is becoming less and less convincing when society is able to imagine itself as a system, a set of processes independent of political, legal or ecclesiastical order (Vedder and Mccready 1996). Taylor (2004) explains that institutions are legacies of a society in which the normative order of things was embedded in higher time. It's almost impossible to imagine society any other way when the normative political order depends on being subject to monarch, or ancient or natural law. Taylor (2004) argues that the first 'independent take on society' is the economy in which society is imagined to be a set of interconnected transactions instead of the domain of a ruler (p. 163). Major shifts like these in our social imagination cause dissonance; Pearl Jam's diagnoses for the resulting sense of disorientation is that it makes much more sense to live in the present tense.

Can social actors and institutions with a religious imagination, which need not only be Christian- although that is the focus of this chapter, have legitimacy in a society with a secular imagination? Taylor's work focuses on the ways we imagine the world that we currently live in and on the practices that produce it. He's not primarily providing an apologetic either for 'higher time' or 'secular time' and he's not prescribing a direction towards which society should be transformed. But Taylor's concepts of secular time and imagination are theoretical tools that have methodological implications for religious actors and institutions of education asking questions like these: (1) What is distinctively 'Christian' about Christian education? (2) Is it something to do with the content, or with the quality of the learning community, or with the institutional mission, or with the pedagogical process itself—or all of these? (3) What are the biblical and theological convictions that underpin our educational theories? (4) Is there room in our institutions for diversities of theological conviction, as well as diversities of educational theory and practice? (5) Is there one Christian worldview, or many? (6) Is there one type of education which is distinctively 'Christian', or are there many 'Christian educations'? (7) Can some types of Christian education be found in secular institutions as well? (8) And what is the relation between theories of Christian education and their practical implementation in our own educational institutions which are highly regulated, and therefore, 'secular' in many of their processes and requirements?[1]

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[1]These questions were the focus of the Association for Christian Higher Education Australia (ACHEA) Conference, Brisbane 2019 for which a version of this chapter was prepared, they can be found on the conference website here.

This chapter posits three conceptual distinctions that might assist Christian institutions of higher education to reimagine their situation and practice in secular time: Imagination rather than worldview, pedagogy rather than curriculum and distinctively rather than uniquely Christian. Following Pearl Jam, for these distinctions to 'bend' and 'inspire' the present tense they need to connect with Taylor's description of how secular society imagines itself.

2.2 Imagination Rather Than Worldview

The term worldview has been a significant concept for helping actors in Christian education, particularly in the reformed and conservative evangelical traditions, towards an articulation of 'an approach and a way to live' that integrates key doctrinal beliefs with curriculum content (Vedder and Mccready 1996). Wolters (2005) describes worldview as "the comprehensive framework of one's basic beliefs about things" (p. 2). His book *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview* sets this framework out at length. Instead of a Reformational worldview, we could talk about a Catholic worldview or an Anglican one suggesting there is not a single Christian worldview but many; we can also talk more broadly about a religious worldview or a secular one. Worldview is a very useful concept, particularly for articulating the propositions and principles upon which knowledge and understanding rest and for challenging the assumption that these principles are neutral or innate. For conservative evangelical Christians in particular, the descriptor 'biblical' in relation to 'worldview' has been important for establishing authority and denoting that this worldview makes an exclusive truth claim. 'Biblical worldview' is, therefore, an important mechanism in evangelical Christian apologetics, or defence of the faith, and it has served as the backbone for curriculum development, institutional accreditation and ministry training throughout the twentieth and early part of the twenty-first centuries.

We inherit our worldview from, amongst other things, our location in time. If we take the Reformation as an example, this was simultaneously a religious and social political event that helped to usher in what we describe as the 'modern age'. The Reformation operates for some Christian denominations as a very particular doctrinal framework, but for all of us in the Western world, whether we know much about it or not, the Reformation has profoundly shaped our moral and political order (MacCulloch 2003). It's in this last point about the sculpting of institutional and social practices that the concept of worldview begins to reach its limitations. In secular time our social order can be shaped by multiple and competing worldviews without the understanding and assent of all social actors. Something about this suggests that the influence and shaping of 'an approach and a way to live' do not rest simply on intellectual assent to a set of principles (Vedder and Mccready 1996). It also suggests that 'worldview' may not be a particularly accessible concept for our contemporaries both inside and outside of religious faith communities.

Taylor's (2004) concept of the social imagination helps us with this, the social imaginary is a concept tied to the question of how Western modernity understands itself. Taylor writes that 'the differences amongst today's multiple modernities need to be understood in terms of the divergent social imaginations involved' (pp. 1–2). Taylor is not using the word 'imagination' here to refer to fiction, fantasy or to the inner world; as in 'she has an active imagination' (Smith and Cooling 2017). Taylor is using it to refer to the way people understand the world they live in, how they fit into that world alongside others and what assumptions inform their expectations about what is normal. Many such assumptions are formed at a pre-cognitive level, and thus Taylor explains that this is something deeper than an intellectual schema or worldview. 'I am thinking, rather, of 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).

Smith (2009) has argued that worldview approaches stem from reductionist accounts of the human person that rely too heavily on cognition and propositional accounts of knowledge. His argument, grounded in the Aristotelean and Augustinian tradition, is that before humans are knowers, they are lovers and that much of what we know and understand is shaped by this pursuit, or our telos. Implicit in this argument is the sense that the concept of 'worldview' itself belongs to the modernist era in which it became influential and is limited by the scientific rationalism that dominated the imagination of modernism. Christian faith and Christian texts reach much further back, with their roots in ancient practices of worship and storytelling upon which contemporary schemas of doctrinal commitment rest. 'I suggest' writes Smith, 'that instead of thinking about worldview as distinctly Christian "knowledge," we should talk about a Christian "social imaginary" that constitutes a distinctly Christian understanding of the world that is implicit in the practices of Christian worship (p. 68)'.

This Christian understanding of the world may be equally unfamiliar, strange or indefensible to the contemporary social imagination but the idea of a Christian "social imaginary' shares a conceptual logic which worldview does not. Smith has been accused of unfairly dismissing the role of cognition although he does clearly state in *Desiring the Kingdom* that this is not his goal, preferring instead to correct an overemphasis on cognition as opposed to embodied practice within the reformed tradition. Smith has also been criticised for adopting a relativist epistemological position regarded by some authors, including Davis and Franks (2013), as incompatible with reformed or conservative evangelical theology. Smith is well able to defend himself and a discussion of these theological and philosophical debates are beyond the scope of this chapter but the debates themselves resonate deeply with the practical questions associated with practicing Christian education in secular time. Taylor's (2004) concept of the social imaginary offers us tools for the analysis of our religious and educational institutional practice that may bridge into contemporary understandings of the self and society more effectively than worldview.

Taylor is careful to make the distinction between social imaginary and social theory and his three reasons for doing so help to illustrate why the concept of a 'social

imaginary' might be more useful to us than worldview in this cultural moment. First, he explains that the way ordinary people imagine their social experience is often not expressed in theoretical terms 'but is carried in images, stories and legends' (p. 23). Second, theory, for which we might substitute 'worldview', is often possessed by a small minority, whereas the social imaginary is typically shared by large groups of people and third, the social imaginary makes possible a widely shared set of common practices and sense of legitimacy. Analysing the social imaginary rather than worldview shifts the focus onto practice. In institutions of education, there is a particular space for analyses and conversations about practice called pedagogy; pedagogy is the focus of the next section of the chapter.

2.3   Pedagogy Rather Than Curriculum

Living in the present tense, says Pearl Jam, requires 'forgiving yourself'; the only reference point is the individual self (Vedder and Mccready 1996). Secular time ushered in a new understanding of the self and its relationship to reality. Kant (1784) described this process of enlightenment as a process of maturing, or coming of age. He regarded the inability to use reason and understanding without guidance from another as a sign of immaturity, the implication being that freedom lies in the cultivation of reason, the intellect and self-determination. One of the consequences of this for the practice of education has been the emphasis on mastering content, method and technique in the pursuit of individual rational autonomy.

If knowledge resides in observable facts and first principles, and if its purpose is the actualization of the autonomous self, then it makes sense to focus primarily on transmitting curriculum content because it ensures everyone has access to truth. The concept of worldview is very helpful here for highlighting the self-referential loop that this creates in the present tense. Measuring or observing facts, establishing first principles and designing curriculum are not value free enterprises. Some way has to be found in secular time for adjudicating between competing claims about truth. Worldview highlights that there are competing claims, but the concept of the social imaginary moves the analysis on even further because it helps to highlight the extent to which our assumptions about knowledge and the self, our worldviews (Christian or otherwise) are themselves influenced and shaped by a secular social imagination.

The language of 'Christian' or 'bible-based' curriculum is a powerful example of this. Emphasising Christian worldview courses, biblical integration and unique Christian curriculum suggests that if knowledge is only taught from a Christian perspective then Christian faith will be securely transmitted. Smith (2009), Smith and Smith (2011) have written extensively on this topic in the context of Christian higher education in North America. They argue that Christian learning should be conceptualised in relation to belonging to a community of practice not the intellectual assent to a set of propositions. Smith (2009) has proffered a radical counter-cultural vision of the Christian university as a place for lovers, a new monasticism for the formation of desires. Whether or not one accepts this as a legitimate vision, the

point is that the conversation about what a Christian university is for in secular time requires an articulation of telos and it requires that attention be paid to practices of formation. Even as we recognise that educational policy norms and accreditation processes push us repeatedly towards curriculum content, pedagogy remains the far more powerful conceptual space in which to have this conversation.

Prior to the enlightenment, or in 'higher time', education was primarily conceived of as a religious activity and experienced within the context of the religious community life. Smith and Short (2004) remind us that during the thirteenth century boys attending university in Paris, lived in hospices called pedagogies. The praxis of religious faith, relationship with God, with each other and with the created order legitimately framed the shape of enquiry. Without wanting to resurrect the middle ages, re-emphasising the profile of pedagogy forces us to articulate what it is that we believe about the learner. As Rowan Williams (2008), so beautifully puts it, teaching begins with the question: "can truth find a home here, and be alive".[2]

This essentially poses an anthropological question which can be worked out faithfully and theologically within different traditions as Higton (2012), does in his magnificent overview   *A Theology of Higher Education* Higton (2012). writes that 'the university is going to remain an ambiguous and ambivalent institution' (p.256). His thesis is that university can make a difference, even in secular time when it's up against multiple discourses the most dominant of which are deadening and destructive. How does a university do this? Higton's answer is pedagogy, 'by exercises of virtue, by experiments in sociality, and by carefully placed questioning about the good of what we do' (p. 256). What is particularly noteworthy about Higton's argument is that he is writing in the context of the United Kingdom where almost all universities are public and secular. In writing a theology for university education in this setting, he is more closely representing what it might take for Christian faculty to be faithfully engaged in the secular social imagination. This leads us helpfully into the next section of this chapter which discusses the distinction between distinctively Christian and uniquely Christian.

2.4   Distinctively Rather Than Uniquely Christian

Christianity has a particular vision of what it means to be a person, an anthropology which shapes the Christian response to human existence. Rowan Williams explains that this vision contains within it a set of assumptions: that human beings are summoned to respond to God's initiative and that they are summoned to shape a life that communicates God to others and something about humanity to God (Williams 2008). For Williams, these commitments are non-negotiable to the life of faith. Others might summarise them as the call to repentance, image bearing

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[2]There is no page number to reference here as this was a verbal response to a Q&A following a lecture. Bibliographic details for the transcript of the lecture can be found in the reference section of this chapter.

and stewardship (Carson 2008). Writing specifically about the place of theology in the university, Williams's thesis is that Christian anthropology ought to reinforce in society a deep suspicion of things that make us less human. Practices that re-make higher education in the image of the political, the bureaucratic and the convenient are the de-humanising consequences of secular time. Williams (2008) points out that not everybody in our society has an anthropological vision, but that a society which believes it can do without even the memory of these commitments will be impoverished.

The question that often gets asked is whether this Christian anthropological vision is unique and whether it is authoritative? It should be noted that part of Williams's project is to reclaim the 'humanism' from 'secular humanism' and to legitimate the religious critical perspective in public intellectual debate. This is a significant discussion in its own right, outside of the bounds of this chapter, but not outside the bounds of faculty, denominational and institutional discussions in Christian higher education. For the purposes of this chapter, what's of interest is the language of uniqueness, as opposed to distinctiveness. In other words, what happens to the conversation about Christian education once it has been framed in these terms. Research with Christian teachers in both the K-12 and higher education settings carried out by Cooling et al. (2016), sheds some really interesting light upon this.

In a study of high school teachers in English Church Schools Cooling et al. (2016), found that many Christian teachers struggled to explain the relationship between their Christian faith and teaching and learning. A common thread seemed to be the sense that in order to describe something as 'Christian' teachers thought they had to be teaching exclusively Christian curriculum content or to be doing something that non-Christian teachers might not do. As part of the research Revell (2016), also interviewed university professors who were training teachers. The interviews with university professors revealed significant amounts of suspicion around the prospect of offering a Christian vision as part of the task of education. What is interesting is that Revell did not find that this suspicion arose because universities were perceived to be secular public spaces where the discussion of religion was to be excluded. Revell found that the root of the suspicion arose from the notion of professionalism. The dominant view shared by teachers and professors in the research, whether they identified as Christians or not, was that to be a professional meant treating personal beliefs as irrelevant so that classrooms or lecture halls could be experienced as inclusive spaces.

Cooling's research introduced the participants to an approach to teaching called *What If Learning*[3] which attends to imagination and pedagogy in order to reframe teaching and learning through a distinctive Christian anthropology. It was a deliberate attempt to start the conversation in a place which more obviously connects to the assumptions actively shaping education in secular time. Smith and Cooling (2017) and Cooling et al. (2016) have adopted the language of 'distinctively Christian' to help articulate where the lines and boundaries could be for a community of Christian educators. Smith writes that the task of Christian teaching is to 'find ways of teaching

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[3]https://www.whatiflearning.co.uk/.

that are genuinely consistent with our Christian faith and genuinely educationally helpful to students' (Smith and Cooling 2017). This may well lead to the affirmation of practices from sources other than those of Christian institutions, doctrine and tradition, just as it might lead to the opposition of practices from any sources that undermine or oppose faithfulness to Christian calling.

The origin of the phrase 'distinctively Christian' as Cooling and Smith use it came out of a policy shift in the Church of England. Cooling (2016) writes about this at length elsewhere but the presence of church schools and universities with an Anglican foundation in the UK public education system is a legacy of a particular historic and cultural relationship between the church and the state in the C19th that has since been refashioned (Chadwick 1997). The Church of England needed to discern the nature of its presence and its investment in publicly funded education for the contemporary cultural context or 'present tense'. The discernment process that the Church of England went through affirmed the centrality of education in the church's mission to the nation (Archbishops' Council 2001). This affirmation was a radical step since the culturally normative thing to do in secular time would have been to back away quietly, not ratchet up the religious purpose of education.

The language of 'distinctively Christian' enabled Church of England schools and universities to articulate a particular vision of what it means to be human. It explained what a church school was for, by affirming 'that church schools participate in the mission of the church by promoting the formation of their students as image-bearers of God' (Cooling et al. 2016, p. 21). It set expectations that this distinctive vision should permeate teaching and learning, it was not to be just the preserve of the chaplain or the bible teacher. As Williams (2008) proposes, this kind of vision releases schools and universities to do the task of education, to address the quality of teaching and learning, to tackle inequality of educational outcomes, to reframe practices of diversity and inclusion, all within the context of a learning community that is guided by a clearly articulated religious purpose. In this way, we might say that the language of 'distinctively Christian' is better able to bend, inspire and illuminate the possibility that the road ahead does not have to be travelled alone with the self. In the final section of the chapter, we will take a closer look at the road ahead by summarising how imagination, pedagogy and distinctively Christian touch on some of the questions we may have about Christian higher education.

2.5   Living the Present Tense—As to the Lord

C.S. Lewis illustrates how a Christian "social imaginary" makes it possible to live fully in the present tense. '*It is only our daily bread that we are encouraged to ask for. The present is the only time in which any duty can be done or grace received.*' (Lewis 1965, p. 52) This quotation comes from a sermon Lewis preached to university students during the second world war. With the future hanging in the balance, with friends and contemporaries dying on the battlefield attending university must have felt pretty futile. Lewis tackled the question of the purpose of learning during wartime.

He argued that wartime only served to highlight questions that Christians should be asking in peace-time: how to go about the business of ordinary life, how to be faithful in parts of life, such as education, that did not feel explicitly religious. Lewis answered the question by describing the posture of living 'moment to moment as to the Lord', exemplified by the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray.[4] If we return to the set of eight questions posed in the first section of this chapter, it is possible to see how the three conceptual distinctions proposed might assist in ordering practices of learning to receive grace in secular time. In other words, the present tense is no barrier to what Lewis (1965), describes as God's infinite and inexorable claim.

For ease of reference and because the questions are inter-related we can group them into four pairs. Please note that the purpose is not to definitively answer the questions but to explore how the conversation might open up if we frame it with imagination, pedagogy and distinctively Christian.

First, what is distinctively 'Christian' about Christian education? Is it something to do with the content, or with the quality of the learning community, or with the institutional mission, or with the pedagogical process itself—or all of these? The concept of a social imaginary could change our response to this question. It certainly lends itself to the affirmation that yes, 'all of these' (content, learning community, institutional mission and pedagogical process) have something to do with the way we imagine education. The concept of a distinctively Christian imagination would also suggest that there are particular practices that a Christian social imaginary might emphasise about the nature of community and mission. Discussing what those practices necessitate a conversation about pedagogy. Perhaps pedagogy doesn't really belong at the end of the list in the question, you could have a very fruitful conversation about what pedagogic processes form distinctively Christian content, learning, community and mission.

Notice how our three conceptual distinctions have begun to re-balance the emphasis in these questions compared to worldview, curriculum and uniquely Christian which typically force us into a far narrower conversation around content and structure. This is important for the second pair of questions which ask what are the biblical and theological convictions that underpin our educational theories? Is there room in our institutions for diversities of theological conviction, as well as diversities of educational theory and practice? Structure is important, many of us assume that it is derived directly from biblical and theological convictions, but convictions are shaped by our contemporary social imagination in more ways than we are often aware of. Biblical and theological convictions don't just show up in curriculum content, they shape practice and are shaped by our institutional practices. If we lack the conceptual space to acknowledge this, it becomes difficult to fully examine structures and content or to explore what the relationship could be between biblical and theological convictions and practice. If that conversation hasn't taken place, then it is less likely that Christian higher education will be able to live fully in the present tense.

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[4]Matthew 6: 19–13.

Implicit in the previous pair of questions and in the third is the concept of 'uniquely Christian', tethered to a sense of higher time in which the social order was religious and uniform. We've attended already in this chapter to some of the reasons why imagination is a helpful concept for dealing with the reality of multiple Christian worldviews in secular time. This is not to suggest that the following questions are illegitimate, but to suggest that there might be a different reason to ask if there is one Christian worldview, or many? Is there one type of education which is distinctively 'Christian', or are there many 'Christian educations'? Grappling with this, especially by attending to pedagogy and asking what the practices of different types of Christian education are and how they relate to the present tense is a very different conversation than seeking to determine which worldview and type of education is uniquely Christian.

Picking up on this thread the concept of distinctively Christian is particularly useful for considering the final pair of questions: Can some types of Christian education be found in secular institutions as well? And what is the relation between theories of Christian education and their practical implementation in our own educational institutions which are highly regulated, and therefore, 'secular' in many of their processes and requirements? These two questions very effectively sum up the dilemma in which Christian higher education finds itself, although as Taylor (2004), Higton (2012) and Williams (2008), have pointed out all universities are facing an assault to their purpose and legitimacy. The concept of 'distinctively Christian' gives us a way to affirm educational practices that are consistent with Christian faith, that humanise and cause us to flourish, wherever these occur. Hauerwas (2007) writes that secular universities are no more 'secular through and through' than universities that claim to be Christian 'are Christian through and through' (p. 8). To affirm 'distinctively Christian' practices of teaching and learning is to hold out an alternate imagination to secular regulation. Working in partnership to do this might be one of the few buffers we have to counter the sense of futility engendered by secular regulation.

In this chapter, I have attempted to take seriously the times in which we find ourselves. People of faith, their institutions and communities are called to live fully in the times and places where they live, indeed are shaped by them. I have assumed that a Christian imagination affords a particular shape to the ways in which we decide to live in those times. Finally, I have argued that the concept of a Christian social imaginary with its attendant pedagogic practices and distinctive anthropology might be a more powerful framework within which to discuss the response of Christian higher education to secular time.

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Chapter 3
Thinking as Christian Virtue: Reason and Persuasion for a Fractious Age

Mark Stephens

Abstract In his 2018 volume *How to Think: A Guide for the Perplexed,* Alan Jacobs offers strategies for improving our thinking in a fractious age. *How to Think* outlines a "humanistic" synthesis of psychologists, anthropologists, journalists and essayists, aimed at enabling people to disagree charitably, to avoid stereotyping and caricature, and to foster virtuous conversations in which people persuade rather than domineer. While Jacobs is open about his Christian belief, his text does not include much reflection on the way Christian traditions of thinking might contribute to, or hinder, his broader aims. This chapter extends the work of Jacobs by considering the biblical and theological resources available for Christian higher educational communities to form students as virtuous participants in intellectual conversation. Building upon the insights of virtue epistemology, a theological ethic of hospitality, and consideration of the "implied reader" of Scripture, we demonstrate the way that both the content of the Christian tradition and the phenomena of Christian Scripture resource Christian teachers for the task of forming students to practice both rigour and humility, conviction and charity, fidelity and open-mindedness.

Keywords Hospitality · Thinking · Epistemology · Humility · Ethics · Character · Argument

3.1 Introduction

It is painfully apparent we live in perilous times for the practice of reason and persuasion. A cursory sample of major newspapers and news magazines reveals a steady stream of articles and opinion pieces lamenting the present state of our politics, the degradation of speech on social media and the overall presence of a culture of contempt (Rukan, 2018; Morant, 2018; Caro, 2019). Accordingly, this fractious state of affairs has called forth a range of responses on how to heal our divided republics and commonwealths, offering both large and small proposals about how our society

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can tolerably cooperate in the presence of profound difference (Brooks, 2019; Haidt, 2013; Muehlhoff & Langer, 2017; Sasse, 2018). One of the more substantive contributions, albeit small in size, has emerged from the field of the humanities. In 2018, the English professor Alan Jacobs (2018), published *How to Think: A Guide for the Perplexed*.[1] Jacobs' express purpose is to draw wisdom from the *habitus* of a humanities academic, on the grounds that the practices of that tradition offer genuine hope for a renewal of thinking and conversation. Jacobs himself has a long pedigree as an essayist, biographer and even as a reception historian of a key theological idea (Jacobs, 2001, 2005, 2009). Indeed, it is fair to say that Jacobs is a prominent Christian intellectual, a label on which he has written for *Harpers* (Jacobs, 2016). It is, therefore, conspicuous that he does not offer much in the way of theological inspiration for his proposals in *How to Think*.[2] Jacobs is clearly not obscuring or hiding his faith; on frequent occasions, he gestures to his beliefs with uncomplicated ease (Jacobs, 2018, 76, 81–82, 109). But the absence of theological reflection inevitably raises the question as to how an overtly Christian approach might add value to his insights.

One of the more important issues of our time is whether Christian thinking is a help or hindrance to the practice of reason and conversation in a divided culture. Moreover, applied specifically to the context of higher education, if Christian thinking can make a useful contribution, then how might Christian tertiary educators appropriate theological insights to form students for a fractious age? The following chapter will be broken into three major sections, with a brief concluding reflection. First, we will offer a thematic survey of Jacobs' work, highlighting how his humanities approach has provided both a unique diagnosis and a fresh prescription for our divided times. Second, we will explain why Christian thinking might be part of the problem, insofar as it distorts reasoning and legitimises inhospitable conversation. Third, we will examine three potential sources for how Christian thinking might make a positive contribution: the insights of virtue epistemology; a theological ethic of hospitality and a consideration of the implied reader of the Christian Scriptures. In our final brief reflection, we will then begin to tease out some of the ways this could be applied in a higher educational context in which students are shaped for generous conversation without sacrificing theological conviction.

3.2 "How to Think": An Appreciative Precis

We begin with a survey of *How to Think*. As indicated in our introduction, Jacobs' work draws from his long experience as a humanities professor within liberal arts

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[1]Interestingly, the original US publication was subtitled *A Survival Guide for a World at Odds* (New York: Convergent Books, 2017). To what degree this reflects a broader cultural divide, where the rest of the world is perplexed, but the United States sees threat, I leave the reader to adjudicate.

[2]As one intriguing example, note that he uses an anecdote concerning C. S. Lewis which he explicitly states does not "owe much to the Christian beliefs he settled on when he was around thirty" (Jacobs, 2018, 60).

colleges and universities. Accordingly, Jacobs gathers inspiration from a bespoke amalgam of journalists, essayists, novelists, neuropsychologists and philosophers, all of which is supplemented by a range of anecdotal evidence. Here we simply offer a bare bones engagement of his work, highlighting its key concerns as a foundation for how it might be extended.

3.2.1 The Diagnosis

How to Think (hereafter *HT*) begins with an acknowledgement that neuroscience and social psychology offer substantial evidence of how cognitive bias infects our thinking, where the intuitive thinking of snap judgements often overwhelms and trumps careful processes of conscious reflection (Jacobs, 2018, 17–18).[3] But instead of remaining within the lab reports of neuroscience, Jacobs explores how deformed thinking operates within concrete social worlds such as academia, debating societies, religious communities, online forums, neighbourhoods, workplaces and conferences. Jacobs' diagnosis can be summarised in three points:

First, our practice of thinking functions as part of our strategies for belonging. In the same way, we might alter our appearance in order to fit in, our thinking is often just as susceptible, if not more so. Our settled convictions, even the very terminology we adopt, become markers for inclusion within a tribe, a process which Jacobs admits academics (both faculty and students) are particularly prone to. In a throwaway line Jacobs confesses:

> …one of the chief ways you prove yourself worthy of an academic life is by getting very good grades, and you don't get very good grades without saying the sorts of things that your professors like to hear. (Jacobs, 2018, 24)

Jacobs' point here is not entirely negative. The social functions of thinking are prevalent because they are inevitable (Jacobs, 2018, 36–39). In fact, the notion of "thinking for oneself" is a myth, for we nearly always think in the context of a community, and we do well to remember this in our engagements with other viewpoints. This means there is a great danger in saying of someone "they have started to think for themselves," when in actual fact what has happened is that they have "[ceased] to sound like people I dislike and [started] to sound more like people I approve of" (Jacobs, 2018, 37).

Second, *HT* points to the way disgust and abhorrence drive our evaluation of alternative viewpoints. Borrowing a term from the anthropologist Susan Harding (1991), Jacobs recurrently talks of the "Repugnant Cultural Other" (hereafter "RCO"; Jacobs, 2018, 27, 32, 83, 131, 145–146). The RCO is our perceived intellectual enemy, whose viewpoint provokes sufficient revulsion that we refuse to consider the potential validity of their arguments, or even to concede them a fundamental

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[3]Here Jacobs is drawing upon the work of Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, fast and slow* (London: Allen Lane, 2011) and Jonathan Haidt, *The Happiness Hypothesis: Putting Ancient Wisdom and Philosophy to the Test of Modern Science* (London: Heinemann, Haidt, 2006).

humanity. In such cases emotions substitute for careful thought, and thinking serves the purposes of tribalism in which one is defined by those who they find repugnant (Jacobs, 2018, 22, 71–72).

Third, *HT* draws our attention to the way words, the very building blocks of conversation and reasoning, can both bind and blind us (Jacobs, 2018, 89–112).[4] It is, of course, always necessary to use particular vocabularies, to deploy specific terminology, and to "bake in" certain assumptions when speaking to diverse audiences. That, in itself, is not the problem. But drawing upon the work of Kenneth Burke, Jacobs refers to the danger of "terministic screens," where the terms of a discussion ineluctably turn our attention to certain features of the world, and by definition, turn our attention away from other features (Jacobs, 2018, 91). What is problematic about our terministic screens is not whether they are necessary, but whether they are sufficient. Every framing of the world through language is inevitably limited in where it can draw one's attention. This does not mean we should find a "term" free discourse, but to recognise that every discussion is limited and partial. Jacobs points to an oft-cited example from George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's work on metaphor. In their seminal volume *Metaphors we Live By*, they point to the way we constantly employ the metaphor of "argument is war" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This inevitably structures our discussions to talk in terms of defeating points, winning arguments and destroying opponents (Jacobs, 2018, 96). The "war" metaphor is apt, but it is by no means *sufficient* to describe all that an intellectual discussion can be. A further feature of our language is the way we use words and terms to artificially "lump" people together under convenient rubrics; liberal or conservative; woke or privileged; communist or fascist. Such categorisation can be useful shorthand, so long as we recognise it as shorthand, a short-cut, but not a fixed and impenetrable grid which actually names what is real within the universe (Jacobs, 2018, 113–118).

3.2.2   The Prescription

Having surveyed something of Jacobs' diagnosis, it is vital to recognise that the ultimate intent of *HT* is to offer a prescription, an optimistic way forward out of the contemporary malaise. Jacobs' gentle suggestions for improvement are liberally scattered throughout the entire text and then summarised in a final checklist. For the sake of brevity, we will synthesise Jacobs' proposed solutions in two points.

First, *HT* occasionally points to a critical issue lying below the surface of our contemporary debates. Do we possess the *will* to think? (Jacobs, 2018, 17, 22–3, 69, 145).[5] More than a matter of mere technique, the practice of thinking interfaces with our character, because our thinking inevitably reflects the kind of person we aspire to

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[4]The terminology of binding and blinding is appropriated from a citation of Jonathan Haidt (55).

[5]Cf. page 21: "The more useful a term is for marking my inclusion in a group, the less interested I will be in testing the validity of my use of that term against—well, against any kind of standard… They are invested, for the moment anyway, in not thinking."

be (Jacobs, 2018, 43, 86–87). What is it that we want more: to belong to the tribe, or to learn the truth? Do we *want* to be brave, or comfortable?[6] Here it seems apposite to quote Ashley Null's summary of Thomas Cranmer's anthropology: "What the heart wants, the will chooses, and the mind justifies" (Null, 2019). Related to this is the question of love, in particular, the love of neighbour (Jacobs, 2018, 27, 81–82). Debate all too often lends itself to the process of "othering"[7] and dehumanisation, adopting the militaristic metaphor of argument as war, all of which can be summarised under the rubric of the RCO. But to other and dehumanise one's "opponent" mandates they cannot be classed as my neighbour and they cannot be an object of my love. As Jacobs himself states towards the end of his volume:

> …once your RCO becomes not so O and therefore somewhat less R, you might come to realise that, with a different turn of Fortune's wheel, there you could have been also (Jacobs, 2018, 146).

Second, at the level of practice, *HT* challenges the reader as to whether we can cultivate patience and forbearance in our thinking (Jacobs, 2018, 23, 145–148). From the very beginning, Jacobs introduces to the problem of Refutation Mode, in which the proffering of an objectionable viewpoint causes us to immediately stop listening, cease thinking and to urgently pronounce a refutation at that very moment (Jacobs, 2018, 18–19, 112). At the micro-level, the patient counteracting of Refutation Mode can come in increments of five minutes; when we hear something that agitates us, we should take at least five minutes before crafting a response (Jacobs, 2018, 18–19). Of course, in many instances, there is actually no obligation to respond.[8] But such patience can also be cultivated in more substantive ways, which require far more activity rather than passivity. The far larger task of patience and forbearance is to consciously tackle the limitations of our terministic screens and our ingrained feelings of repugnance. Patience requires us to find the best representative of an opposing viewpoint (which takes time)[9]; it requires us to be sufficiently aware of our repugnances such that we can, at least temporarily, set such revulsion aside; and it requires us to be generous enough towards the motives of others that we take the time to learn the rhetorical force and logic of an alternative position, even to the point of describing it in their own dialect (Jacobs, 2018, 111, 147–148).

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[6]Note Jacobs' final words in the text: "be brave" (148).

[7]"Othering is a process whereby individuals and groups are treated and marked as different and inferior from the dominant social group" (Griffin, 2017).

[8]Point 4 on Jacobs' "Thinking Checklist": "Remember that you don't have to respond to what everyone else is responding to in order to signal your virtue and right-mindedness." (148).

[9]This is called steel-manning as opposed to straw-manning (Jacobs, 2018, 112).

3.3   The Need for a Christian Contribution

As was indicated in our introduction, Jacobs is a Christian professor of English, who offers a mostly humanistic perspective on our fractious age. The adjective "humanistic" is not intended here pejoratively, it is simply the language that Jacobs himself uses (2018, 16). To reiterate, although he is not shy in gesturing to his Christian convictions, Jacobs does not explicitly seek to fund his proposals from the resources of theology. Speaking to his implied audience of the contemporary United States, such a rhetorical strategy is entirely comprehensible. But if the communities of Christian higher education are to appropriate Jacobs' insights then it is helpful to consider how an explicitly theological perspective might add value to both his diagnosis and his prescription.

At the level of diagnosis, the pressing need for a Christian contribution stems from the fact that the practices of Christian theology may well be part of the problem. At this juncture, it is important to identify my theological location, for it serves to guide the remaining discussion. My own convictions can best be described as conservative and evangelical, oriented around core convictions concerning the paramount importance of Scripture as the Word of God, the uniqueness of Jesus as the bringer of salvation and the importance of evangelistic witness as a central task of the church (Bebbington, 1989, 2–3). Although the labels "conservative" and "evangelical" are fraught with potential for misunderstanding, they are offered here in the service of transparency. Hence, my intended rhetorical situation, or perhaps rhetorical target, are Christian educators seeking to build a Christian education upon evangelical theological convictions. To what degree my arguments might serve other communities I cannot tell.

Having divulged my location, we can return to the issue at hand. What do I mean by the idea that (conservative) Christian theology is part of the problem? Simply stated, my experience is that the holding of conservative theological convictions often produces people whose thinking patterns are defective in precisely the ways that Jacobs diagnoses. Conservative evangelicals often seem less than willing to even know their opponents, let alone the logic and language of their positions. Evangelicals are frequently driven by a discourse of revulsion and repugnance, in which a suitable RCO is defined, derided and then destroyed. Finally, evangelicals are regularly capable of employing militaristic metaphors in association with the practice of thinking and public persuasion (Noebel, 2001; Mohler, Jr, 2011). Perhaps in no discipline is this more apparent than evangelical apologetics. The Canadian theologian John Stackhouse speaks of being raised in an evangelical tradition which taught "apologetics as martial arts" (Stackhouse, 2002, ix), where the intended goal might be gospel victory, but the regular outcome is further estrangement from Christians because their manner of speech has become so thoroughly boorish.[10]

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[10]Cf. Stackhouse's anecdote concerning an unnamed apologist who swept the floor with his logical argumentation, but whose manner caused one audience member to respond: "I don't care if the son of a bitch *is* right. I still hate his guts." (xvi; emphasis original).

Truth be told, similar dynamics are sometimes at play in the way Christian thought is delivered within Christian higher education. The perceived urgency of developing a Christian worldview is often predicated by means of an "othering" discourse. The putative godlessness and concomitant degeneracy of secular education has served many marketing departments well. In this mode, the Christian worldview is offered as the vanquisher of all alternative systems. And let it be said that there are a number of worthwhile reasons why such a posture might be adopted. Chief among these is that the Christian Scriptures includes examples where martial rhetoric is applied to the cause of Christian thinking (e.g. 2 Cor 10:4–5; cf. 1 Cor 1:19). But as indicated above, what becomes of our institutions if the dissemination of Christian content produces "truth-tellers" who are bullies, bigots and blind to their terministic screens? Christian colleges often speak of their graduate attributes in terms of forming Christlike humility, love and grace towards the world, yet it may very well be our manner of inculcating core theological convictions which mitigate most against the attainment of such attributes. Can one practice what Richard Mouw terms "convicted civility"? (Mouw, 2016). What kinds of reflection and practice help in the formation of not only Christian thought but Christlike thinkers? To a consideration of three possible sources, we now turn.

3.4   Sources for a Christian Contribution

In the discussion below, we do not intend to offer an exhaustive answer to our problems. What follows is intended as a suggestive sketch for how Christians might attend to the patterns of their reasoning and persuasion in a fractious age.

3.4.1   Source 1: Virtue Epistemology: The Quest for Virtuous Minds

In recent decades there has been a return to the language of virtue in ethics (Baehr, 2011, 7).[11] Virtue ethics move beyond considering the rightness and wrongness of discrete actions to consider the rightness or wrongness of the "agent doing the deed" (Kallenberg, 2017, 31). In other words, is ethics merely to be reduced to doing the right thing, or is it more to do with being a certain type of person? One of the key dilemmas that virtue ethics speaks to is the problem of the person who does the right action, but whose underlying character is defective in some way. In some respects, that is the very problem we are examining in this chapter, namely the person of right belief, but deformed character.

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[11] Jason Baehr situates the turn to virtue ethics with the work of Elisabeth Anscombe in the middle of the 20th century.

Traditionally, the language of virtue has been applied to certain "moral" domains of action, such as our practice of generosity towards the poor, or courage in the face of corruption. But in more recent decades, the language of virtue has come to be applied to the domain of the intellect, perhaps most prominently through the movement known as "virtue epistemology." Although this movement is by no means exclusively religious, there are numerous participants who draw inspiration for their work from the Christian tradition (Dow, 2013).

Virtue epistemology argues that our habits of mind reflect something of our personal character. As Jason Baehr frames it:

> a fully or broadly virtuous person can…be counted on to care deeply about ends like truth, knowledge, evidence, rationality, and understanding; and out of this fundamental concern will emerge other traits like inquisitiveness, carefulness and thoroughness in inquiry, fair-mindedness, open-mindedness, and *intellectual* patience, honesty, courage, humility, and rigor. (Baehr, 2011, 2)

Baehr's language here is important. The virtuous mind *cares* about thinking. To reach back to Jacobs, the virtuous mind *wants* to think, indeed they possess the will and desire to ensure that genuine learning should require a robust intellectual character.

It is important to note that this is not simply a rehash of the traditional concerns of epistemology as to the nature and grounds for genuine knowledge. Rather, it goes to the question of one's *dispositions* towards knowledge and understanding. Here one might note that the Scriptures can apply the language of desire towards matters of truth (Zech 8:19; 1 Cor 13:6; 2 Thess 2:10). In light of Jacobs' diagnosis in *HT*, the Scriptures interrogate the Christian thinker as to whether they desire or love the truth, and whether such desires for truth manifest in a willingness to practice the necessary courage, patience and humility that are the serious responsibilities of virtuous thinkers.

Nevertheless, we must also acknowledge that the language of "loving the truth" can cover over a multitude of sins. We have all met a great many people, mostly Christians, who love truth far more than they love people. Indeed, virtue epistemology debates the precise relationship between how "intellectual" virtues relate to the practice of "moral" virtues (Baehr, 2011, 206–222). While the full ramifications of this debate are far beyond the purview of this chapter, we can minimally suggest that within a Christian framework the practice of intellectual virtue must cohere with one's practice of moral virtue. This would demand that our love of truth be coordinated with our love of people, in the same way, that our love of people coordinates with our love of truth (see Eph 4:15). Within the context of our present fractious age, virtuous thinking means both declaring and demonstrating that we care about people *and* care about thinking, such that our character and will are fundamentally oriented towards cogitation and conversation characterised by humility, patience and courage.

3.4.2   Source 2: A Theological Ethic of Hospitality

Talk of the need to practice love of neighbour together with our love of thinking inevitably turns our minds to the topic of Christian hospitality. Across the Testaments, and throughout most of church history, hospitality has functioned as a central practice of Christian virtue (Pohl, 1999). Yet the word itself has also been debased over recent centuries. In contemporary discourse, hospitality is all too often used as a cypher for dinner parties with friends.[12] But the language and examples of hospitality in Scripture prioritise a far more challenging concept: loving and welcoming the stranger (Rom 12:13; 1 Tim 3:2; 5:9-10; Tit 1:8; Heb 13:2; 1 Pet 4:9; 3 John 8).[13]

The traditional sites for hospitality have been the home in general and the meal table in particular. Consequently, the ethical challenge of Christian hospitality is frequently paired together with exhortations to care for the vulnerable, the poor and the marginalised (Bretherton, 2016, 134). But the value of hospitality as a broader social idea or motif has come to be recognised in the works of political theologians like Luke Bretherton, who regards hospitality as a structuring concept which can define the posture Christians should generally adopt towards those with whom they disagree (Bretherton, 2016, 123). Crucial to Bretherton's project is that hospitality constitutes a far superior mode than tolerance. Tolerance, at least in its more modern forms, addresses the problem of difference by advocating the negative principle of agreeing to disagree, or the "principled refusal to prohibit conduct believed to be wrong" (Bretherton, 2016, 122). Tolerance works from the language of permission and acceptance, but it struggles to be framed in ways that can encompass generosity and blessing. Hospitality, on the other hand, is about welcoming the stranger, in which the foreigner becomes a guest who can tangibly see the commitment of the host towards them.

The application of hospitality to the domain of thinking involves conceiving of other minds as strangers to whom we can offer welcome as guests. Their membership at the table is not predicated on their ideas, but on their common unity with us as image-bearers. Such hospitality opens a space for ideas to be aired, perspectives to be discussed and understood, without convictions having to be compromised.

Framing the classroom as a hospitable space is well known (Burwell & Huyser, 2013), but the extension of hospitality to our RCO's is perhaps far less considered. *HT* already heads in this direction when it commends the value of "participation in multiple communities that are often at odds with one another" (Jacobs, 2018, 25). But the explicit language of hospitality, absent from the text of *HT*, deepens the impulses already present in Jacobs' writing. The richness of hospitality lies in its capacity to both acknowledge strangeness and yet maintain generosity and welcome. It does not predicate welcome on the basis of assimilation or agreement, but rather uses disagreement as an opportunity for relationship. In conscious counteraction to

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[12]Pohl, *Making Room*, Kindle Location 77.

[13]The standard NT noun for hospitality, *philoxenos*, together with verbs like *xenodocheo* (1 Tim 5:10) or *xenizo* (Heb 13:2); all of these draw attention to the *xenos* (stranger, foreigner) as the object of love and the recipient of gift.

the default socialising tendencies of our thinking habits, in which we normally tend to think with those who are like us, intellectual hospitality deliberately seeks to think with those whom we disagree, just as we might eat with those whom we do not know (Glyer, 2015). In simpler terms, hospitality does not confuse agreement with the act of neighbouring. Listening does not constitute affirmation and understanding does not constitute endorsement.[14] Intellectual hospitality cultivates a posture where "giving it five minutes" is not exceptional, but essential. It fosters the habit that one cannot critique a position one does not understand, and that the best kind of understanding is to first articulate my guest's perspective in their own dialect and to their satisfaction. A theological ethic of intellectual hospitality posits that if one cannot discern the logic of an alternative position, indeed if one cannot appreciate and articulate why an idea is persuasive and compelling to our guest, then we have not truly welcomed them to the intellectual table.

3.4.3   Source 3: The Implied Reader of Canonical Scripture

Our account thus far has drawn upon Christian philosophy and theological ethics to suggest some ways of furthering the practice of Christian thinking in a divided age. Yet the elephant in the room remains the lingering sense that prioritising Scripture as a supreme authority serves to cultivate a domineering intellectual posture from its readers. Here we could cite the words of Erich Auerbach in his classic work *Mimesis*:

> The Scripture stories do not, like Homer's, court our favour, they do not flatter us that they may please and enchant us—they seek to subject us, and if we refuse to be subjected we are rebels. (Auerbach, 2003, 15).

As was indicated earlier in our discussion of evangelical theology, we are aware of instances where people's commitment to the authority of Scripture breeds inhospitality in the practice of their thinking. But can one use the Christian Bible to show it intends to make thinkers who are capable of intellectual hospitality?

Perhaps one way of approaching this is to speak of the "implied reader" of Scripture. The implied reader is a concept borrowed from literary studies, which has been variously discussed by theorists such as Iser, Chatman and Eco (Briggs, 2010). Simplifying in the extreme, the phrase names the basic notion that texts presuppose certain kinds of audience, a hypothetical "someone" assumed by the author who might be capable of fully understanding the text (Chandler & Munday, 2019). As both Briggs and Bockmuehl have argued, the implied reader of Scripture is a disciple, a "virtuous reader" whose disposition is to love God and others through their reading, and who thus reads with humility, trust and wisdom (Bockmuehl,

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[14]Cf. the work of Biola communications professor Dr Tim Muehlhoff, and his talk "Stomping on Jesus: Taking the Perspective of Others in the Argument Culture," available at https://cct.biola.edu/stomping-jesus-taking-perspective-others-argument-culture-muehlhoff/.

2006; Briggs, 2010). In other words, the implied reader of Scripture is not an intellectual seeking to master the text as an instrument. In this respect Briggs points us to the teaching of Augustine, who argued:

> …anyone who thinks that he has understood the divine scriptures or any part of them, but cannot by his understanding build up this double love of God and neighbour, has not yet succeeded in understanding them (Augustine, as cited in Briggs, 2010, 141).

But how might the reading of Scripture help form thinkers who practice the patience, love, and care to which Jacobs enjoins us? Here we need to attend to the actual *phenomena* of what Scripture is, rather than our logical inferences as to what kind of Scripture we think God should have provided (Bird, 2013). Even with the evangelical assumption that Scripture is unified and coherent, that unity and coherence is achieved via a diverse collection of texts. As the ethicist Andrew Cameron has quipped, "the Bible is a big book" and the process of understanding it necessarily takes time (Cameron, 2011, 133). What is more, upon reading Scripture it becomes clear that canonical unity is forged not through neat uniformity, but rather by juxtaposing texts which stand in some degree of tension with one another. The neat aphorisms of Proverbs are counterpointed by the anguished questions of Job and Ecclesiastes. The harsh laws against foreign brides in Ezra (Ezra 9:1–2) sit awkwardly with the charming inclusivity of Ruth. The statements on justification made by Paul (Romans 4:5) do not easily cohere with James's statement that faith without works is dead (James 2:26). Such tensions can only be resolved by practicing intellectual humility, a measure of hermeneutical patience and a posture of open-mindedness (Kandiah, 2014). The very fact that the church possesses four accounts of the life of Christ, which each manifest degrees of similarity and difference, forces all Christians to avoid the perils of hasty harmonisation (Pennington, 2012, 50–73).

Furthermore, Scripture also witnesses to a capacity to listen to the worldview and language of its audience and to communicate its truth in diverse dialects. Thus, the Genesis accounts of creation both speak against ANE mythology and yet also echo its thought-forms and language. The Israelite wisdom literature is both distinctive in its theology and yet overlaps with other sapiential traditions present in surrounding cultures. Perhaps the *locus classicus* for demonstrating generous listening with robust conviction is Paul's speech to the Areopagus in Acts 17. There Paul manages to temper his revulsion at Greek idolatry (Acts 17:16) so as to adopt a rhetorical strategy of bridge-building, insofar as he finds sufficient common ground with the Athenians to give a coherent biblical theology in the language they can understand, and link the Jesus story to the experiences and cultural narratives of his target audience (Fernando, 1998, 484; Campbell, 2011, 181).

3.5   Concluding Reflection: Re-Forming Thinkers for a Fractious Age

The aim of this chapter is to consider how theology might support and extend the analysis of *HT*. In our first section of this chapter, we identified Jacobs' focus on attending to the character and will of the thinker, and the cultivation of essential habits of intellectual patience, humility and generous listening towards the other. It is my assumption that the goal of Christian colleges is focused just as much on producing "knowers" as it is on producing knowledge. Yet we are painfully aware that the final assessment of the graduate attributes of our students occurs not in our classrooms, but in the lives and thinking they practice after they have graduated. We are therefore compelled to ask what kinds of thinkers we are producing? Here I seek to offer a series of final reflections, in the form of both statements and questions.

First, as valuable an analysis as Jacobs provides, unless we bring his work into conversation with how evangelicals think theologically, the value of his insights will be blunted. In simple terms, it needs to be seen that doing the hard work of thinking is an act of virtue, rather than something that is just useful for our times. Christians should want to think, love to think and actively resist the thrill of a cheap point if it comes at the expense of patient and humble cogitation. However much such resistance to cheap thrills undermines our sermons and our marketing brochures—so be it.

Second, we simply have not cared enough about our manner of thinking, instead focussing on victory over learning (Jacobs, 2018, 148). This raises the question of whether our students have merely learnt how to answer, or whether they have learnt how to think and learn. This affects the way we teach the Bible, the way we appropriate the Bible and the way we imaginatively live the Bible. The implied reader of Scripture is not one who immediately "get's" everything.

Third, in a fractured age like ours, the Christian tradition of hospitality provides unique resources for enabling virtuous thinkers to welcome the "other," "the stranger" and "the enemy." Such welcome is not syncretism or assimilation, it is rather the chance to practice the open table of Jesus in the context of academia. Christian thinking should not be known for mere toleration of its opponents. It should be known for its gracious capacity to welcome outside voices while offering its own robust response.

Fourth, as part of removing the log from our eyes, we must "patiently, and as honestly as [we] can, assess [our] repugnances" (Jacobs, 2018, 148). Of course, as the Pauline example in Athens demonstrates, the presence of distress is not always wrong. But some of our repugnances are entirely unjustified. And even those which are justified require us to engage in the costly process of understanding the language and logic of our opponents, so that we might winsomely persuade them as best we can.

Finally, we must practice the art of commending students for their thinking not just their thoughts. That is to say, our structures and our academic habits can often be geared towards honouring the best answer, to valorising students who can master content both in terms of its conceptual complexity but also their rhetorical force

in explicating their understanding. But what might it mean to honour thinkers who exemplify bravery and courage in their learning? What might it mean to commend someone's patience in thinking, even if it means their final answers are not yet fully formed? What might it mean to produce virtuous thinkers in a fractious age?

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Chapter 4
Home-Coming: Restoring a Theology of Place Within Christian Education

Darren Iselin

Abstract To be human is to dwell within a particular place—from the moment we are, we are "implaced." Christian education, as person forming communities, should therefore seek to curate, cultivate and celebrate implacement, particularly in a contemporary age where a haunting sense of placelessness shapes our current generation. This chapter invites Christian educators and leaders to restore a theology of place within the academy and explores the high importance of place and how geography, location, community and neighbourhoods are actually part of a grander story of God's sovereign purpose in and through creation. This chapter will review and explore a snapshot of the corpus of literature relating to the importance of place as a theological construct and will propose how an understanding and recognition of place can be used as a lens through which to curate the importance of place and implaced embodiment, within our Christian educational communities. The chapter will also explore how principles of placemaking within Christian education that are grounded in an incarnational posture can reflect and celebrate the significance of the incarnation of Christ whereby "The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood" (John 1:14 MSG).

Keywords Christian education · Incarnation · Placemaking · Community

In an age of increasing fragmentation, disconnection and social isolation, and where an aching sense of placelessness is prevalent across society; the restoration, application and celebration of a theology of place is of pressing importance. Christian education, as intentionally placed, person forming, interdependent learning environments, need to restore and re-imagine afresh the importance of a theology of place within their variegated educational communities. This chapter will review and explore a snapshot of the corpus of literature relating to the importance of place as a theological construct and will propose how an understanding and recognition of place can be used as a lens through which to cultivate and celebrate the importance of place and implaced embodiment within our Christian educational communities.

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Specifically, within this chapter, the importance of restoring place within contemporary educational contexts will be articulated and justified across three key themes:

Home: Place as a theological construct
Far from Home: Placelessness in a commodified educational age
Homecoming: Christian Education as an implaced and embodied learning community

It is hoped that through a fresh investigation of and appreciation for a theology of place, Christian educators may recapture the essential role that place contributes to all meaningful learning and formation, and will inspire a fresh reimagining of our educational contexts and learning environments as dynamic landscapes "charged with the Grandeur of God" (Hopkins, 2011, p. 20).

4.1 Home: Place as a Theological Construct

Place can be somewhat of an amorphous term that can have as many meanings as it has applications. Craft (2018) defines place as "part of who we are; it is both a physical and social reality. Whilst our bodies must physically dwell in places, our minds also structure knowledge and ideologies in relation to places (p. 8)". Since creation, mankind has been placed somewhere, and the biblical story continually reinforces the importance of places to geography, relationships and human flourishing and experience. The starting point for any theology of place arises from the creation story of Genesis One which Bartholomew (2011) refers to as a "place story rather than an earth story" (p. 10). The theology of place presented in Genesis is framed "within a complex, dynamic understanding of creation as ordered by God" and how humans intentionally and purposefully interact with the places they inhabit (pp. 10–11). Through such a range of interactions, place can be conceptualised as location, geography and landscape, but also as an experience, a community, and a set of interrelationships, memories, and habits regarding meaning making. Such an expansive definition of place means that it is "not just a piece of ground [but]… an undeniable fact of our existence in relationship with the whole of creation" (Craft, 2018, p. 9).

Therefore, to be human is to dwell within a particular place and these places shape us in deep, significant and at times unexpected ways. Our souls, our loves, our relationships and our calling and purpose are inextricably linked to places. Because we are embodied and implaced image bearers, we find soulful purpose and meaning in our physical settings. Walter Brueggemann (1977) proposes that such formation in place allows human identity to be animated in:

belonging to and referring to that locus in which the peculiar historicity of a community has been expressed and to which recourse is made for purposes of orientation, assurance, and empowerment (p. 5).

We are intricately rooted in places and the locales, communities and landscapes where we dwell and have our being that engender within us deep connections and interrelationships which form us in deep, psychic and significant ways. Learning, living and loving all share an intimate and lasting connection with these contours of our physical settings. Therefore, because we are placed, and not merely situated, our places for work, witness and worship should not be perceived as merely individualised, autonomous or isolated, but rather interconnected and interdependent within communities, locales and neighbourhoods for God's good purpose. For this reason, it is important to consider place as a more multifaceted and multidimensional construct than a merely a personal call to serve in a specific setting or location—our call is intricately and purposefully linked and enfolded into specific and interdependent communities.

God works through people and places. And significantly, God works through people *in* places. It is for this reason that a theology of place reflects and amplifies the trinitarian emphasis of being in relationship through community (Allberry, 2012, pp.79–81). Our image bearing nature means that all of humanity is created to be grounded in implaced locales—in places that are bound in relationships and never intended to be atomistic or in isolation. Daniel Kemmis (1990) links the importance of this relational interdependence when he writes

> To inhabit a place is to dwell there in a practised way, in a way which relies upon certain regular, trusted, habits of behaviour. Our prevailing, individualistic frame of mind has led us to forget this root sense of the concept of "inhabitation". … We have largely lost the sense that our capacity to live well in a place might depend upon our ability to relate… In fact, no real public life is possible except among people who are engaged in the project of inhabiting a place (p. 79).

The concept of the local church epitomises inhabitation with an implaced ecclesiology that reinforces being purposefully and divinely placed in specific locations, for specific purposes, at specific times. The New Testament speaks directly to locale and region when describing ecclesial distinctiveness and differentiation and the communities which were intricately tied to these places of worship, work and witness.

Just as the local church is "called out" from among its neighbours and divinely placed to a neighbourhood and specific location, so too are Christian ministries and organisations, including Christian educational communities, to serve not merely their own personal or institutional ends, but the wider needs and neighbours within their locales. Such a perspective underscores the crucial importance of being divinely implaced within contemporary educational settings and highlights that the location where we serve and cultivate Christian education is not peripheral nor inconsequential to our calling and service, but a critical part of the grander story of God's sovereign purpose in and through creation. It is through this biblical understanding of place that the ministry of restoration and reconciliation through Christian education, in all its variegated contexts, is rooted, orientated and animated.

The importance of place as a theological construct is further underscored by the **genius loci** (spirit of place) that shapes and orientates our identities and cultural forms within our educational learning communities. The intentional alignment of rootedness within place occurs as learning communities are deliberate about the

creation and maintenance of sacred places and their divinely implaced environments. One College principal highlighted this sense of placement recently when he reflected on his role as a long-serving custodian at the school where he served:

> Before the foundation of the world, God has set apart this land for education at this time, in this place. In this way, God is sovereign, and this community is His instrument to serving this local place. To have an impact you need to stay – stay for a long time – I'm here living 400 metres from school Monday to Friday doing community – investing in this place and being rooted – living like a local, acting like a local, celebrating like a local.[1]

Furthermore, this localised application of a theology of place facilitates the capacity for the stories, symbols and structures to reflect and showcase the importance of *this* place within Christian educational communities as they care for the community and creation where they are established. James KA Smith suggests that

> every "culture" or community of practice has rituals of orientation and repetition that reinforce the mission, goals, and ethos of the organisation. And the best – that is, most formative – rituals of orientation and development do so in ways that work on the imagination and *don't just inform the intellect*…. Formative framing practices invite us to *become participants in a story* and find tactile, aesthetic ways to keep reorienting us in that story (p. 165).

A sound understanding of the theological importance of place and placemaking practices cultivates synergies between landscapes, living and learning that 'work on the imagination' and invite active and dialogical participation in a community's story. These practices can be expressed in a variety of ways and can include intentionally using architecture, building form and design, facilities, gardens, surrounds, foyers, classrooms, open areas and other physical and natural environments to express distinctive cultural meaning and significance. Collectively, and with the symbiotic interactions, conversations and engagement of the entire learning community—a context-specific genius loci is shaped and celebrated. In this way, places are not just seen or merely passed through, but felt and experienced and loved. This level of intentionality regarding the critical role of place enables such educational communities to flourish where they are planted as they are faithful in their responsibility as stewards of creation and agents of reconciliation and restoration within their implaced locales.

4.2   Far from Home—Placelessness in Commodified Educational Age

Christian education, as intentionally placed, person forming communities, should therefore actively seek to cultivate theological placemaking principles and priorities, particularly in a contemporary age where a sense of placelessness defines the cultural zeitgeist. John Inge (2001) identifies that since the Enlightenment, there has been an increasing downgrading of the importance of place within society, and this "has

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[1] P. Valese.

worked out in practice with dehumanizing effect", suggesting "that place has much more effect on humanity than has generally been recognised" (pp. 4–5).

In seeking to trace the causes of this displacement within contemporary society, Brueggemann, suggests our current generation's quest to find meaning fails to realise that "it is rootlessness and not meaninglessness that characterizes the current crisis" (Brueggemann, 1977, p. 4).

Rootlessness amplifies the inevitable failure of the modern age that "human persons… could lead detached, unrooted lives of endless choice and no commitment… glamorised around the virtues of mobility and anonymity which seem so full of freedom and self-actualisation" (Brueggemann, 1977, p. 10). Such virtues cultivate a sense of isolation and self-interest that erode the capacity for relationship and human connection in and to our places. Bartholomew contends that "whilst some thinkers celebrate the virtues of anonymity and mobility that are the modernity's "gifts" … their inevitable outcome is … *atopia*, or placelessness" (2011, p. 20).

The triumph of empiricism and rationalism across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries progressively desacralized the West, including a gradual yet insidious marginalisation then eradication of the construct of place within society and the academy. Bartholomew highlights this phenomenon and concludes:

> We live amidst a crisis of place. In our late modern age, we have lost that very human sense of place…Indeed… in our dromocratic [speed focused] society every person constantly "on the move" suffers from placelessness in one form or another (2011, p. 17).

This aching sense of placelessness has significant and far-reaching implications for Christian educational learning communities that must confront and contest for the hearts and minds of an increasingly rootless generation who are shaped by the all-encompassing allure of unfettered freedom and unbridled autonomy within contemporary culture and society.

4.2.1 Our Obsession with Spaces and not Places

Whilst the concepts of place and space are interwoven, the particularity of place has, in the modern age, been superseded by space. Because our default position is now orientated towards personal space, we become active consumers in an ever-increasing quest for speed and individualised autonomy. Inge (2001) states that

> although place was of importance in Greek thought, the Western intellectual tradition has tended to downgrade it, place being eclipsed by an emphasis first upon space and second upon time. This prevailing discourse has worked itself out in the development of Western society, the process reaching a dehumanizing culmination in the twentieth century (p. 62).

Within educational communities, traditions, rituals, habits and practices were historically always *implaced*—formed and perpetuated around clearly defined places, tightly bound relationships and learning localities, each with their own distinctive cultural stories, histories, symbolic elements, norms and assumptions. Lane (1998),

in citing Bourdieu's (1990) seminal work on field and habitus, states that the West has now reduced habitus to a "nonsacramental, individualistic quest for transcendent experience… We are, in short, a people without "habit", with no common custom, place, or dress to lend us a shared meaning" (p. 10). This unprecedented displacement of our habitus from our habitats has contributed to the subsequent decoupling of "landscape and spirituality" (ibid) that inevitably eventuates when we seek to live transient and displaced lives that discard and devalue the importance of place in our lives and learning.

The concern to move quickly and freely from one place to another perpetuates this sense of placelessness in culture, in relationships and community, and its impact has unquestionably infiltrated our modern social institutions including schools, colleges and universities.

4.2.2   Placelessness and "Distanced" Education

The empty promise of such lives without constraints and individualised paths of freedom and autonomy have transferred seamlessly into contemporary educational practices. Charles Taylor (1992) warns that:

> The rise of individualism has wrenched us loose from all the settings that gave meaning to the lives of our forebears; we have been thrown back on our inner resources, but when we look inside ourselves, we find emptiness because we have been cut adrift from everything that once supplied the resources we are seeking" (p. 142).

David Brooks suggests that education communities who have succumbed to these potent forces become soulless institutions. He adds that these institutions "are more professional and glittering than ever, but in some ways, there is emptiness deep down" (para. 3). Truth is relativized and fragmented and the consequences are soulless cynics who are characterised by what Mark Schwehn (1993) terms "a disenchantment with the world" (p. 9), without any anchor of place to circumvent nor ground their aching disconnection.

Rather than being circumspect of these seismic cultural shifts, the church and church-based institutions, including Christian educational communities, have sometimes sought to assimilate and then promulgate these consumerist and commodified modes of practice that inadvertently can alienate rather than connect people within their communities.

The **genius loci** (spirit of place) that once powerfully shaped and grounded our identities within many of our Christian education communities has been replaced by a **Libera animam** (free spirit)—a license to break free from any established and connected roots or fetters to location, community and neighbourhood. The modern education lexicon is replete with terms that reflect this ontological shift away from interdependent places to autonomous and privatised spaces. Our curriculum is promulgated as individualised; we reduce student cohorts to commodified raw scores and standard distribution curves that assign value to impersonal numbers not names;

we engage "mobile" self-paced, self-directed learning. These new modes and models are certainly not to be universally discredited, dismissed nor discarded. But contemporary educational communities have at times been far from discerning nor circumspect in critiquing and evaluating these compendia of new tools and techniques and the consumerist *Libera animam* that underpins so many of these approaches.

Rather than these communities responding as harbingers for authentic and neighbourly placemaking that evidence and showcase their distinctive localities and communal cultural elements, some Christian educational communities have succumbed to the embrace of a plethora of disconnected and displaced educational practices and principles that disassociate place from their entire educational pedagogy and practice. Whilst digital technologies have afforded exciting new ways of engaging in education, some of these approaches have not thoughtfully considered how placemaking priorities can find expression in these new learning ecosystems and digital environments. Such discordant approaches in regard to placemaking in a technological age have allowed utilitarian priorities to prevail which perpetuate a neo-pragmatism that elevates the promise and practice of mobility and anonymity over rootedness and meaningful connection to place to alarming levels.

The recent Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) phenomenon revealed that whilst courses can indeed be free, autonomous and independent of location and geography—the lived experiences of an overwhelming majority of students have found that engagement and meaningful learning could not be sustained without an authentic community, a sense of rootedness and belonging and a real-time personal connection to orientate the learning process. John Warner wrote in Inside Higher Education that "In 2012 Sebastian Thrun, founder of …MOOC provider Udacity told Wired magazine that in 50 years, there would be only 10 higher education institutions in the world and Udacity had a "shot" at being one of them…. However, [by October 2017], Udacity declared an intention to move away entirely from open access courses. Company Vice President Clarissa Shen said MOOCs 'are dead'" (2017, para. 1,6). She went on to add "Our mission is to bring relevant education which advances people in careers and socio-economic activities, and MOOCs aren't the way" (para. 7). Warner concludes that this was a cautionary tale of over-promise and under-delivery which saw the audacious vision to "transform all of higher education reduced to targeting niche corporate training occur within only five short years" (para. 8).

In reality, the most successful courses and learning that utilise on-campus, online and MOOC inspired platforms recognise that without developing a *genius loci* (whether digitally and/or in person), the course delivery space is void of authenticity, identity and purpose.

Such creative blending of places with spaces, of habitus with habitats, provides much thoughtful reflection on the implications and opportunities of navigating this new terrain for educational practice in a commodified age. It is why placemaking—across whatever medium or method we seek to adopt and utilise in our tech-savvy and constantly mobile digital age is of such importance. The failure of these courses also illuminates the danger in decoupling place within a contemporary the education milieu, where the quest for autonomy, individualised space, mobility and personalised freedom has at times eclipsed other teaching and learning considerations within many educational communities.

4.3   Homecoming: Christian Education as an Implaced and Embodied Learning Community

Considering these commodified and displaced demands that perpetuate rather than curtail rootlessness and atopia, Christian educational communities are confronted with a compelling rationale to turn hearts towards **home**. Bouma-Prediger and Walsh (2008), thoughtfully describe the displaced landscape of our contemporary age by contending:

> Both postmodern tourists and global capitalists want to keep their options open, whether for the identities they will construct in cyberspace or the products they will buy at the mall. Both value choice over loyalty. And both remain deeply homeless because being at home is seen to be a limiting of choices and requires an acknowledgement that we are not autonomous but interdependent and interrelated homemakers (p. 263).

As part of God's restorative and redemptive plan, all of those involved within Christian education are afforded a unique and strategic opportunity to curate place-making. The wanderers and vagabonds of a placeless age that enter Christian institutional places (including staff and students), must be afforded a hospitable welcome door by these schools, colleges and universities that warmly invite them to come "home". It is therefore to this homemaking process of preparing the table through embodied practices of placemaking and the practical application of a theology of place that Christian educators should be focused.

In an age where personal space and freedom to merely "pass through" our educational communities are prized over rootedness and interconnected community, what should a thoughtful Christian response be? What would it look like if Christian educators were to re-orientate and re-imagine how embodied placement finds expression in our school communities? In an age where electronic learning devices are essential, what would it look like if student learning was to equally consider the embodiment, practice and presence of the pedagogue (authentic mentor and guide) rather than defaulting to depersonalised and displaced emphases on an information disseminator or content host? In an age where unfettered freedom, mobility and spatial transience dominate both the classroom and the curriculum, what would it look like to intentionally engage in embodied placemaking principles of hospitality and invitation to transform these learning spaces? The following three foci exemplify facets of how a reorientation towards an applied theology of place can contribute to flourishing Christian learning communities.

4.4   Place Restores Embodiment and Incarnational Emphases Within Christian Education

Author and poet, Wendell Berry (2004), encapsulates the embodied pathway back towards restoring the importance of place within communities by articulating how inextricably linked love is to where we dwell: "Love in this world doesn't come

out of thin air. It is not something thought up. Like ourselves, it grows out of the ground. It has a body and a place" (p. 88). If our explicit intention within Christian education is, as James KA Smith surmises, to cultivate loves, shape loves and rightly order loves (Smith, 2009, p. 18) then it is of great importance that we are highly intentional about ensuring that such loves—for learning, for leading, and for living, are ordered well within our local communities and are both embodied and implaced.

The importance of embodied placement for Christians is exemplified in the incarnation. The Gospel of John records that "The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood" (John 1:14 MSG). The incarnation has been described as an "absolute foundational doctrine, not just an irreducible part of the Christian confession, but the theological prism through which we view our entire missional task in the world" (Frost and Hirsch 2004, p. 35). The incarnation highlights the importance of intentional placement—The Son of God, whilst embodying the omnipotent and omnipresent fullness of the Godhead was not named Jesus of the universe—some all-encompassing and boundaryless abstraction. He was known as Jesus of Nazareth—bound by place and politics, history and culture, story and ritual. So much of His earthly identity was tied to geography and socio-cultural mores that some people even questioned his cultural pedigree decrying "Can anything good come out of Nazareth? (John 1:46). Lane would therefore contend that:

> One necessarily reads the scriptures with a map in hand… The God of Old and New Testaments is one who "tabernacles" with God's people, always made known in particular locales. When Paul celebrates the 'scandal of the gospel', this is a reality geographically rooted in Jesus, a crucified Jew from Nazareth, of all places. The offence, the particularity of place, becomes intrinsic to the incarnational character of Christian faith (1992, p. 5).

Through the scandal of particularity—of place, location, setting and culture, God entered our world—moved into the neighbourhood—and underscored that love really is grounded in a body *and* a place. The essence of the incarnational model for Christian educators necessitates a posture whereby the "enfleshment of commitment and knowledge must be widely evident. Teachers must be paradigms of that which we "profess" both academically and religiously… The sine qua non of an educator is the ability to communicate through embodiment" (Gill, 1979, p. 1012).

To embody the paradigms which we profess, Christian educators must take seriously the importance of being placed and imitate Christ's "pitching of a tent" or "dwelling amongst" within our families, neighbourhoods and cities, but also intentionally within our classrooms and educational communities.

Christian educational leaders must therefore consider what incarnational postures and approaches best enable and promote placemaking initiatives within their communities. The push towards the decentralisation of the academy and the individualised and commodified nature of the contemporary "space orientated" workforce requires Christian leaders to be discerning and deliberate with decision-making processes that may directly or inadvertently undermine embodiment and implacement within their communities and cultures.

4.5   Place Reinforces the Importance of Cultural Liturgies Within Christian Education

Lane proposes that because of our endemic sense of displacement and our age's obsession with mobility and anonymity, many communities, cultures and organisations have lost the capacity to form habits that are grounded in habitats. He reveals: "We are bereft of rituals of entry that allow us to participate fully in the places we inhabit … We have realised, in the end, the 'free individual' at the expense of a network of interrelated meanings" (1998, p. 10).

Restoring, reimagining and celebrating such rituals and practices therefore lies at the heart of any intentional placemaking and home coming within Christian educational communities. Smith's seminal cultural liturgies series defines these liturgies as "practices and rituals of ultimate concern" (2009, p. 86). that are "the most loaded forms of ritual practice because they are after nothing less than our hearts" (p. 87). He recommends that those leading modern communities:

> will not adequately grasp what is at stake in… cultural institutions if we just look at what appears in the present or on the surface; we need to "read" these institutions and practices in order to discern the telos at which they are aimed…. In short, we will only adequately "read" our culture to the extent that we recognise… there are an array of liturgies that function as pedagogies of desire (2009, p. 73).

It is through these specific pedagogies of desire and their interrelationship to our locality and physical settings that a pathway of embodied placement can be effectively articulated, communicated, promoted and practiced within our educational communities. Such an intentional process can only be effectively achieved as Christian educational communities understand and articulate their own spirit of place, and the specific purpose, role and assignment within their particular place, at a particular time. The apostle Paul highlights this in Acts 17, revealing that God has "determined their reappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him" (Acts 17:26–27 NIV).

As these liturgies are purposively and consistently habited in real and authentic places and locales, a distinctive and tightly integrated habitus can form, enabling all those placed within the learning community to embody and enact the spirit of place which they inhabit. In this way, the opportunity to be drawn into the story of a place, the beauty of a place, the telos of a place, the calling to *this* place becomes animated and celebrated. This is especially relevant in an age of flexible work and mobile learning options and individualised course pathways where decisions by Christian learning communities may not necessitate nor are concerned about how placemaking and hospitable practices can be infused into every facet of their genius loci. Embodied and implaced communities who are habited in this way also rightly order time—as place gives rhythm, routine, stability and seasons: work and sabbath-rest, time to engage and retreat. Our embodied and implaced habits discipline our days and provide boundaries and borders in our otherwise on-call, 24/7 autonomous spaces. Bartholomew (2011) attests to these placemaking disciplines and reflects, "the best

writers on place speak of the need for attentiveness, familiarity, silence, slowness, stability, repetition, particularity, hope, respect, love… all characteristics and the fruit of Christian spirituality, but rare in our speed-driven, consumerist Western culture" (p. 320). Furthermore, Robert Benne (2001), traces the key conditions for Christian colleges to sustain their ethos and culture, and highlights the importance of these embodied cultural liturgies for learning communities:

> Living traditions…also carry many practices, habits, celebrations, and memories that make them unique and attractive communities. They are dense networks of both meaning and obligation that persist over time…. It is important that that these schools have effective ways of introducing all new members of the community… into the living tradition that is theirs (p. 196).

Embodied and implaced learning communities will reflect and celebrate these living traditions—putting flesh and bone around these networks of meaning making as a placemaking priority.

In this regard, "The genius of the Christian university (or school or college) is to create a storied community… [that] must develop and prize their own spirit of place" (Allen and Badley 2017, p. 299) through celebrating these context-specific liturgies of desire that orientate and ground people within authentic placemaking cultures. Christian educational communities that are intentional about their people and their places, their placemaking stories, liturgies and histories and the particularity of place being seamlessly tied to their practices, enhance the potential to promote a sense of connection, community, and belonging. Through these placemaking priorities and practices, it may also compel and inspire those within such learning communities to ask: "I wonder what is *my* place in *this* place?"

4.6 Place Provides an Authentic Context for Celebrating the Now and the not Quite yet

Thirdly, Christian educational communities who desire to embody and faithfully live out the biblical story, should both recognise that place is of essential importance in this moment, whilst simultaneously affirming that all placemaking endeavours are but a glimpse and forestate of the ultimate place we will one day call "home". Christian educational communities need to be reminded that our schools, colleges and universities are landscapes charged with God's grandeur that are sanctified and set apart for Emmanuel, our God *with* us, in our place, our locality and our community. Christ's incarnational posture means that He has "moved into the neighborhood", and specifically *this* neighbourhood, and set up His dwelling, within our sovereignly placed educational communities. For this reason, Christian educators need to be diligent and highly intentional about restoring embodied priorities in both the classroom and the wider community in their cultural moment.

Such an orientation should seek to draw upon a well understood and well-articulated theology of place that encourages and inspires us to be welcoming place-makers, graciously and expectantly preparing the table for all those who come into our communities. The application of placemaking principles will seek to promote a safe, stable, secure, supportive sense of place, a distinctive spirit of place and a formative journey towards home for all. Through this recognition and celebration of the importance of place, locality can be fused seamlessly with learning and in so doing, facilitate an expectation that our geography and physical places may provide meaningful and authentic contexts for our place, pedagogy and practice to be enhanced in creative and dynamic ways.

> It is important, however, to recognise that, in all of our faithful placemaking endeavours, whilst we are unquestionably a divinely placed people, and called to be formed within our places, we are all also longing for an ultimate homeland. The biblical narrative of place both affirms and celebrates the importance of placemaking but also echoes of our ultimate home coming. Anderson (2018) identifies this reality by stating: "This is the deeper truth about place: no earthly place can fill what is ultimately a longing for a heavenly one. We can stay here because we know we'll never find our final home on this earth" (para. 34). It is within this liminal place between the now and the not quite yet, that we dwell in place, both as settlers and sojourners towards a kingdom to come.

Upon reflecting deeply about this in-between space between our two homes, Frederick Beuchner in his book, The Longing for Home, ponders: "The first home foreshadows the final home, and the final home hallows and fulfills what was most precious in the first" Buechner (1996, p. 3). Inge concludes that Beuchner:

> understands that people and place are vitally entwined. He writes of how the word longing comes from the same root as the word long in the sense of length in either time or space and also the word belong, so that in its full richness the word to long suggests to yearn for a long time for something that is a long way off and something that we feel we belong to and that belongs to us. (2001, p. 235).

In a wonderful twist and delightful play on words, the concepts of time and space *and* place all draw from the same root word and will, one day, ultimately each find their fullest meaning and perfect divine order when we finally come "home".

There is an elegant welsh word, *hiraeth*, that also encapsulates this yearning. Whilst the etymology comes from the root meaning for longing—its meaning cannot be easily translated into English. It is often used to refer to a longing, but the multi-layered meaning of the word also implies a specific kind of longing—a deep soulful desire for "home" and even a homesickness, that you deeply long for and affectionately seek after (Davis, 2007, para. 1). Whilst our learning communities should work diligently and faithfully to reflect and animate His kingdom on earth, all our place-making labours are but momentary glimpses of what one day will be a restoration and consummation of all things for His glory. Only then will we be finally "home" and our placemaking tasks and responsibilities will finally find their ultimate fullness and completion in Him.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to remind Christian educators of the importance of a theology of place in responding to the divine calling to lovingly cultivate God's good creation through hospitable and embodied placemaking for all who enter Christian learning communities in a rootless and displaced age. There is much for the Christian educational community to glean from a restoration of a theology of place to the academy and the themes and foci of this chapter are but a primer for a more comprehensive and detailed exploration of the importance of place to contemporary Christian educational communities.

Whilst engaging in this creative and dynamic task, may we also rejoice with anticipation and expectation that our soulful practices of placemaking are but a foretaste for "home". May the *hiraeth* that is latent within our collective souls, our deep longing for home, be cultivated and celebrated through intentional and incarnational place making within our Christian learning communities. For Jesus himself has promised "there are many rooms in my Father's house; if there were not, I would have told you. I am going now to prepare a *place* for you" (John 14:2). In the meantime, will you go and do likewise within your learning community?

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Chapter 5
Christian Higher Education: Capturing a Personal Passionate Profession

Beverley Norsworthy

Abstract Understanding Christian education as a lifelong endeavour to understand how one's image bearing can be an expression of God's mission on earth has implications for its purpose, pedagogy and foci. With this in mind, this chapter presents a case for Christian Higher Education (CHE) which values the development of a *Personal Passionate Profession*. The chapter outlines how this concept, which builds on LaBoskey's (1994) notion of a Passionate Creed, combines understanding humans as imago dei and vocation as the opportunity to be co-workers with Christ, acts as a tool to help Christ followers articulate and embody God's call on their life in a particular time and place (Norsworthy, 2009; Bell, 2010; Bell, Robertson, & Norsworthy, 2017). The development of such a profession has significant advantages. In the first instance, it helps understand how the way one is designed or 'wired' with particular loves or passions, motivations and gifts enables work within a particular context and vocation to be an expression of God's redemptive work. Secondly, it can be the mirror in which reflection about our vocation occurs so that it is gently, continually and strategically nudged toward being more intentional and strategic for the Kingdom of God.

Keywords Imago dei · Christian higher education · God's redemptive work · Kingdom work · Vocational preparation

5.1 Introduction

This chapter argues that our understanding of the purpose of Christian Higher Education (CHE) has implications for our curriculum and that there is a compelling reason to include more focus on the identity of the student as an image bearer who is a co-worker in God's redemptive plan (McEwen, 2012; Middleton, 2005; Norsworthy & Belcher, 2015; Waalkes, 2015). The heart of this argument arises from an observation that to focus on the student mainly as a professional in training (i.e., teacher,

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social worker, musician, pastor or business person) runs the risk of their education being disconnected from who they are at the core of their being. On the surface, such a statement does not sound outrageous. However, within CHE, each institution and educator within such is shaped by their own undergraduate and postgraduate experiences, and by an understanding of the nature and purpose of humans and their work. Christian higher education institutions typically seek to reflect such key understandings in their vision, mission and value statements. Within the Australian Christian Higher Education Alliance (ACHEA), descriptors of such foundations may be referred to as Christian, Biblical, a Christian worldview, a biblical view of God and His mission and/or the teachings and examples of Jesus Christ. These foundations inform or inspire a focus for the processes of preparation and equipping for life and work, personal and professional and vocational and service. This preparing and equipping may be positioned as formational and achieved through targeting a combination of head (knowing), heart (desires) and hands (skills). It includes developing understanding which may be applied or explored, and which also may include deepening of faith and development of Christ-like character. Two examples from ACHEA membership institutions are included as illustrative:

Christian Heritage College's website reports a mission to:

> Develop qualified professionals who seek a solid Christian foundation for their life and work. To love God with your whole heart, soul and mind, and to love your neighbour as yourself, are the principles which guide CHC's mission and which give shape to our pursuit of higher education within a Christian vision of life. The outworking of this is through CHC's understanding of a Christian worldview which underpins and informs all of our pursuits.

and,

Tabor College website reports:

> All that we are and do is infused by a Christian ethos that recognises spiritual formation as essential to flourishing in life and work. The values of this ethos include, respect and care for the individual, a disposition of hope, a commitment to social justice and equality, and environmentally responsible practices. Such expressions of practical care emerge from a biblical vision of God and God's mission – the restoration and reconciliation of all things.

As illustrated in the two examples above, common goals within CHE relate to *knowing, loving and being*: knowing God and His mission, knowing God and His world; loving God with one's heart, soul and mind and loving one's neighbour as self; and, being Christ-centred followers.

As for all forms of education, CHE providers seek a desired end result. Vision statements have a 'SO THAT' component. This may be that their graduates may know more of God and His world through the Bible; fulfil professional goals; embody professional excellence; maximise their potential; commit to social justice and equality; act justly in all human relationships; exercise responsible care and stewardship of God's creation; establish environmentally responsible practices; have a disposition of hope; care for others, understand the world and their place in it, and provide a firm foundation for personal and professional life. Similarly, the desired result may be that through the graduates there will be ongoing influence in the world around them. Such transformation may be captured in phrases such as

change/impact the world; make a difference in the world around them; flourishing of humanity through the lives of its graduates; and seek the just transformation of our world. Along with the focus for education, some CHE institutions noted that their approach to teaching and learning was personal; interactive; relational; in community; supportive; informed by faith, or transformational. Our vision, mission and value statements position students as uniquely created in God's image, having 'gifts and talents' to foster and being called as 'his people'. If CHE institutions are understood as "communities which educate in a context in which the spiritual life and formation of students are nurtured" (Roux & Jensen, 2018, p. 4), it behoves us to ask—into what form, way or story are our students nurtured? Perhaps, as Anderson (2014, p. 23) notes, we "have tried to answer how identity manifests itself without first answering where identity comes from".

5.2 The Development of a Personal Passionate Profession

The notion of a *Personal Passionate Profession* combines the author's engagement with LaBoskey's (1994) notion of a Passionate Creed together with insights that come from understanding the power of being 'imago dei' (the image of God) and the commitments included in one's profession. Recognising that the initial conceptualisation was within learning experience design within initial teacher education, the claim being made in this chapter is that this process is advantageous for all those who seek to live out their image bearing identity as an expression of the Gospel in the community where God has placed them. As noted by McEwen, Herman, and Himes (2016, p. 309), such a "goal of Christian higher education is rooted in an understanding of humanity as informed by the biblical concept of the imago dei (image of God), and an understanding of hope as that which draws humans forward to a common future".

5.2.1 LaBoskey's "Passionate Creed"

In 1994, Vicki LaBoskey's research identified that student teachers who were more effective as reflective practitioners had two distinguishing characteristics. They were committed to asking and answering the question "Why?" and they tended "to be guided by a strong belief", what LaBoskey referred to as a Passionate Creed. By this she meant that "they have a purpose, a rationale for, and a mission to accomplish in and through their teaching" (Norsworthy, 2008, p. 63). LaBoskey defined a Passionate Creed as: "… a belief held with intensity that permeates the teacher's thoughts about his or her teaching" (1994, p. 97). While the concept of a Passionate Creed has not apparently been developed further by LaBoskey or other teacher educators, it is a very influential component of Bethlehem Tertiary Institute's (BTI) approach to initial teacher education and postgraduate studies. (A google search of the term 'Passionate

Creed' will verify this point). At BTI, all student teachers (and more recently Master of Professional Practice students) are challenged to capture in one or two sentences something of who they are, their hopes for those they teach, counsel, serve or lead and the hoped-for result which will eventuate from their actions. This is no easy task!

Research undertaken with BTI teaching graduates identified the development and articulation of a Passionate Creed as the most important, influential component of their preparation in terms of its contribution to resilience and ongoing intentionality for their teaching practice (Bell, 2010). The articulation of the passion which inspires and motivates them enables them through reflective practice to nurture and sustain their own sense of call, responsibility and commitment to the vocation of teaching through and beyond the specific challenges faced by beginning teachers (Agbenyega, 2012; Adoniou, 2015; Bamber & Bullivant, 2017). The likelihood of this occurring is increased if, throughout their initial teacher education, they are consistently asked how their understanding, beliefs, values, expectations and hopes within that Passionate Creed "influence my choices, my actions, the way I view and interact with others"? (James, 2007, p. 165).

The process of articulating, examining, critiquing and refining a Passionate Creed throughout student teachers' preparation and career contributes to resilience as it develops "the capacity to manage on-going and multiple challenges over time, while continuing to grow and thrive professionally" (Mansfield, Beltman, Weatherby-Fell, & Broadley, 2016, p. 212). It enables the teacher to be "comfortable in chaos but not distracted from their articulated end purpose" (Bell, Robertson, & Norsworthy, 2017, p. 17). Our graduates report that their Passionate Creed contributes to their resilience, self-efficacy, agency and reflective practice (Bell, 2010; Bell, Robertson, & Norsworthy, 2017).

In terms of reflective practice, questions such as *How can I do better*? or, *How can I improve my teaching*? are meaningless unless we have a clear idea of what our goal is and therefore what 'better' might look, sound or feel like. LaBoskey (1997) claims '*the reflective teacher is one who questions and examines, as much and as often as possible, the reasons behind and the implications of her knowledge, beliefs and practices*' (p. 150). We see such clarity of purpose in the life of David who "served God's purposes in his own generation" (Acts 13:36); of Jesus who wanted to always act in a way that pleased his father, to point people to Him and to do the work he had been given (see John 10:37, 38; 12:45; 13:7; 14:7–10). Similarly, Paul the apostle always presents himself as a servant of Christ and this identity as a servant shaped the way he lived and worked—always seeking to live for the pleasure of his master and saviour, Jesus Christ.

Other examples might include that of Mother Teresa who understood that she was called by God "to go into the dark holes of the poorest of the poor to do small things with great love in order to bring Christ to the poorest and the poorest to Christ" (Poplin, 2008, p. 13). She knew WHO she was and the nature and role of *her* work in God's great gospel plan. Nothing could sway her from what God has called her to do. She did not become confused, distracted or discouraged by criticisms, compliments or promises of success. She sought, heard and responded to the voice of God. She found her identity in being a daughter of the most high God. Each of them, and many

others lived their life because of an image they had in terms of their life purpose. And, for each of the examples above, this life purpose was something which God had given them to do.

5.3   The Personal: Being Imago Dei

Exploring LaBoskey's (1994) idea of a Passionate Creed through a biblical lens can lead to the development and articulation of a *Personal Passionate Profession* which enables each student to understand who God has designed them to be in light of an increased understanding of God and His Mission, and, the world and its needs. This is not limited to a particular vocation but rather is linked to their identity as imago dei and a participant and co-worker with God in the greatest love story of all time (Cardinal Ratzinger, cited in Smith, 2009; Swaner & Erdvig, 2018; Wright, 1991). "A clear understanding of the imago dei makes the nature, value and purpose of humans and humanity much clearer" (Klassen, 2004, p. 1). Similarly, McEwen et al. (2016, p. 308) note that being "Created in the image of God, Christians bear witness to God's blessing in and for the world (Gen. 12; Matt. 28)".

Within this approach, to flourish as imago dei includes 3 Rs: Relational connectedness, Reflecting who God is and Representing him here on earth. In the first instance it is about being continually relationally connected to our Creator (Romans 1, John 14:10). Secondly, it is about reflecting who God is to those around us (McKnight, 2007). In other words, being letters 'known and read' (2 Corinthians 3:2), or, in the words of Greene "clothing the biblical worldview with visible lives" (1998, p. 275). Thirdly, and critically for the argument at the heart of this chapter is that, as imago dei, we are God's representatives here on earth (Sands, 2010). We are called, equipped and empowered to be his ambassadors; to faithfully express the kingdom of God on earth.

This critical connection to the person, that is the self, appears to be key to effective Christian Higher Education in that it challenges an educational approach which objectifies or dehumanises the person (Freire, 1996; Freire & Freire, 2000; Groome, 1980), and focuses on notions of standardisation and efficiency (Brueggemann, 1982; Maslin, 2020); where even the process of education is commodified (Biesta, 2019; Waalkes, 2015). On the one hand, "to have an understanding of what it means to be human is necessarily at the core of the educational project" (Spears & Loomis, 2009, p. 36). At the same time, we understand that "Learning is therefore a spiritual calling: properly done, it attaches us to God (Plantinga, 2002, p. xi). It is this attachment to God and the consequential sense of being loved, accepted and purposeful which will keep our graduates in responsive, relational and transformative endeavours— in and out of vocational contexts. Without such connection, "We are in danger of encouraging our students to live for their work, when they should be living for God's purposes" (Waalkes, 2015, p. 147). The development and articulation of a Personal Passionate Profession scaffolds the student to seek and be attached to God.

The word *personal* reminds us of the importance of increasing our self-awareness of God at work in the way he designed us, "calling me to be the person I was born to be to fulfill the original selfhood given me at birth by God" (Palmer, 2000, p. 10). Increasing our understanding of how God has graced (gifted) us can help us avoid being distracted or pulled away from our overarching mission (Bailey, 2013; Palmer, 2000). Palmer (2007) claims that this is an issue of the heart—in the ancient sense as "the place where intellect and emotion and spirit and will converge in the human self" (p. 11). It is here that the motivation to make a difference, for and with others, will be nourished, explored and understood. In fact, as noted by Groundwater-Smith, Ewing, and LeCornu (2015), a transformative education "nurtures a human flourishing, building on both the desirable features of the past that have provided us with a rich legacy, and an openness to the future in which young people can be active and imaginative agents" (pp. 3–4).

Broadly speaking, those in Christian Higher Education acknowledge that each person tends to be characterised by specific 'desires', graces or 'ways of being' and serving to bring Him glory. These 'ways of being' work together so that, with reliance on the grace of God, in their study, scholarship and vocation Christians can contribute to God's unfolding mission on earth (Plantinga, 2002; Sands, 2010; Sherman, 2011; Volf & Croasmun, 2019; Witherington, 2011; Wright, 2006). As stated by Volf and Croasmun (2019, p. 82), a "biblically rooted" vision for one's life purpose is other-centred, that those in one's sphere of influence may flourish.

Increasing our self-awarenss of such gifts, strengths or capabilities can help us understand the way God has made us. They can also give insight to the way we relate and respond to others. However, the trap might be that we confuse the source of these strengths or think we can fulfil our calling without reliance on God, and this is definitely not the case (Anderson, 2014; Hoekema, 1986; Keller, 2012; Waalkes, 2015). Moses taught the Israelites that no matter what blessings they had, or what achievements they could claim, at the end of the day they were to be careful to not forget that it is God who is the source—including strengths, abilities and vision (Deuteronomy 8:10–14). Such developing self-awareness of God's design and plan for us helps us make decisions about what to be involved in, and to what to say 'no'. One of my postgraduate students recently commented, when reflecting on the impact of developing and articulating his Personal Passionate Profession, "I am clearer about my purpose and that has helped me make decisions about how I spend my time". He was surprised that it "seems to have had an impact on directing my future steps—not heading in career pathways that make no sense but have apparent social value" (Personal Communication, Nov 2019). No longer was social standing a desired factor. The clarity of his call meant that he could invest his time (both at work and at home) with clarity, confidence and courage.

Understanding those things that are our treasure and gift to offer to God as a sacrifice helps us to discern and to make decisions in our everyday living. As I have written elsewhere:

> The importance of developing a Passionate Creed, or "critical rationale to guide their prac-
> tice" (Brookfield, 1990, p. xvii) for different course work components should not be underes-
> timated. Without such, there is no sense of direction and purpose, or "sense of where they are

going and why it is important to get there" (ibid). Without this interrelated sense of personal, teleological, professional, and pedagogical purpose, reflection remains paralysed by questions such as: What worked well? and What can I do better next time? Such questions are actually meaningless without a purpose and reason by which to determine an understanding of 'better'. To have a teleological mirror as one of those which generates questions to ask of the pre-service teachers provides the possibility of the type of connectedness which appears to be critical. (Norsworthy, 2009, p. 109)

Without this strong sense of the personal relationship with God's purposes and design, it seems that the relationship between work and life's meaning is replaced with an understanding of work as a means for gaining economic security (Knight, 2006; Morrow, 2012; Veith, 2002; Waalkes, 2015). According to Morrow (2012) this lack is a reason why "we face such a crisis concerning our individual identity and significance" (p. 95). Bellah (1998), a renowned American sociologist, suggests that one way to overcome the fact that the "sacredness of the individual is not balanced by any sense of the whole or concern for the common good" (p. 620) would be to reclaim the idea of vocation as calling within a meaning framework which is motivated by a contribution to the good of all. Palmer (1998, p. 13) writes: "*Integrity is that which is integral to one's person —being able to discern that which fits and that which does not and then choosing life-giving ways (as compared with ways which fragment) of relating to the forces that converge within, becoming more whole, more real, as one acknowledges the whole of 'who I am'* ".

5.4 The Passionate: Loving What God Loves

To place an emphasis on the personal should not be equated with reducing the importance of biblical knowledge and understanding. Quite the opposite. "Educated Christians therefore need to know their Bible in order to lead a life that fits in with the purposes of God" (Plantinga, 2002, p. xii). It is about loving what God loves and understanding how his design for us before the foundation of the earth (Eph 2:10) can embody this love as a response to the needs around us and a desire to "increase the net worth of Shalom on earth" (Plantinga, 1995, p. 37). "It is disappointing that the word shalom has become equated with a generic sense of peace rather than being understood as the Hebrew word for God's vision for complete well-being, flourishing, harmony or peace in relations with him, with self, with your neighbour and with the earth" (Vanderwoerd, 2008, p. 135) or as Wolterstorff (1983, p. 72) describes "universal flourishing, wholeness and delight—a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts fruitfully employed, all under the arch of God's love". A biblical focus is not on the individual unhooked from their relationships and faith. Rather, it is on increasing an organic communal sense of well-being and flourishing. The reason why Bellah's idea has traction and can be understood by the notion that "deep down, we want to know why were placed on this earth. Our deepest passion is to know that we are fulfilling the purpose for which we were created. We

need to have a sense of calling, to have a reason for our existence" (Morrow, 2012, p. 97). This reason is much broader than a particular vocation.

According to Old Testament scholar, Brueggemann (2010, p. 24) "it is the faithful well-being of the human community that is well pleasing to YHWH". A similar thought is expressed by Volf and Croasmun (2019) in their belief that "… the purpose of theology is to discern, articulate and commend visions of flourishing life in light of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ". This "flourishing of human beings and all God's creatures in the presence of God is God's foremost concern for creation and should therefore be the central purpose of theology" (p. 11). Christian education which embraces such thoughts would seek to ensure that students know they live 'in the presence of God', love God and desire his kingdom and act out of that love and desire. Thus, we need to include learning experiences that not only inform the intellect but convert the imagination (Norsworthy, Dowden, & Luetz, 2018). While scriptural passages such as Micah 6:8; Galatians 6; Philippians 2 and Jeremiah 9: 23–24 outline what some of these priorities and passions may be, there is a need for critical exegesis so that they are not reduced to the lowest common understanding, or presented in such a manner as to make them unattainable in one's everyday way of being, knowing and doing. Understood through Old Testament scholar, Walter Brueggemann's exegesis we note that they include being passionate about and committed to acts of loyal loving kindness, of doing justly so that "all members of the community have access to resources and goods for the sake of a viable life of dignity" (2010, p. 62) and of repairing the social order in order to "correct every humanity-diminishing activity" (ibid, p. 63).

Once again, understanding God's 'big' story is critical as it provides the framework for interpreting everyday experiences. Educational programmes which seek to embody such passion need to require and develop "… intellectual beliefs, deep passion of the heart and actions of both proclamation and presence" (Hollinger, 2005, p. 144). What is key in the development of passion for God's priorities is understanding "Who he is" (Psalm 78; Jeremiah 9) and how the way God has uniquely graced us, fits with His mission (Sherman, 2011; Wright, 2006). Capturing this fit is the final component of the *Personal Passionate Profession.*

5.5   The Profession: Affirming One's Call as Imago Dei

The final contributing factor in developing and articulating a *Personal Passionate Profession* is found in the etymology of the word profession. The word 'profession' is a derivative of '*profess*' from the Middle English, *professen* meaning 'to take vows' and before that from Latin, *professus*, 'to affirm openly'. Thus, the profession can be described as an articulation of those commitments in one's life such that they will lead to certain responses, choices, priorities and 'ways of being'. Christian Higher Education can make a life changing difference to students by scaffolding their exploration of the relationship between the way God has graced them and, in particular for what aspect of His kingdom work he has given them a passion. Sherman

(2011, p. 108) refers to this clarity as a 'vocational sweet spot': that point of nexus where God's mission, people's needs and my passion, gifts and call all cohere. It is this understanding of the big picture which provides the framework from which their vocational work may flow—no matter what that vocation may look like at a particular time and place. Through this process, they will "not only find an occupation to bring to the kingdom" but also "*shape* it to suit this purpose" (Plantinga, 2002, p. 120, italics in original). Such exploration can help establish a biblically informed identity within the Gospel story with the focus on 'doing good to all' (Galatians 6:10; Brueggemann, 2010; Keller, 2012; McEwen et al. 2016). It is the opportunity for "spiritual discernment along with an open heart and mind to be surprised by joy in the act of seeking a full and faithful life in service to God, neighbours and the world" (Pazmino, 2010, p. 5).

Capturing this Personal Passion in a succinct one or two sentence profession is hard work. Typically, the profession will include something of

- the person (the who),
- the mission or passion (the what) and
- the reason or desired outcome for the practice (the why).

To maximise the authenticity and usefulness of this profession, students are encouraged to capture it in a creative way which fits with who they are. For example, the music teacher engraved his profession into a trombone bell (his instrument) and consequently both he and those with whom he makes music—be they students or peers, see idea and action together. Poignantly, the bell had been given to him by his own music teacher who recently passed away. He wisely left a space for more words to be added as he grows in self-understanding and experience. Or, the arts teacher who captured her profession in a poster which she displays in her classroom and to which she invites her students to hold her accountable. A recent secondary student teacher who is passionate about dance choreographed an amazing story to explain her identity and life calling. About this learning experience she wrote, "I also wanted to let you know that it was the most enjoyable (and meaningful) assignment I have EVER done. Thank you for allowing me to express my Passionate Creed in a way in which I felt I could communicate it the best".

5.6 Conclusion

The development and articulation of a *Personal Passionate Profession* enables each student to understand that they are part of something much bigger than themselves at the same time as knowing that their identity is not found in their work but in belonging, being…. It's simultaneous focus on the big picture as context for acts of grace, "can orient students toward a lifetime of restorative work" where 'they can come to see their true purpose in God's story and how they have been uniquely created and gifted by Him as active participants in that story" (Swaner & Erdvig, 2018, p. 46). It enables education which is about:

> forming human beings according to the pattern of Christ such that each person and community is able to improvise the way of Christ in the flow of time in anticipation of becoming, along with the entire creation, the home of God. (Volf & Croasmun, 2019, p. 9)

It enables Christian Higher Education which is shaped by an understanding of humans as social beings, created to be in relationship; as learning beings, created to discover God's world; and as outward-focused beings, created to work for the common good (McEwen et al. 2016, p. 310).

The value of developing and articulating a *Personal Passionate Profession* is the development of a strong personal identity which is rooted in the nature of being imago dei, a uniquely designed co-worker who participates in God's redemptive plan throughout all of life—and that one's vocation can be maximised to be one expression of this call. "It makes a difference to our students' thinking when their developmental journey is contextualised within hopes and realities that are 'bigger than me' and beyond the immediate" (Bell, Robertson, & Norsworthy, 2017, p. 12).

It can increase the intentionality and strategic alignment of one's living with the biblical narrative and the idea of the Kingdom of God on earth. This does not mean that everyone seeks work in the church but rather that our work is understood as "a sacred calling "(Veith, 2002, p. 19), the invitation "of God to belong to him, to live God's way and to do God's work in the world" (Stevens, 1999, p. 19).

This chapter has outlined how LaBoskey's idea of a Passionate Creed has been activated within a Christian Higher Education setting and a biblical framework which engages learners as imago dei and contributors to the Kingdom of God on earth through intentional vocational practice. The discipline of articulating a *Personal Passionate Profession* captures an understanding of who God has made us to be and in particular for which aspect of His kingdom work he has given us a passion. The articulation of such a profession provides a plumb line for effective reflection and contributes to ongoing growth, resilience, self-efficacy and intentional decision-making within vocational endeavours. Most of all, the development of a *Personal Passionate Profession* values an approach to Christian Higher Education which "attaches us to God. In addition, the learned person has, so to speak, more to be Christian *with* … helps us lead a faithful human life in the midst of a confusing world" (Plantinga, 2002, p. xi, italics in original).

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Chapter 6
Towards a Conceptual Model for Biblical Transformative Online Learning

Elizabeth Beech

Abstract Online course delivery is here to stay. Much research has been done in recent years on best practices in technology and instructional design related to student learning outcomes, student engagement, social presence and learning communities. There has even been some interest in transformative learning online. However, little research or reflection has considered how to provide an online learning experience that is not only effective and transformative, but that also flows from a biblically faithful approach to education. Such a model must not merely 'integrate' passages of Scripture within an otherwise secular approach, but should reclaim truth as it 'unhides' God and redeems knowledge for God's purposes within a strong relational, communal learning context. Furthermore, while all education will be transformational on some level, the desire to affect transformation of the deepest, pre-theoretical worldview assumptions that strongly influence beliefs and practices through conceptual shifts in ontology, epistemology, and praxis, should be central to Christian higher education. This chapter will review current literature, practices and models of online learning in order to consider aspects of biblically faithful models for fostering transformative Christian online learning communities of co-allegiants discovering truth to bring about redemptive change.

Keywords Transformative learning · Biblical teaching · Online learning · Worldview · Transformation

6.1 Teaching for Transformation: What is Transformation?

More and more consideration has been given in recent years to the concept of transformative education. While, in reality, all education may be considered transformational on one level or another simply because knowledge will nearly always change a person to some degree (Edlin 2014; Rice 2006), the generally accepted definition is that 'transformative learning refers to the process by which we

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transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference... to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action' (Mezirow 2000, pp. 7–8). Taylor and Cranton (2012) have written specifically about the unique theoretical perspectives of *adult* learning. The focus of these has shifted over time from an early 'automaton approach' based on instructional design, learning strategies and assessment techniques, to a more relational approach that focuses on the social context and 'goes beyond cognitive processes' (p. 4). 'Adult learning is now described in relation to embodied learning, the emotions, spirituality, relational learning, arts-based learning, and storytelling' (p. 4). They observe that transformative learning theory has 'paralleled and been strongly influenced by the development of adult learning theory in general' (p. 5).

Transformative learning theory comes out of a wide range of disciplines, 'is based on constructivist assumptions, and the roots of the theory lie in humanism and critical social theory' (Taylor and Cranton 2012, p. 5). Constructivist and humanist perspectives tend to look at the individual as the unit of transformation while critical theorists focus on social structures and oppression. Regardless, these various philosophical underpinnings of the theory may actually all be 'examining different facets of the same thing' (p. 8). The theory 'is based on the notion that we interpret our experiences in our own way, and that *how we see the world* is a result of our perceptions of our experiences' (p. 5, *italics added*). This chapter proposes that, in the end, 'how we see the world' is actually the basis of *transformation* since it implies a change in something much deeper than just our knowledge database or our visible actions. Hence, the oft-quoted adage: 'We don't see things as they are; we see them as we are'.

Brookefield (1986) has suggested seven adult 'learning tasks' that have come out of a critical theory approach to transformative learning: 1. Challenging ideologies (as broadly accepted beliefs and values), 2. Contesting hegemony (not serving the interests of those in power), 3. Unmasking power (recognising it in interpersonal relationships), 4. Overcoming alienation (being our authentic selves), 5. Learning liberation (through imagination and the arts), 6. Reclaiming reason (understanding how our lives have been shaped by our lifeworld), and 7. Practicing democracy (paying attention to the ideal of democracy). These tasks tend to focus on learning that stems from an evaluation of what is wrong and needs to be changed in regard to social conditions outside oneself. Mezirow (2000) and others would see the transformative learning task as more of a relational process 'by which individuals suspend judgment and struggle to understand others' points of view from their perspective' (Taylor and Cranton 2012, p. 8) leading to an inner personal change.

While not advocating for any of these in particular, it is helpful to keep these varied approaches in mind as we look at commonly accepted online adult education practices. If 'learning occurs when an alternative perspective calls into question a previously held, perhaps uncritically assimilated perspective' (Taylor and Cranton 2012, p. 8), then the educational environment must find ways to provide critical reflection of the sort that allows for possibly unexpected and disorientating experiences (Elias 1997).

Transformative learning,

> …involves reaching deep to uncover the unconscious within ourselves and reshaping meaning as we become more open, inclusive, and complex in our thinking. As that complexity increases, we begin to reach what can only be described as meaning making at the edge of chaos. Meaning making at the edge of chaos is the type of meaning making we engage in when our underlying assumptions are profoundly challenged… It is not simply an adjustment to our meaning schemes but rather when our entire frame of reference is called into question. (Jacobs 2019, p. 19).

'Our entire frame of reference', as defined by Jacobs (2019, p. 19), the 'taken-for-granted frames of reference', as proposed by Mezirow (2000, p. 8) or 'how we see the world' (Taylor and Cranton 2012, p. 5) all refer to our pre-suppositional worldview assumptions. 'Worldview is an articulation of the basic beliefs embedded in a shared grand story which are rooted in a faith commitment and which give shape and direction to the whole of our individual and corporate lives' (Bartholomew 2015, p. 477). A biblical approach to transformational learning would then focus on bringing about change at this deepest level of pre-theoretical worldview assumptions that form a pre-conscious foundation of our beliefs and practices (Goheen & Bartholomew 2014; Naugle 2005; Sire 2015).

Transformation has certainly become a major theme for many Christian institutions of higher education. But what do we mean by this? What is expected to be transformed, by whom, when and how? If there is transformation taking place, do we *know* that this 'meaning-making' is occurring based on a *biblical* worldview foundation? How are we making sure that this happens? And have we assured that what we think may be happening in the face-to-face classroom is still happening in our ever-increasing online environments?

Burggraaf (2014) provides the following definition of biblical transformational learning:

> Transformation involves shaping the desires of students and teachers towards the Kingdom for the purpose of 'shalom', the integrated wholeness, well-being and harmony in every dimension of life that God intends for his creation. Transformation of heart, mind, spirit and life is the work of the Holy Spirit and the school shapes its educational experiences and settings in openness to the direction and guidance of the Spirit. (p. 19).

What would our Christian online courses look like if they were to take into account this desired worldview transformation, or fundamental change, brought about by crossing thresholds (Meyer et al. 2010) of deep conceptual shifts in ontology, epistemology and praxis?

6.2 Current Online Learning Best Practices

There has been much debate regarding the effectiveness of online learning in general as compared to the traditional face-to-face environment.

On the one hand, some argue that online education can be as effective as face-to-face formats when designed using the appropriate pedagogy (Driscoll et al. 2012), or that there is no significant difference in student learning and satisfaction (Russell 1999; York 2008). Others claim that instructors can mitigate differences in online student satisfaction by adopting a constructivist pedagogy, explicitly stating their grading procedures, and making an effort to portray their enthusiasm and the relevance of the course content for students (Summers et al. 2005). On the other hand, Urtel insists there is a significant difference in student learning and satisfaction (2008, 328), and Ritzer criticizes standardized online courses with generic content and multiple-choice exams for threatening to replace unique classes taught by specialists in a "McDonaldization" of learning (2004, 155). (McGuire 2017, p. 30).

Arasaratnam-Smith and Northcote (2017) have reviewed articles that both affirm as well as question the equivalent effectiveness of online teaching and learning. They look at 'a specific aspect of learning that purports to impact a sense of community and, subsequently, a sense of online learning community' (p. 189). They 'do not posit that online community-building tools and activities should seek to fully replicate the attributes of face-to-face collaboration; rather such tools provide a different experience from the collaborative learning experiences offered by face-to-face learning scenarios' (p. 189).

Some particular concerns with effective online learning have been with adequate functioning technology (i.e. streaming video), contract cheating, relative lower performance and a general 'frustration over not being able to replicate classroom dynamics, to model critical thinking, or to gauge student comprehension, reactions, and emotions thorough verbal inflection and body language in online environments' (McGuire 2017, p. 30). According to Moore and Kearsley (2012), 'distance is not simply a matter of geographical distance, but is a pedagogical phenomenon (in an online learning environment)' (p. 209). Their Transactional Distance (TD) theory has proposed that there is a 'psychological and communication space, not a psychical [sic] space, to be crossed, a space of potential misunderstanding between the inputs of instructor and those of the learner' (as cited in Horzum 2015, p. 505).

Much of the focus of generally accepted best practices for online teaching and learning has been developed out of the 'framework for effective online discussion called the **Community [of] Inquiry Model**' (Garrison & Anderson, 2003 as cited in Maddix 2012, p. 374). This framework consists of 'three interdependent elements: (a) *cognitive presence*, (b) *social presence,* and (c) *teaching presence"(p. 375)* . Cognitive presence is the 'extent to which participants in any particular configuration of a community of inquiry are able to construct meaning through sustained communication' (p. 375). Social presence is what is used to "project their personal characteristics into the community of inquiry by presenting themselves as 'real people'" (p. 375). Finally, teaching presence is 'the design, facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes' (p. 375).

Berry (2019) has defined community 'as feelings of membership and closeness within a social group, [that] can be a protective factor against online attrition' (p. 164). From her research with faculty in exploring strategies for enhancing a 'sense of community', community provided a sense of belonging with students 'knowing that they matter to each other' (p. 164), enhancing their commitment, increasing shared

goals, as well as providing academic and social support. The benefits were that this led to greater classroom participation and deeper learning, greater ability to manage stress, and greater overall emotional well-being. Instructors were seen as important in creating this sense of community.

Regarding the primary importance of the *Community of Inquiry Model*, however, Jézégou (2010) observes that,

> …in their publications, the authors do no [sic] really develop the theoretical foundations of their model (Garrison et al. 2000; Garrison and Anderson 2003; Garrison and Arbaugh 2007). Thus, in a summary paper — that serves today as a benchmark — entitled *e-learning* in the 21th Century [sic], Garrison and Anderson (2003) present this model of *community of inquiry* by evoking its affiliation to the North American Anglophone philosophy of pragmatism. However, a number of researchers, little acculturated to this philosophical approach, notably in French-speaking countries, can encounter difficulties in appropriating themselves with the model and in subjecting it to empirical testing. (p. 19).

Her main criticism revolves around the very concept of community. On a spectrum ranging from a simple 'group of friends' to a 'formal group', a 'community' has been described as 'a social organization that is relatively informal and flexible, directed towards a goal… The members of this community band together to build a collective experience that allows them to reach this goal while pursuing their own personal objectives' (Jézégou 2010, p. 19).

Still, the *Community of Inquiry Model* has become a standard in online teaching practice with hundreds of empirical papers written utilising it (Berry 2019). Berry (2019) has proposed some practices that enhance a sense of community in the online classroom such as:

– Allowing students to express themselves openly
– Presenting alternative viewpoints
– Blogs, wikis, discussion/message boards
– Providing 'teaching activities that encouraged deep reflection stimulated students' engagement in the learning community' (p. 165)
– Dividing into small groups
– Setting up collaborative activities
– Recognising that the synchronous environment has benefits for student engagement such as:

    o Higher social presence
    o Communicate more easily—better interpret their peers
    o Increased comprehension & sense of community
    o Rated either most helpful or least helpful—burdensome, struggle to maintain simultaneous conversations, instructors must be skilled.

Meyer (2014), in tackling the question of 'What works to increase student engagement online'? (para. 3), suggests using learning theories that encourage engagement, specifically focussing on 'active learning, collaborative learning, authentic and experiential learning' (para. 4) as opposed to passive learning strategies. Similarly, she emphasises focussing on pedagogies and active learning options such as

assignments that require students to 'do something' (para. 5). Other strategies focus on helping students to understand 'the goal and reason for the assignment' (para. 6), pushing students to think more deeply, teaching them to learn, and regularly evaluating hardware, software, student engagement and its effect on learning.

Maddix (2012, 2013) has adapted Arthur Chickering's widely accepted principles of good practices in higher education to the online environment, in general, and more specifically for online discussions since he claims that 'effective online courses are highly dependent on the success of online discussions' (2012, p. 382). A simplified version of his *Best Practices of Online Communities* is as follows:

1. Develop clear guidelines for online discussions

    a. Clear rubric
    b. Post guidelines
    c. Model good communication
    d. Explain a substantive post
    e. Keep record of student responses
    f. Send personal critiques to students individually
    g. Be aware of cultural patterns and preferences
    h. Deal with inappropriate responses outside of forums
    i. Summarise threads to prompt further exploration
    j. Praise students who respond effectively
    k. Be active in the online discussion (social presence is important)

2. Develop a supportive learning environment
3. Foster online presence and faculty involvement
4. Create learning activities that foster interaction and dialogue.

6.2.1 Transformative Learning Online

Most empirical studies specifically regarding *transformative learning* have been done in regard to the face-to-face setting (Smith 2012). Smith (2012) claims that 'transformative learning theory is useful to understand student experiences and to provide guidelines for designing and facilitating instruction that leads to this fundamental change' (p. 408). The 'fundamental change' she refers to is not clearly defined but seems to be taken for granted as positive and desirable.

Some of the diverse suggestions from her literature review have included ways to transfer the 'characteristics of transformative learning …to the online context, …ways to foster transformative learning through collaborative learning, including emotional issues associated with the processes, …ways to build savvy learners who will also become responsible global citizens', and even the possible benefits of 'avatar role-play' (Smith 2012, pp. 410–411).

> Overall, the literature suggest that it is possible to foster transformative learning with (1) deliberate attention to a strong pedagogy in the design of the online course, (2) instructors who deliberately allow for a learner-centered approach, (3) deliberate attention to the students'

ability to interact with one another through sustained discussion and through the use of complex problems or issues in a safe environment, and (4) deliberate attention to students' ability to engage in self-reflection (Smith 2012, p. 411).

6.3   Christian Online Learning Strategies

Most scholarly writing about Christian online learning is concerned specifically with teaching biblical studies online, not necessarily a biblical foundation for all studies within a Christian context (Ascough 2018; Babyak 2015; Flynn 2013; Lang et al. 2019; Reese 2018; Thorne 2013). There may be mention of a concern for spiritual development, but generally these studies have not expanded beyond the application of general best practices, as mentioned above. According to McGuire (2017), 'asynchronous online courses in religious studies can be effective if instructors pay attention to key aspects of online teaching and learning' (p. 29). In biblical studies courses, one of the main concerns is whether 'spiritual formation can actually occur in an online setting' (Babyak 2015, p. 65), yet, admittedly, 'quantifiable studies are needed that will provide data on the quality of online education and the ability of professors to encourage students in their spiritual development' (p. 74). As one seminary professor has asked, the question is 'how I can engage spiritual formation in an online environment' (Ascough 2018, p. 124). It is generally accepted that 'spiritual formation is one of the recognized benchmarks of higher education that is Christian' (Maddix and Estep 2010, p. 423).

Maddix (2012) proposes that 'Christian educators believe that learning and growth take place best through social interaction in a communal setting' (p. 372). In advocating a 'biblically based, relational pedagogy', Babyak (2015) quotes Ricciuti's explanation of the Greek paidagogos as a 'slave-attendant who escorted male children to school. It [paidagogos] is an idea, then, that relates to accompaniment: a teacher willing to walk alongside, to accompany to school, in a sense to companion along the way' (p. 65). He contends that 'dialogue-based discussions are often the means by which spiritual formation and development are created in this community life' (p. 65).

Based on Scripture references about knowledge and understanding (Gal 3:7; Eph 5:5; 6:22; Phil 1:12), seeing things dimly (1 Cor 13:12), needing to share with 'those who have different interpretations of Scripture' (p. 66), encouraging students (Rom 1:8) and praying for students (Romans 1:9–10), Babyak (2015) has developed a list for 'Establishing a Christian Virtual Environment' as follows:

1. A biblically based, relational pedagogy
2. Taking time to deliberately encourage students online (Rom 1:8)
3. Praying for students (Rom 1:9–10)
4. Integrating spiritual truths and principles online
5. 'Professors should teach everything from a Christian worldview to create a strong Christian virtual environment', stating that 'as the mind is renewed in the virtual Christian environment that is taught from a Biblical worldview, the end result

should be students who are being transformed by the renewing of their mind (Rom 12:1–3)' (p. 67).

These concepts as embodied in practical suggestions for course design are as follows:

1. Resisting the temptation to 'simply replicate the traditional course online' (Babyak 2015, p. 68).
2. Professors and students should 'create a power point presentation at the beginning of every course to introduce themselves' (p. 68).
3. Professors should 'train students to initiate communication with them' (p. 69).
4. They should 'choose a method to encourage online discussion' (p. 69).
5. There must be an emphasis on respect for all students.
6. There should be clear grading rubrics for every assignment.
7. Students should be assigned faculty advisors.
8. Professors should 'be very organised with their time' (p. 72).
9. Videos should be an important part 'to help students whose learning styles might not naturally be tapped through threaded discussion, readings, and e-mails' (p. 73)
10. There should be deliberate attempts to accommodate different learning styles.

Gresham (2006) advocates for "a theological pedagogy for online education based upon the concept of 'divine pedagogy'" in which "the phrase 'divine pedagogy' describes the manner in which God teaches the human race" (p. 24). Such pedagogy stems from the Roman Catholic tradition but, he says, 'has roots in a broader Christian and Jewish biblical tradition' (p. 25). 'The concept of the divine pedagogy originates from the church fathers especially as a way to describe the progressive preparation for the coming of Christ' (p. 25). Central to divine pedagogy is the idea of adaptation—'adapting the message to the needs and capabilities of each student' (p. 25).

Gresham (2006) suggests that online education is just such an adaptation. This new form of learning is actually an opportunity to remove the need for a physically present instructor to 'the incarnation of divine truth in the life of the instructor and the instructor's ability to assist students in discovering and incarnating that truth in their own lives' (p. 26). Success is based on personal communication with the instructor instead of a particular educational environment. Furthermore, he believes 'by moving learning from the classroom to the students' own world, the instructor might find it easier to use the student's own life experience as the context for theological reflection, facilitating the recognition of the divine presence enfleshed within the student's own life and circumstances' (p. 27).

Certainly, the possibility to explore new knowledge paradigms from within one's unique lifeworld is an advantage of online education. However, Thorne (2013) would go even further by claiming that 'constructivism provides student-centered knowledge, truth-oriented perception, individually transformed information, and an actively constructed worldview' (p. 99). He proposes that as students engage with real issues and other students, truth is pursued and worldview perspectives are challenged. Although these four principles of constructivism are also goals of biblical

education, they put knowledge within *us*, not with God as The Source. They are, actually, the foundations of secular humanist educational philosophy.

Hannaford (2012) has explored 'a model of online education to effect formative and transformative change in diverse students located in globalized contexts' (p. 2) recognising that 'while technology is clearly providing the means for connection, it is not necessarily providing meaningful connections' (p. 5). He suggests that an appropriate Christian model of online education would facilitate 'meaningful human connection', 'learning within a community', 'student formation' and "a challenge and change process to existing paradigms within a 'safe space'" [transformation] (p. 6). It should be 'contextually appropriate (can be offered across culturally diverse contexts with anthropological insight and cultural sensitivity)', and should 'missionally respond to the God-given nature and desire of each human person to function in, and be transformed through, developed relationships within a spiritually formative and transformative process' (p. 8).

Perhaps Eric Barreto (as cited in Ascough 2018) has best expressed our concern:

Teaching online is not a matter of technique or technology; it is a question of pedagogy and formation and identity… The gift and challenge of online teaching is that it forces us to learn anew what it means to teach. The best online teaching requires a rebuilding of our assumptions, skills, and aims. Online teaching is not so much a project of translation (converting a residential course to an online course) but of reexamination. Moreover, online teaching clarifies once again that teaching is less about communicating data or the promulgation of content but about the formation of learners. (p. 128).

6.4 Towards Biblical Transformative Online Learning

A recent concern of this author in regard to online teaching and learning has been about the more difficult task of inciting deeper pre-theoretical worldview changes in students that will permanently affect the way they view and relate to God, others, and his Creation, as his image bearers.

Have the ways in which we organise our online learning environment taken into account this aspect of desired worldview transformation or have we simply adopted secular theoretical approaches to learning as applied to online learning, baptised them with some relevant Scripture, and assumed these would, therefore, be an effective biblical approach? We must step back and consider that all theories, pedagogies and even the tools of technology (Schuurman 2013) are based on foundational philosophical underpinnings of values, beliefs, propositions and assumptions upon which their use 'makes sense'. Most importantly, the epistemological foundations of secular learning theories are usually based on empiricism (foundational knowledge is based on experience) or rationalism (truth and knowledge are based on logical processed applied to them). Often what we tend to think of as a 'Christian epistemology' may only be an adaptation of secular philosophy rather than a theology of education that flows from a God-ordained biblical perspective.

In looking at education in general, it has been observed that, without realising it, most Christian schooling systems are still largely based on the philosophical underpinnings that are brought to them from a secular humanist perspective, as taught in our secular universities (Beech and Beech 2019b). This, along with the powerful influence of cultural factors, such as the media and social media, often means they only vary from other institutions in that they carry the branding and outer trappings of some particular religious denomination.

We must then consider how to we might train ourselves, and our student teachers, to be able to remove ourselves sufficiently from the philosophies in which we swim, in order to really see the ways in which we have been formed and captivated by the World. This will most probably mean reframing the way in which we design, prepare and deliver our online courses in ways that will also incite deep worldview transformation in our students.

Again, this does not mean including more Bible verses, or endorsing online best practices, or adopting certain teaching methodologies principally because they are compatible with Christian ethics since they advocate being kind, responsive, encouraging or building a supportive community.

> The consideration of God as the center of our education theory and practice has many implications, one of these being the wholeness that an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God can bring. God does not see His created beings as two-dimensional—the way many education theorists may see people. We live in a Creation that is fallen where we often perceive the influences of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to be balanced in some way by the World, the Flesh and the Devil. Under these influences, we live and learn as complex beings comprised of more than just a body or just a brain. (Beech and Beech 2019b, p. 46).

We must realign all of our pedagogy, or andragogy, under a new God-derived philosophy of education. 1 Corinthians 2:9–16 describes the Holy Spirit as the essential link between the 'deep things' and the 'thoughts' of God in transforming our own 'thoughts' as 'we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words' (v. 13).

> Apart from spiritual rebirth and the changes brought about from data acquisition and understanding, a profound and desired transformation will be in the way our students view the world. We wish them to see the world through different glasses, to hear the world differently, and to feel it differently—having different assumptions about the world, seeing, at least to some small extent, with God's eyes, hearing with His ears and feeling about it as He does. The acquiring of knowledge becomes a process of unhiding God in His word and His Creation. This means that education is primarily a theological pursuit. This is true whether the theological foundation is the God of the Bible, 'Mother Nature', or the 'Laws of Nature'—still theological, just different gods. This, naturally, has implications for classroom practice and the stories on which we base our teaching. (Beech and Beech 2019b, p. 55).

For the past forty years, the National Institute for Christian Education has recognised that 'a majority of Christian educators in Australia are trained in undergraduate teacher training institutions that have an alternate worldview towards life, purpose, success, the nature of a child, the nature of the teacher, and the nature of schooling' and determined that it has 'an important role in providing ongoing postgraduate study in the distinctives of Christian education to all teachers in Christian schools

and other contexts' (National Institute for Christian Education 2017, Para. 1). With this task in mind, National Institute courses have aimed to provide an 'alternate world-view' perspective on life and education. As one of the founders has stated, through these courses teachers have been 'encouraged to clarify the application of [their own presuppositions by] developing a coherent educational philosophy, enabling them more effectively to nurture pupils as responsible Christian citizens, workers, and family and church members' (Blomberg 2015, p. 863). This is done innovatively through the core subjects on biblical theology and worldview and, subsequently, through the other subjects that are based on the core subject philosophy.

The primary purpose of this innovative approach to study is.

> …to provide a vehicle for the long-term transformation of the foundational beliefs teachers and school leaders may have regarding their role as Christian educators who teach and lead in a biblically faithful way… In order to teach or lead "Christianly", most teachers and leaders must undergo a transformation of worldview assumptions, or "habit of the mind" (Mezirow 2000), so that the thoughts, words and practice of their lives in education flow from a biblically grounded sense of "normal." (Beech and Beech 2019a, p. 2).

Since the beginning, 'the epistemological perspective undergirding the courses assume[d] that the concrete experience of teachers and students [was] the primary site of knowledge' development (Blomberg 1994, p. 1) as they participated in a space where 'the community of truth may be practiced' (Palmer, as cited in Blomberg 2018, p. 2019). The programme of study was not based on experts transmitting a quantity of knowledge to practitioners, rather it focussed on helping teachers to challenge their previously held, and possibly unacknowledged, worldview assumptions in 'contexts in which students [would] be confronted with problematic issues and challenged to articulate their perplexities' (Blomberg 1994, p. 1).

> I have long advocated a "problem-posing pedagogy"… grounded in the biblical teaching of creation and antithesis. The Creation mandate affirms the responsibility of God's image-bearers to tend and care for all that God created in law-ordered splendour, not merely the "natural world" but the social and relational developments since the beginning… We are called to unfold creation culturally, in ways glorifying the Lord. Human creativity involves imagining what *could* be, posing problems to discern and actualise what *should* be, serving God's purposes. (Blomberg 2018, p. 214).

This problem-posing and reflection-based methodology worked well in early years when the courses were offered around the country at a distance and such a reflective approach can be implemented creatively within the online environment.

Some other innovative 'pedagogies for higher education that break from the conventional mould' (Blomberg 2018, p. 220) include Problem-Based Learning (PBL), case studies, immersion programmes, collaborative action research, focussed learning around a discipleship model and intense ongoing reflection on one's personal application of *learning* from a biblical perspective as applied to their own real world context and in relation to their colleagues and instructors (Blomberg 2018). The essence of applying these pedagogies in a biblical transformative model is that it must emphasise *reclaiming* truth in order to '*unhide*' God, redeeming knowledge for God's purposes within a strong relational, communal learning context.

While the model and application of National Institute courses is certainly far from perfect, over the years and in recent research (Beech 2018, 2019), the transformational efficacy of these courses has been established. For instance, the results of one study showed, through the use of metaphors, that one student felt he had been "on a journey [with] things… working together to move, but [that] 'there's something maybe not quite right", however, upon completion of the course he feels he is "now knowing what was wrong and how to fix it" (Beech 2018, p. 35). Another commented that "the purpose of the study actually made you reflect on not just my practice in my classroom… but on my worldview" (p. 36) and yet another that the course gave him a "refocus of what I'm doing" so that he is now "trying to filter things through... the biblical perspective" (p. 35).

In transferring the National Institute courses to the online environment, the epistemological, philosophical and pedagogical approaches have remained the same, as has much of the structure and teaching material. The focus has continued to be on building learning communities of co-allegiants to God who are discovering truth to bring about redemptive change within their own educational contexts.

Again, while it is inevitable that online and Christian best practices will, and should, be applied to future course development, if we are to truly aim for biblical worldview transformation then we must carefully consider the theoretical foundations that underpin each practice and analyse their ultimate purpose (*telos*). Biblical transformative online learning will go beyond building a sense of community, increasing student engagement, 'integrating' spiritual truths or even encouraging 'spiritual formation'. We should not hesitate to use innovative reflective methodologies that can break long-held educational and philosophical paradigms. Hence, the ongoing challenge is to determine how we can assure that we provide the highest quality online best practices while maintaining a focus that flows out of an integral, biblically grounded perspective (Beech and Beech 2019a).

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Chapter 7
Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Christo-ecclesial Unity in Christian Higher Education

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Abstract This chapter investigates one means by which Christian Higher Education Providers (CHEPs) might follow after and attest to Christ: a shared commitment to Christocentric unity both within and between Christian Higher Education institutions. The chapter draws on the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer to argue that the basis for the hope and possibility of such unity is the reconciliation wrought by God through Christ's 'vicarious representative action' (*Stellvertretung*), which for Bonhoeffer is the beginning and hallmark of new social relations in the church-community (*Gemeinde*), where the Risen Christ is really present. Bonhoeffer's Christo-ecclesial ideas were themselves tested and refined in a Christian Higher Education setting (at Finkenwalde and elsewhere) in the tumultuous pre-War years of the mid-1930s. While forged *in extremis*, Bonhoeffer's ideas, it is argued, continue to challenge Christian Higher Education providers today to embrace an intentionally Christo-ecclesial unity as a counter-cultural marker of Christian Higher Education.

Keywords Dietrich Bonhoeffer · Christo-ecclesial unity · Christian higher education · Reconciliation

7.1 Introduction

A key challenge confronting Christian Higher Education in increasingly secular settings is defining, and then remaining true to, what it means to offer distinctively *Christian* Higher Education. This challenge is heightened by the shift of recent decades whereby Christian Higher Education institutions offer an array of courses beyond the traditional disciplines of biblical studies, theology and ministry training. What makes the education received by students in business, education, social sciences or liberal arts specifically *Christian*, particularly when some such disciplines must be delivered according to strict professional accreditation requirements? For that

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matter, what makes Christian education in Bible, theology and ministry distinctively *Christian*, beyond the content itself?

While many, from Holmes (1987) to Ream and Glanzer (2013), Smith (2009) to Dockery and Morgan (2018)—and indeed this publication and its predecessor (Luetz et al. 2018)—have sought to answer this question, perhaps at the most basic level, the simplest answer to the question is: a demonstrable, shared commitment to Christ. That is, education in a Christian Higher Education setting is not only to be formative of the heart and its desires, as Smith (2009; cf. Norsworthy et al. 2018) has argued, but in other fundamental ways should also attest to, serve, glorify, follow after and disciple others to follow after the Crucified, Risen and Present Jesus.

This chapter will contend that one of the distinctive signs of being Christ-centred is a lived commitment to Christocentric unity, both *within* and also *between* Christian Higher Education institutions. To expound this otherwise rudimentary point this chapter will draw on the work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was profoundly Christological, and sought to foster an authentically Christian formation of students, and thereby the renewal of the church in a challenging and increasingly non-religious environment.

Despite the historical, cultural and contextual distance of Bonhoeffer's setting from many of ours, today, the German scholar is a helpful guide on Christological unity in Christian Higher Education for three reasons. Firstly, Bonhoeffer is from start to finish deeply Christological in his theology and practice, concerned with the questions which he originally posed as 'Who is Jesus Christ'? and 'Where is Jesus Christ, today'? (Bonhoeffer 1978), and which he later pondered as 'who Christ really is, for us today' (Bonhoeffer 1995, 501). In the latter form, Bonhoeffer is contemplating what it means for Jesus Christ to be Lord of a society that has become not only disinterested in Christian faith, but 'radically religionless' (Bonhoeffer 1995, 502–503); such a question might be echoed by Christian Higher Educator Providers in the early twenty-first century, immersed as many of us are in settings of rapid secularisation and growing disaffiliation from the Christian church.[1]

Secondly, Bonhoeffer was animated, from as early as his 1927 doctoral dissertation *Sanctorum Communio*, by the unique character of the church-community, which he believed is 'God's new will and purpose for humanity' (Bonhoeffer 1998, 141) and which should therefore reflect a new pattern of reconciled relations.[2] Throughout the 1930s, Bonhoeffer also sought wider unity in the church through close participation in the emerging ecumenical movement; while it is true that today's CHEPs are neither churches nor denominations, they nevertheless might generally be regarded as part of the wider church, and many are affiliated with denominations in a manner analogous to the association of Bonhoeffer's preachers' seminary with the Confessing Church

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[1]In relation to my own setting, see for example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics 'Religion in Australia: 2016 Census Data Summary' (2017). As early as 1934, Bonhoeffer lamented that he was becoming 'more convinced every day that in the West Christianity is approaching its end—at least in its present form, and its present interpretation' (2007, 81). His seminary leadership sought to reinvigorate the church amid such decline.

[2]German edition published 1930; first English Translation, *The Communion of the Saints*, published 1963.

of his day. This brings us to Bonhoeffer's third point of relevance: Bonhoeffer was particularly interested in community as a formative practice and mark of Christian discipleship and experimented with such in a Christian higher education setting. His two most widely read works, *Discipleship* (2003) and *Life Together* (Bonhoeffer 2005),[3] were written during or concerning his time as head of the Emergency Teaching Seminary (the so-called 'preachers' seminary') of the Confessing Church at Zingst, and then Finkenwalde, in the profoundly difficult years prior to World War II. *Life Together*, written not long after the Gestapo had shut down the preachers' seminary, exudes both a deep commitment to selfless, love-centred community, in principle, and a rugged realism that acknowledges the struggle of being formed into disciples by community, in practice. In sum, although written *in extremis*, Bonhoeffer's attempts to match the principle of Christ-effected reconciliatory unity with praxis in a Christian Higher Education setting may provide resonances and opportunities for constructive application, today.

This essay will, therefore, firstly note the counter-cultural nature of unity in our contemporary world, then, secondly, examine the broader scriptural and theological/Christological basis for such unity. The chapter will then turn to Bonhoeffer for guidance on Christocentric unity in principle and practice. Finally, the chapter will conclude with some implications for contemporary Christian Higher Education Providers.

7.2 Unity as a Counter-Cultural Possibility in a Divided World

As in Bonhoeffer's day,[4] achieving or even striving for unity today appears to be increasingly counter-cultural, given the trenchant divisions of the wider world in which we live. Only the briefest survey of the global geo- and socio-political landscape is here possible to make the point; however, at the time of writing, globalism and consensus-building is on the wane: in recent history the United Kingdom has shown itself to be profoundly dis-united firstly on whether and then on how

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[3]Comprising lectures given at the preachers' seminary at Finkenwalde, *Discipleship* was first published in German as *Nachfolge* in 1937, and then in abbreviated form in English as *The Cost of Discipleship* in 1948. *Life Together* (German: *Gemeinsames Leben*, pub. 1939; ET pub. 1954) drew on more of Bonhoeffer's Finkenwalde lectures and the associated experiment in community and was written in four weeks in 1938. Bonhoeffer's writings—including previously published works, letters, sermons and more—are now available in the seventeen-volume critical edition series, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works* (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, MN, 1996–2014). Among its key revisions, this series restored the closer translations of *Discipleship*, and *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church*.

[4]Although his early works *Sanctorum Communio* and *Act and Being* precede Hitler's rise to power in 1933, Bonhoeffer worked and wrote largely during the years of Nazi ascendancy, which divided not only Europe, but also the German church (in the so-called 'Church Struggle' between the 'German Christians' who embraced Nazism, and the 'Confessing Church', which, initially at least, resisted nazification. Bonhoeffer became a key leader in the struggle and the Confessing Church).

to divide itself from Europe, while a second Scottish vote on independence may break up the United Kingdom itself. The United States of America—now almost an oxymoron—similarly appears deeply, and perhaps for the time being irrevocably, rent along partisan and racial lines, with competing political narratives and a post-truth landscape creating wholly divergent interpretations of fact and reality. From Latin America to Europe, South Asia to Australia, nationalism and tribalism are resurgent, as populists and political opportunists seek to create division along ethnic, racial, cultural, religious and political lines. We appear at risk, as some have suggested (Costello 2016, 62–63), of returning to the same old gods of *Blut und Boden*—blood and soil—espoused by the Nazi party in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's day, to the exclusion, fear and even hatred of the Other. Such antipathies are ever more readily stoked and expressed from behind the anonymity or at least relational distance offered by social media. It might be argued that a retreat into such divisive tribalism and individualism is a form of narcissism, allowing us to push away those not like us, and retreat into liking only those who mirror ourselves: those of like-mind, like-skin, like-politics and like-prejudice. Certainly, the zeitgeist of this moment appears to be self-interest, whether of the individual or narrowly defined group with which the individual choses to identify. How, then, as the world around us provides disturbing echoes of Bonhoeffer's own Europe in the 1930s, do we in Christian Higher Education defy the gravitational pull of such discord with the optimism of this seemingly naïve and utopian word, 'unity'? What is the hope and possibility of unity, today?

7.3 Scriptural and Theological Bases for Christocentric Unity

Theologically, it can be proposed that unity is profoundly difficult to foster because it runs contrary to something more universal and fundamental than the current zeitgeist: that is, it runs contrary to fallen human nature.[5] In Luther's concept of *homo incurvatus in se* (Luther 2013),[6] which Luther adtoped from Augustine, and in Wolfhart Pannenberg's language of human 'egocentricity', the Fall has rendered humanity turned inward toward the self, away from openness to the Other and from the world (Pannenberg 1970). However, the witness of Scripture is that there is one—one alone—who is the hope and possibility of others being 'one' (Jn 17:21). It is in this one name that Paul dared to hope for an allusive unity, calling on followers of Jesus to love and accept one another (Rom 14:1; 15:7); pray for one another (1 Tim 2:1); be kind to and bear with one another (Col 3:12–13); comfort one another (2 Cor 1:3–7); forgive one another (Col 3:13); honour one another (Rom 12:10) as one body, which is the body of the one name (1 Cor 12:12–27; Eph 4:12–13). In this one, for Paul, the old allegiances, the old tribal gods, the old self-protective bonds of

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[5]Eberhard Jüngel aptly summarises sin in this sense as 'the urge towards relationlessness and dissociation' (Jüngel 2001, 113).

[6]For a discussion of this idea in Augustine, Luther and Barth, see Jenson (2007).

ethnicity, citizenship, ideology and identity—all such markers of division—are cast aside. For Paul, 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all are one in Christ Jesus' (Gal 3:28, ESV). The one name—the Son who is eternally one with the Father and the Spirit—is, for Paul and for us, the hope and possibility of being 'one'.

This hope and possibility are not realised through determined human efforts to be more unified. Rather, Jesus Christ is *alone* the hope and possibility of being 'one'. In Him, the hope and possibility of unity is already, objectively, realised, for in Him all things—despite evidence to the contrary—are reconciled (2 Cor 5:18–19). As the unique, two-in-one, one—two natures in one person, as the Chalcedonian Fathers affirmed—Jesus Christ effected in his very person the most foundational reconciliation: that of a wayward world, a fallen and inward-curving humanity, a self-isolating species, with its One God.[7] In Christ's own unity of natures, diversity is embraced without annihilating or confusing the distinction between the human and the divine, and the fundamental divisions affecting the cosmos are reconciled: both the ontological distinction between Creator and creature (that is, the difference in nature, or being, of God from human beings), and the relational/sin-induced division between God and fallen human beings. As Karl Barth rightly emphasised, Christ reconciles these divisions not just on the basis of the cross and empty tomb, but *in himself* from the manger, and indeed the womb (1960, 47),[8] fulfilling the divine eternal decision that God's Word would become flesh (John 1:14) to establish an enduring relationship between God and humanity. Jesus is thus Reconciler not just in his death, but in his very life, for He is the One in whom deity and humanity meet in perfect union, though the reconciliation reaches its apex and effect through the divine giving of self to the Other in selfless love on the cross. By effecting this first order reconciliation, Christ the Great Reconciler includes in his own reconciliation of the world to God the reconciliation of all things and all people: of Jew and Greek; of dark-skinned and fair; captains of industry with minimum wage-workers; Democrat and Republican; Scottish nationalist and English nationalist; teenagers and parents; janitors and chief executives. While this reconciliation has been effected objectively, Jesus Christ continues through his presence by the Spirit to bring this reconciliation towards fuller realisation, with the church as the harbinger of the full and final reconciliation of all things in the eschaton. In doing so, Christ is the hope and possibility of his followers being one, because Christ reconciles us out of our fallenness, fear, and egocentricity, to Himself, and thus turns us outward, exocentrically (Pannenberg 1970) to love the Other: God, and our neighbour.

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[7]Karl Barth defines reconciliation as 'the restitution, the resumption of a fellowship which once existed but was then threatened by dissolution [because of human sin]. It is the maintaining, restoring and upholding of that fellowship in face of [sin]', which is accomplished by God in Christ (1956, 22).

[8]Barth rightly emphasises that God was *in Christ* reconciling the world to God (2 Cor 5:19); for Barth, Christ's person and work cannot be separated, nor, therefore, can his incarnation and crucifixion: in sum 'Jesus Christ is the atonement' as the one who fulfils the covenant between God and humanity (1956, 57).

Being one can thus only follow our following the One into the oneness he has already determined as our destiny. Against this more general biblical/theological exploration of the reconciliation won in Christ, it is now instructive to turn to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's ideas on how this reconciliation is to be realised in the church-community (and by extension, in CHEPs) as the forerunner of the new humanity reconciled to God in Christ.

7.4   Principles of Christo-ecclesial Unity in the Church: *Sanctorum Communio*

Bonhoeffer's doctoral dissertation, published as *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church*, offers a number of instructive points concerning unity in and as the Body of Christ.[9] We will turn to this work first, before seeing how Bonhoeffer developed and applied these ideas in a Christian Education setting in the following decade, in *Life Together*.

For Bonhoeffer, unity in Christ is founded on the reality that the 'Body of Christ' is not a mere arbitrary metaphor for the church-community; rather it is a place where Christ is actively present:

> The relation of Christ to the Church is twofold. Christ is the foundation, the cornerstone, the pioneer, the master builder. But Christ is also at all times a real presence for the church, for it is Christ's body, and the people are members of this body… or members of Christ himself (Bonhoeffer 1998, 139).[10]

While Christ has ascended to the Father in heaven, from where we await his return, for Bonhoeffer Christ is also *really* present in the Body of Christ, that is, in the church-community on earth (1998, 140).[11] Bonhoeffer thus revises a Hegelian phrase to speak of the church as 'Christ existing as church-community' (*Christus als Gemeinde existierend*) (1998, 141).[12] This —what we might call 'Christo-ecclesial community'—is both historical (in that it exists in time) and divinely established through the Holy Spirit (1998, 143),[13] as the reconciled new humanity. For Bonhoeffer, 'The church is God's new will and purpose for humanity', over against the

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[9] Bonhoeffer's *Sanctorum Communio* is challenging to read and frequently neglected in favour of his other more popular works. For a recent systematic exposition of the work, see Mawson (2018).

[10] Bonhoeffer's language of 'real presence' demonstrates his location in the Lutheran tradition, but also his constructive modification of that tradition. For more on Bonhoeffer's Lutheran thought, see DeJonge (2017).

[11] The German term *Gemeinde* (community) is used by Bonhoeffer with specific reference to the church community; even though 'church-community' is somewhat cumbersome in English, it is retained here to follow Bonhoeffer's particular usage.

[12] Hegel had spoken of 'God existing as community'; for more on Bonhoeffer's engagement with Hegel, see Robinson (2015).

[13] For Bonhoeffer, 'The Holy Spirit is the will of God that gathers individuals together to be the church-community, maintains it, and is at work only within it' (1998, 143).

peccatorum communio (or the company of sinners) as represented in Adam (1998, 141, 123ff). The new humanity, reconciled to God in Christ and bearing his presence, operates on the basis of new ontic-ethical 'basic-relations', even though sin—the old ontic-ethical basic-relation—is not yet completely abolished (1998, 125). While sin 'places the individual in a state of utmost solitude, a state of radical separation from God and other human beings' (1998, 145), through the 'vicarious representative action' (*Stellvertretung*) of Christ humanity has been reconciled into community with God (1998, 146). For Bonhoeffer, reconciliatory vicarious representative action is not limited to the historical acts of Christ but it is now also incumbent on the church-community, through whom Christ is present to the world; indeed, vicarious representative action is 'the life principle of the new humanity' (1998, 146–147). Because the community between God and humanity has been restored, the '*community of human beings with each other has also become a reality in love again*' (1998, 157).[14] While in other social affiliations and institutions the 'ethical-basic-relations continue to exist in their brokenness' (1998, 166), the love of God brought by the Holy Spirit into the heart of an individual in the church grants her or him the God-given capacity to love others: 'For that person the other member of the church-community is essentially no longer claim but gift, revelation of God's love and heart. Thus the You is to the I no longer law but gospel, and hence an object of love' (1998, 166). In the church, thereby, new social relations are established.

The love for neighbour which results in this community is not a human possibility, but is only possible through Christ, Bonhoeffer affirms. Such love, which is not abstract but is directed toward real, concrete neighbours, is purposeful, placing us in service of the other person, although the specific purpose of love in each instance 'is exclusively determined by God's will for the other person, namely, to subject the other to God's rule' (1998, 168).[15] The demands of such love are radical and without limit, determined by the divine will for the other:

> *Love for our neighbour is our will to embrace God's will for the other person* ; God's will for the other person is defined for us in the unrestricted command to surrender our self-centred will to our neighbour, which neither means to love the other instead of God, nor to love God in the other, but to put the other in our own place and to love the neighbour instead of ourselves (1998, 171).

As we surrender unreservedly to God—who surrenders Godself unreservedly to us—and to God's will for the other, genuine community is created, in which a separateness of persons still exists (that is, there is no 'mystical fusion' of persons) (1998, 173), and yet unity can be experienced. This community of love is not dependent on, nor is it a means to fulfilling, the law, but rather is based on Christ who has 'already fulfilled the law for me and loved my neighbour', and who thus 'creates a bond between myself and my neighbour' (1998, 175).

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[14]Furthermore, for Bonhoeffer, because 'Christ is present only in his church-community… *community with God only exists in the church*' (1998, 159). Italics here, and in Bonhoeffer's quotes throughout, are from the original texts.

[15]Bonhoeffer continues that such love 'requires an infinite variety of means that cannot be formulated as a general principle. Perceiving these means is up to, or rather the duty of, each person. We must dedicate ourselves entirely and with all our strength to become a means to this end' (1998, 168).

The concrete acts in which the Christian community of love actualises itself takes two forms, for Bonhoeffer: (1) the community being structurally '*with-each-other*' [*Miteinander*] and (2) members of the community being actively '*for-each-other*' [*Füreinander*] (1998, 191).[16] Living with-each-other means that members of the church-community, following Christ, bear the burdens and sufferings of one another, such that 'the weaknesses, needs, and sins of my neighbour afflict me as if they were my own, in the same way as Christ was afflicted by our sins' (1998, 180). Accordingly, in every circumstance and suffering of life the individual is accompanied by the church-community. The second form of actualised love in the community, *being-for-each-other*, has two aspects: Christ is the standard of conduct of the community, and the power by which the members of his body become 'a Christ' to others (1998, 182–183). The unity of the community, which lives one life with each other and for each other, is realised in three forms of action: firstly, self-renouncing work for the neighbour, in which an individual is called to 'advocate vicariously for the other in everyday matters, to give up possessions, honor, even our whole lives' (1998, 184) for each other. Secondly, unity is achieved through intercession for others, in which the prayers of the individual represent the whole church-community (1998, 189), and in which we can become a Christ to our neighbour by recognising our own indictment in the sins of the world, thereby taking those sins onto the church community itself, as Christ existing in church-community (1998, 187). Finally, such intercession extends to the forgiveness of sins, which the church-community itself can offer because it is the body of Christ himself, by bearing sin and in turn laying it on Christ (1998, 189). To be in the church-community is to be *in* Christ; to have one's sins borne by Christ and to be part of bearing the sins of others is possible only in '*Christ existing as church-community*' (1998, 190–191).

While this Christologically conceived ecclesiology points implicitly toward the Christo-ecclesial unity with which this chapter is concerned, Bonhoeffer now explicitly turns to the topic of unity. The unity of the church, Bonhoeffer writes, is '*not based on human unanimity of spirit*, but on *divine unity of Spirit*' (1998, 198). In Christ, and indeed as the body of Christ, the church has its existence as what Bonhoeffer terms 'a collective person' (1998, 199). Unity is thus objectively true of the church as, and in, Christ, who is one unified person: 'In Christ all are one, differences no longer exist; there is not even a plurality any more. They are all *one*, "one loaf", to use Luther's phrase' (1998, 199). Such objective unity in Lord and faith, however, has to be subjectively actualised through love: 'Unity has to be won, insofar as it does not [subjectively] exist. But the weapon of the Christian church-community is love. It will thus always be the work and demand of *Christian* love to press toward unity' (1998, 202). While complete unity may ultimately be eschatological, 'the will seeking the greatest possible realization of unanimity will be alive in the church, and will take comfort from the prayer of Jesus "that they may be one, just as you Father are in me and I am in you" (John 17:21)' (1998, 203).

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[16]Elsewhere, Bonhoeffer adds a third 'one-another': *in-one-another* (*Ineinander*), of which Christ's presence in the church-community is the most intimate form (2012, 299).

There is much to tease out for Christian Higher Education today from this section of Bonhoeffer's work on ecclesiological unity, alone. However, before drawing out some implications it is also helpful to briefly examine insights from the practical application of those ideas during Bonhoeffer's seminary leading days, as described in one of his most widely read works, *Life Together.*

7.5 Principles and Practice of Christo-ecclesial Unity: *Life Together*

Life Together was written after the forced closure of the preachers' seminary at Finkenwalde, where Bonhoeffer had for two years sought to implement many of the ideas in *Sanctorum Communio*, along with his more recent interest in 'a new kind of monasticism … [and] a life of uncompromising discipleship, following Christ according to the Sermon on the Mount' (Bonhoeffer 2007, 285, cf. 2003).[17] *Life Together* describes the principles and practice of daily discipleship at the seminary intended to bring breathe new life into a church widely compromised by capitulation to Nazism. Alongside an outline of the community's remarkably (and controversially) rigorous programme of personal and communal piety, a common theme of the book is radical Christian love and unity.

Bonhoeffer opens *Life Together* with the Psalmist's exultation: 'Behold, how good and pleasant is it for brethren to dwell together in unity'! (Ps 133:1). For those who today work in Christian organisations, Bonhoeffer helpfully emphasises that Christian fellowship and communion should never be taken for granted: 'the community of Christians is a gift of grace from the kingdom of God, a gift that can be taken from us any day… the time still separating us from the most profound loneliness may be brief indeed' (1995, 325).[18] The experiences of such fellowship vary in form from rare visits from another Christian for those ill, imprisoned or in a diasporic or missional setting, to regular Sunday gatherings for worship. Those preparing in seminary, Bonhoeffer argues, 'receive the gift of a common life with their brothers [sic] for a certain length of time' (1995, 325). It was this specific opportunity for Christian life together which Bonhoeffer particularly expounds in

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[17]Wells (2015, 221) writes, 'In *Life Together*, Bonhoeffer's whole attention is upon the challenge, gift, imperative, and grace of 'being with' one another. In that sense … we can see *Life Together* as the book that sums up Bonhoeffer's theology as well as his own life'. Indeed, according to Bonhoeffer's long-time companion, Eberhard Bethge, Bonhoeffer had yearned to live in genuine Christian community well before his time leading the seminary (cited in Kelly 2008, 95). For more on Bonhoeffer's pedagogical experiment at the seminary, see House (2015a). For a more recent pedagogical experiment based on Bonhoeffer's *Life Together* see Smith (2017).

[18]The closure of the Finkenwalde seminary had no doubt reinforced this to Bonhoeffer, who was to later experience such a loss even more keenly during his two-year imprisonment at Tegel military prison and at Buchenwald, and, finally, at Flossenbürg concentration camp, where he was executed on 9 April 1945.

the book of that title, though he regards both the principles and practices he recounts as having wider significance.

For Bonhoeffer, the possibility of Christian community has only one foundation: 'Christian community means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ' (1995, 325). Outside of Christ, there is division, conflict and discord. In a passage of particular pertinence, Bonhoeffer writes.

> A Christian comes to others only through Jesus Christ. Among human beings there is strife. 'He is our peace' (Eph. 2:14), says Paul of Jesus Christ. In him, broken and divided humanity has become one. Without Christ there is discord between God and humanity and between one human being and another. Christ has become the mediator who has made peace with God and peace among human beings. Without Christ we would not know God… Moreover, without Christ we would not know other Christians around us; nor could we approach them… Christ opened up the way to God and to one another. Now Christians can live with each other in peace; they can love and serve one another; they can become one. But they can continue to do so only through Jesus Christ. Only in Jesus Christ are we one; only through him are we bound together. He remains the one and only mediator through eternity (1995, 326).[19]

Bonhoeffer seems cognisant of the danger that such statements can sound like abstract theology or, at best, eschatological idealism. However, his experience applying the theological principles to seminary life allows him to ground his work in a stark realism. Such community, founded on Christ, is both difficult and costly, in Bonhoeffer's view—perhaps like the costly grace which is at the heart of Bonhoeffer's understanding of discipleship itself (Bonhoeffer 2003, 43ff). Innumerable times, Bonhoeffer writes, 'a whole Christian community has been shattered because it has lived on the basis of a wishful image. Certainly, the serious Christians who are put in a community for the first time will often bring with them a very definite image of what Christian communal life should be and will be anxious to realize it. But God's grace quickly frustrates all such dreams' (1995, 326). In fact, Bonhoeffer argues, disillusionment with the idealised dreams of Christian community in the face of lived reality has to be experienced and then traversed to make way for genuine, durable community and unity to emerge (1995, 327): 'Christian community is not an ideal we have to realize, but a reality created by God in Christ in which we may participate' (1995, 328). This participation in that which is already realised in Christ comes via gratitude and self-renunciation amid the demands generated by life together. In the Christian community, on the basis of the uniting work of God in Christ, we enter into such life 'not as those who make demands, but as those who thankfully receive' (Bonhoeffer 1995, 327).[20] Echoing his work in *Sanctorum Communio*, Bonhoeffer reiterates that the heart of Christian community is love of the neighbour expressed in self-surrendering service. This love for others comes only from Christ; we do not know in advance what such love should look like in concrete circumstances and actions; rather '[o]nly Christ in his Word tells me what love is. Contrary to all my opinions and convictions, Jesus Christ will tell me what love for

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[19]Such a community, established by Christ in the temporal realm, foreshadows eternal community with the same Christians (1995, 326).

[20]He continues, 'Even when sin and misunderstanding burden the common life, is not the one who sins still a person with whom I too stand under the word of Christ?' (1995, 327).

my brothers and sisters really looks like' (1995, 328). Because such love originates in Christ, not in the other who is to be loved, it can equally be true toward an enemy or a friend, both of whom are one's brother or sister (1995, 329). All such love is to have the effect of commending Christ to those who receive it; it is not self-seeking or self-serving, and hence does not exclude 'the weak and insignificant, the seemingly useless people,' for this would risk excluding Christ himself (1995, 329).

In the latter sections of *Life Together*, Bonhoeffer details the particular regimen and spiritual disciplines which he had structured into the community life at the Finkenwalde seminary. These, based in part upon monastic life which Bonhoeffer had observed while in England, represent the more controversial aspects of this work, yet may be worth revisiting for those committed to the formation of the heart through Christian education. In sum, Bonhoeffer commends reading lengthy passages of Scripture together; the collective singing of hymns; common meals, and the regular sharing the Lord's Supper; as well as times of silence for meditation on Scripture, prayer and intercession (1995, 334). To these Bonhoeffer adds, again, 'service', in the forms of listening to others, remembering that God is the great listener, and it is his work in which Christians participate;[21] 'active helpfulness' in little, seemingly minor matters, yet which interrupt our time and sense of self-importance and thus may be God-ordained disruptions (1995, 338–9);[22] bearing with others —that is, bearing the burden *of* the others themselves (1995, 339), allowing them the freedom to be different from us, and to sin against us, which requires of us the service of forgiveness when they do. Indeed, as Bonhoeffer writes, '[t]hose who bear with others know that they themselves are being borne'—and forgiven (1995, 340). Service also means proclaiming the Word of Christ to each other, to comfort and in humble admonition, and, finally, the bearing of authority as nothing more than faithful service to the Word of God.

7.6   Implications for Christian Higher Education

What, from this brief survey of Bonhoeffer's Christo-ecclesial theology of unity may be of benefit for Christian Higher Education providers today, while recognising that CHEPs are not the church itself (but can form a part of it, as did Bonhoeffer's seminary) and that our context is not precisely the same as Bonhoeffer's?

Drawing on Bonhoeffer it can be proposed that Christ himself dwells by his Spirit in, and exists as, the church-community of which Christian Higher Education is a part; Christ is therefore not absent, nor a distant observer of what we do. Bearing his

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[21]While intended for those called to preach, Bonhoeffer's words may also have pedagogical pertinence to others: 'So often Christians… think that their only service is always to have to "offer" something when they are together with others. They forget that listening can be a greater service than speaking' (1995, 338).

[22]In a few remarkable sentences, Bonhoeffer calls for humility and notes that God himself may lie behind the disruptions and interruptions of daily life, thwarting our plans and raising signs of the cross in our life to remind Christians 'that God's way, and not our own, is what counts' (1995, 339).

presence, as part of the body of Christ, those of us in CHEPs are thus to operate on the basis of new social relations established by Christ in the reconciliation of all things to God. That is, CHEPs and their staff act towards others on the basis of self-giving love, as representatives of the new humanity in Christ, eschewing the old basic-relations of fallen, ego-centric humanity. Among a myriad of implications, this might suggest that CHEPs could more rigorously critique the unthinking adoption of practices based on the social relations of unreconciled, egocentric humanity. As House (2015b) writes, 'some sustained interaction with [Bonhoeffer's seminary] writings may help us in an age when theology is regularly replaced by marketing strategies and financial plans, and often by flawed ones at that.' While it may be true, as Augustine taught, that 'truth belongs to [the] Lord, wherever it is found' (2008, 47; cf. Holmes 1977), CHEPs may do well to self-consciously consider the degree to which the practices they adopt conform to the self-surrendering, vicarious representative action of the Crucified, Risen Christ and our calling to emulate that action as a participation in Jesus' continuing presence in the world. Indeed, vicarious representative action may provide a conceptual frame which encourages intentional community in and between CHEPs as we take sacrificial action for others—including other CHEPs—standing in their place, suffering with and for them, loving and embracing God's will for them, and their own communities. The demands of such love may at times be radical and without limit, perhaps calling on us 'to give up possessions, honor, even our whole lives' (2009, 1:184). Should the demand for Christian Higher Education decline in Western countries, and secular opposition to Christian Higher Education continue to increase, such proposals may not remain abstract. Regardless, Bonhoeffer challenges us to be as Christ in the world, which may involve being prepared to lay down our own (institutional and personal) goals, success, careers and even institutional survival so as to ensure the survival of other CHEPs. Furthermore, just as Bonhoeffer left the relative safety of a London parish to lead what became an illegal seminary in Germany for the sake of his faithful brothers and sisters,[23] we, too, may find ourselves challenged in the decades to come to surrender incomes, titles, prestigious positions, or personal comfort so to serve the will of God for others in and beyond the Body of Christ. Are we prepared, even, for our particular institution to cease to exist so as to ensure the ongoing life of other Colleges and institutions?

Assuming that at least for now God wills our continued existence as particular CHEPs, such existence *Miteinander* and *Füreinander* (with-each-other and for-each-other) compels us nevertheless to bear the burdens, sufferings, sins and afflictions of others in our own institution and in other institutions, renouncing our own needs, and interceding for the needs of others. This poses even the rudimentary question: rather than seeing other institutions as competitors, how often, and to what lengths do we pray for the good of other Colleges? How might we share in their burden-bearing (for example, with financial challenges or regulatory compliance matters?) What resources might we be able to forego for their benefit, and that of the Christian Higher Education sector in general?

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[23]For more on the personal cost to Bonhoeffer, and others associated with the Confessing Church and its seminaries, see the biographical account by Marsh (2014).

We might also be inspired by Bonhoeffer to recognise and foster Christian fellowship as the gift that it is, both in our institutions, and between them. Developing formative community is, as Bonhoeffer's students discovered, profoundly demanding, perhaps even more so today in busy, fragmented and increasingly online lives; fostering the communal formation of students in the online space is perhaps one of the great pedagogical challenges of our age, and seems a world away from the model Bonhoeffer sought to implement at Finkenwalde and elsewhere.[24] Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer's grounding of unity in the actual and real experiences of God-given community, not merely in abstract idealism, provides encouragement to work toward unity in the concrete, sometimes mundane but taxing setting of contemporary Higher Education. Such real unity emerges, Bonhoeffer would seem to counsel us, from the ever challenging, in fact all-demanding, self-renunciation and self-surrendering service of others. To know what this love is to look like in our contexts, we must listen to Christ for the other, and listen to them ourselves, in the circumstances in which we encounter them. Love, the source of which is Christ, commends us to love even those that seem to oppose us—perhaps those in the secular, political and governance bodies who might otherwise appear to us at times as adversaries. Our commitment to self-surrendering service also means we assume a posture of active helpfulness toward others: from small acts of disruptive service such as volunteering to sit on each other's course review and external moderation bodies, to the more demanding aspects of bearing with others, which may mean giving other faculty, later generations, and those of different denominations, traditions, and viewpoints the freedom to be different from us while still actively seeking opportunities to give of ourselves in service to them. Might CHEPs in more affluent settings support counterparts in developing nations through non-paternalistic sharing of resources? Being a Christ to others, including by offering forgiveness, will likely itself be a testimony to Christ in a shouty, divided and oftentimes uncharitable world.

Furthermore, the work of Bonhoeffer commends us to ask how are we acting together for the good of all, meeting together to break bread, and to receive each other 'as one meets the Lord, in reverence, humility and joy' (Bonhoeffer 1995, 325). To what extent, in other words, are we promoting and doing *life together*, in a meaningful manner, even in ways that must be contextualised from Bonhoeffer's own vision of such? And, more directly, how often do we feel genuinely thankful for the sector in which we work? In Bonhoeffer's words, 'The more thankfully we daily receive what is given to us, the more assuredly and consistently will community increase and grow from day to day as God pleases' (1995, 328).

Finally, Bonhoeffer's work exhorts leaders of CHEPs—whether presidents and executives, senior management, Deans, middle managers or even lecturers in relation to students—to live out a humility which defies the cultural norms of hubris, self-promotion and striving to be 'influencers' (in social media, or otherwise). As

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[24]House (2015a) is particularly critical of this aspect of contemporary Christian education, lamenting its inevitability but arguing for seminaries to continue to foster face-to-face, communal formation.

Bonhoeffer exhorted, we do well to recognise that the only authority given to Christian leaders is service of the Word of God, and the authority to love as Christ has loved the world and given himself up for it.

7.7   Conclusion

This chapter has argued that a key distinctive of Christian Education should be, in simple terms, a following after and attesting to Christ, and, more specifically, a life lived in reconciliation to God and others as part of the new humanity established by Christ. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's work helps us to be cognisant that Christ is himself present in the church-community—a community encompassing Christian Higher Education Providers—which now exists under the conditions of new social relations. Such radical new relations of love, self-sacrifice and vicarious representative action for the other call the church-community—and those of us in Christian Higher Education—to an existence which contrasts starkly to the division-wracked socio-political environment in which we live. Christo-ecclesial unity, for Bonhoeffer, far from being an unrealisable ideal, is an eschatological hope which is possible to concretely actualize here and now through acts of self-renouncing service and costly, radical, love. Subjectively participating in the objective reality of being one in Christ is therefore a fundamental part of the discipleship to which Christian faculty and staff are called, and which Christian institutions should intentionally seek to emulate, and form in students, whatever their discipline and vocation. Undoubtedly, such unity is difficult; in fact, it is impossible to achieve by our efforts alone. However, as Bonhoeffer himself saw, on the basis of what Christ has already achieved, it will 'always be the work and demand of *Christian* love to press toward unity' (1998, 202). While Bonhoeffer's highly pressurised environment of the 1930s is different from our own in many respects, his robust commitment to Christo-ecclesial unity, and his example of applying such theological principles in a challenging and demanding setting, should commend to us the possibility of finding analogies in our own place, time and Christian Higher Education context.

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Chapter 8
In Search of a Redeemed and Redeeming Epistemology for Cross-Cultural Educational Research: A Biblical Narrative Perspective on Straussian Grounded Theory

Joseph R. Leopard

Abstract In today's atmosphere of shifting philosophical plurality, it is the imperative of Christian educators and educational researchers to shape institutions of education to holistically form students' affective nature, what Smith (2016) calls loves and desires. Therefore, researchers must pursue educational research that acknowledges students' *imago dei*. To this end, this chapter evaluates the history of Straussian Grounded Theory Method (GTM) (an interpretivist revision of classical GTM) with emphasis on its epistemological underpinnings and resulting methods. These elements are examined from a Christian worldview perspective via a biblical narrative framework. The relational nature of biblical ontology with its resulting humility-based epistemology provides a firm foundation on which Straussian GTM's methodology might better stand and be further enhanced. The resulting discussion emerges a uniquely relational yet pragmatic, ethical framework for the formulation of redemptive and restorative research aims. Such a framework will help educational researchers negotiate diverse cross-cultural situations, avoid the dead-end frivolity of secular, naturalistic assumptions, and integrate the distinctively Christian elements of a vibrant, living faith into Straussian GTM and other qualitative research methodologies. Such a vision of research makes space for educational researchers to maintain a posture of "faith seeking understanding" (Kenneson, 1995) while pursuing a Christ-centred vision of human flourishing encapsulated in the concepts of the Great Mandate, the Great Commandment, the Great Commission and the Great Community.

Keywords Educational research · Qualitative research methodology · Epistemology · Christian worldview · Image of god · Straussian grounded theory

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8.1 Introduction

In today's increasingly postmodern world of philosophical plurality, Christians, especially Christian educators, must wrestle with their role in a postchristendom world (Jenkins, 1998; Knight, 2006; Middleton & Walsh, 1995; Van Brummelen, 1997).

Of further concern is an apparent formation gap in many Christian educators. This gap can be seen in various indicators, including a common lack of distinctively Christian pedagogy (Stoner, 2012) and a lack of an integrated understanding of foundational Christian lifestyle concepts such as the *imago dei*[1] (Norsworthy & Belcher, 2015). Alumni of Christian schools in North America have been found to be less likely than public school graduates to give toward or participate in civics and social action (Pennings, Seel, Neven Van Pelt, Sikkink, & Wiens, 2011), which are indicators connected to fulfilling God's Great Mandate and Great Commission[2] in today's complex world.

Conceptually, much of this perceived gap in Christian education can be traced to a philosophical, worldview level (Knight, 2006; Norsworthy, Dowden, & Luetz, 2018; cf. Sire, 2009). Smith (2016) has pointed out that contemporary education has produced educators that view the learner as a primarily intellectual being, or to use his terminology, as a "mind on a stick". This view is contrary to the Biblical notion of a whole, nuanced human being created in the *imago dei* (Henderson, 2015; Walton, 2009; Watts, 2002) to live out eternal purposes in relationship with God (Bartholomew & Goheen, 2006).

This mind-on-a-stick mentality has also failed to examine the formative "liturgies" of culture and the impact these have on one's own formation and the formation of others, both from one's own culture and other cultures. Indeed, the first step is for Christian educators to start with themselves (Smith, 2016; Stoner, 2012), considering how to better embody Christian formation personally and institutionally. Part of the institutional embodying involves reflectively and purposefully crafting educational systems at all levels, from classrooms to international bodies, that support a holistic formation of human affections based on the biblical concept of the *imago dei*.

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[1] The anthropological consideration that human beings are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26).

[2] The Great Mandate and Great Commission are each shorthand terms that refer to core elements of the Bible story. These two elements weigh upon the life decisions that Christians make. For that reason, they naturally come to bear on the aims and methods of Christian education and Christian pedagogy (cf. Dreeckmeier, 1997; Van Brummelen, 2002). The Great Mandate (Gen. 1:26–28) refers to God's intention that humanity would engage with the earth and use its raw resources to create value. This divine mandate implies the creation of harmonious and equitable societies that express genuine care and justice. The Great Mandate forms the philosophical basis for humanity's relationship with the natural order. It has special philosophical implications for the natural and social sciences. The Great Commission (Matt. 28:19–20) refers to Jesus' instructions for His followers to live to help people of all nations to know Jesus Christ and come to embody His teachings. The Great Commission encapsulates all the human activities involved in the Bible's message of restoration between God and human beings. It links with the Great Mandate in the sense that the restoration of all relationships also includes the restoration of a human being's relationship with the earth and fellow people. Both the Great Mandate and the Great Commission envision the restoration of entire cultures and communities.

An affective "re-formation" of Christian education—indeed a subtle yet purposeful reformation—will require a multi-pronged strategy. An important aspect of such a strategy is the guidance of Christian educational research in exploring, describing and validating educational practices that form "pedagogies of desire" (Smith, 2016). In the selection and contextualisation of research methodologies, Christian educational researchers should be careful to consider the underlying philosophy of their methodologies. Otherwise, they may adopt unexamined, functionally eclectic stances that are not optimal for the task at hand. Indeed, these stances may unwittingly work against the educational researcher's vision. Knight's (2006) critique of eclectic philosophies of education is apt here:

> Along with the insight that there is something of value in each of the [non-Christian] philosophic positions comes the feeling that if individuals select the best from each of them, they will be able to operate as successful educators. The effect of such a method, however, is to develop a patchwork quilt rather than a seamless tapestry. It is true that patchwork quilts have their own beauty and functionality, but it must be asked whether such an eclectic product is the best that can be done in terms of building a philosophic foundation for the important social enterprise called Christian education. With the passage of time and with added conceptual maturity comes the realization that eclecticism is generally only a "second best" method of developing an educational position. It soon becomes apparent, for instance, that eclecticism may lead to internal contradictions as a person selects a bit from this philosophy and a piece from that theory…. Beyond those problems, an examination of the presuppositions underlying the various philosophies and theories leads to the realization that each has elements that are out of harmony with biblical Christianity (Chapter 8).

Research, as an educational pursuit, also must be examined and guided by a distinctively Christian philosophy.

8.1.1   Straussian Grounded Theory Method

Grounded Theory Method (GTM), in its various incarnations, has been described as the "most widely used qualitative method" (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 47). First developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Annells, 1996; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Kenny & Fourie, 2015), GTM aims to generate a theory "from participants who have experienced the process or phenomena" in question (Nieuwenhuis, 2016c, p. 79). Such a grounded theory emerges from a *saturation of categories*, which occurs when all possible qualitative data points are connected to the emerging concepts.

Considering Johnson and Christensen's (2004) possible aims of research projects, GTM best lends itself to an initial exploratory approach, seeking to generate rich conceptual description of a phenomenon and its context through immersive, constant comparative analysis of the collected data. However, its "best kept secret" (Urquhart, 2019) is in its explanatory and predictive ability to generate rich substantive and formal theories (cf. Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Today, Straussian Grounded Theory Method (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1994), which is Strauss's interpretivist reformulation of classical GTM, is one of the most popular of the many varieties of GTM (Bryant & Charmaz,

2007). Since Strauss's passing, his co-writer Juliet Corbin has continued to develop Straussian GTM as its de facto custodian (Kenny & Fourie, 2015).

This chapter will explore Straussian GTM as a possible research tool in the effort of enhancing Christian education. Special attention will be given to this research methodology's procedures and epistemological underpinnings. Straussian GTM has a unique philosophical perspective on what does or does not constitute knowledge and knowing—a crucial consideration, indeed, in any research endeavour. These elements will then be examined via the epistemology of a biblical narrative framework. The resulting discussion will highlight the opportunities for modifying Straussian GTM, and other qualitative methodologies, to better acknowledge a Christian vision of human flourishing.

We now turn to investigate Straussian GTM with emphasis on its epistemological underpinnings.

8.2 Epistemological Implications in Grounded Theory

8.2.1 GTM's Early Development in Postpositivism

While other qualitative methods had originally developed from distinctively subjectivist philosophies (cf. phenomenology; Smith, 2013), classical GTM started in a postpositivist paradigm. The methodology emerged from Blumer's philosophy of symbolic interactionism (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Though Nieuwenhuis (2016b, pp. 62–63) points to its emphasis on subjectively interpreted meaning as an overlap with interpretivism, its critical realist ontology, as analysed by Lincoln and Guba (cited in Annells, 1996), retained a positivist-leaning recognition of knowledge existing, to a degree, in external reality. In line with this epistemological view, Annells (1996) pointed out Glaser's "procedural directions that explicitly lead the researcher toward *the ideal 'to come closer to objectivity'* " (p. 387, emphasis added).

Such a balance of objectivist and subjectivist views arguably aided GTM's cause. McCann and Clark (cited in Levers, 2013, p. 1) described the challenge Glaser and Strauss faced in a time when academia only recognised a positivist outlook in research. In this context of early transition, Blumer's symbolic interactionism, with its vague, open-to-interpretation ontology (Lewis, cited in Annells, 1996, p. 382), served as a postpositivist middle ground that could gradually move away from positivism.

8.2.2 Transition Toward Interpretivism

As late as 1994, Lincoln and Guba (cited in Annells, 1996) still recognised GTM as a uniformly postpositivist approach. Soon after, Annells (1996, pp. 386–387)

demonstrated the two clear streams of GTM that had formed, primarily between Glaser's classical position and Strauss and Corbin's interpretivist-leaning position (see Fig. 8.1). Straussian GTM's contextual matrix (handled in more detail below) particularly departed from symbolic interactionism's lack of consideration for societal influences (Annells, 1996). Grounded theories were also referred to as "created" rather than "discovered" (Strauss & Corbin, cited in Kenny & Fourie, 2015, p. 1274), an epistemic direction Corbin has continued to take Straussian GTM until present (Kenny & Fourie, 2015, p. 1278).

As Mjøset (2009) points out, an interpretivist position necessarily redefines the role of researchers, requiring their participation in the process of research: "The basic fact that we study something that we are (or could be) ourselves, implies that there must be some relationship between the way that we gather knowledge and the ways in which people learn" (p. 50). Assuming personal interpretation as eventual and potentially beneficial enables researchers to approach the social world in more organic ways. However, GTM's primary end is a theoretical framework (cf. phenomenology and ethnography; Nieuwenhuis, 2016a, p. 105), clearly harkening to its positivist roots. For those interested, Kenny and Fourie (2015, pp. 1280–1283) have outlined the heated debate over exactly how much positivism and postpositivism still remain in Straussian GTM. But our discussion will now turn to the specific procedures of a Straussian GTM project.

Fig. 8.1 Some elements of an Interpretivist Viewpoint. Adapted from Nieuwenhuis, 2016b, pp. 61–62
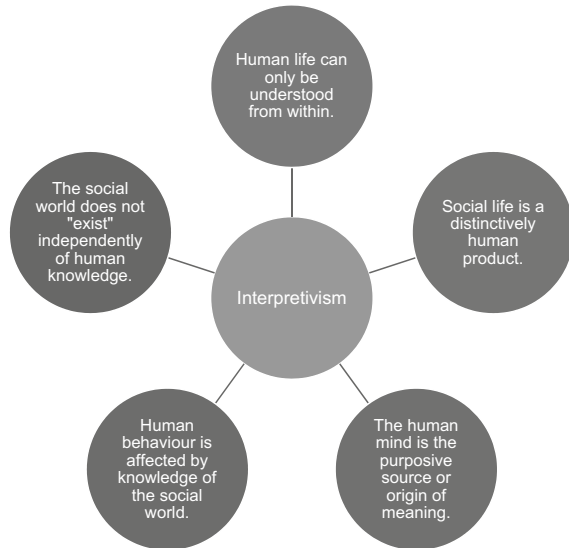
8.2.3   An Overview of Straussian GTM's Procedures

For readers not fully acquainted with the Straussian GTM, I will now give an overview of the methodology's primary procedural features. Of course, an exhaustive discussion of Straussian GTM is beyond the scope of this chapter, but a basic familiarity is necessary for the discussion at hand.

To ground my example of Straussian GTM (no pun intended), reference will be made to Teräs & Kartoˇglu's (2017) GTM research on Professional Learning (PL) in an Online Professional Development (OPD) course utilising the authentic e-learning framework.

8.2.3.1   Literature Review in Straussian GTM

Researchers following GTM must approach their research subject without preconceived ideas or theories; however, Nieuwenhuis (2016a) points out the importance of "theoretical sensitivity" (p. 106), which involves obtaining sensitivity toward the context around the phenomena. Strauss and Corbin's strategy allows for an "open mind" but not an "empty mind" (Kenny and Fourie, 2015, p. 1284). In this way, theoretical sensitivity acknowledges the qualifications, experience and efforts that an expert brings to a study.

In this direction, Teräs & Kartoˇglu's (2017) literature review involved detailing the authentic e-learning framework; summarising research conducted on PL, OPD and e-learning; and making specific remarks regarding the absence of research on OPD utilising the authentic e-learning framework. Though their selection of literature incorporated more qualitative and theoretical studies than quantitative studies, it is noted that the literature review's thoroughness is what one would expect in similar studies in education that utilise other research methods and paradigms.

8.2.3.2   Data Collection in Straussian GTM

The symbolic interactionist and interpretivist interests in individually made meaning as a source of knowledge results in a preference for semi-structured interviews. Observations and document analysis offer avenues of secondary importance (Nieuwenhuis, 2016a, pp. 79–80). Teräs & Kartoˇglu (2017) relied on semi-structured interviews performed via online video conferencing software (a valid tool as per Hindmarsh (2017)) and observations of online activities in the OPD course's online environment. These were captured by the online environment's activity logs.

The postpositivist interest results in qualitative data revealing new information via results in twenty to thirty interviews, generally more than a phenomenology (Nieuwenhuis, 2016c, pp. 75, 79–80). This thoroughness aims for a "saturation", where "no new data are emerging" (Kenny & Fourie, 2015, p. 1271). These requirements are likely an inheritance from positivism's emphasis on proper sampling (cf.

Kenny & Fourie, 2015), but it can also be argued that creating a grounded theory inherently requires more in-depth measures of trustworthiness than qualitative methodologies that are not interested in generating theories (see the Trustworthiness section, below).

Teräs and Kartŏglu's (2017) research involved "seven participants" (p. 199). However, they achieved conceptual density by conducting multiple interviews with each participant throughout the OPD course, including after the course had finished. This is a valid approach as it acknowledges Strauss and Corbin's (1994) concern for process and conditionality, that is, how interactions around the phenomenon change over time and in response to different conditions.

8.2.3.3   Data Analysis in Straussian GTM

As part of its process of constant comparison, GTM features an ongoing interplay between data collection and data analysis (Annells, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, cited in Teräs & Kartŏglu, 2017). Of anecdotal interest, many GTM research articles, including that of Teräs & Kartŏglu, address data collection and data analysis under one heading.

Memos. To aid with the complexity of constant comparison, researchers engage in continual memoing of all thoughts, questions and other impressions (Kenny & Fourie, 2015, p. 1271; Teräs & Kartŏglu, 2017, p. 200). Memoing begins from the first coding session (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). These memos eventually become a reflective journal (Nieuwenhuis, 2016a, p. 115), which also adds to the credibility of the research (Shenton, 2004, p. 68; see Trustworthiness, below).

Kenny and Fourie (2015) have outlined Straussian GTM's rigorous coding directives, as follows: open coding; axial coding; selective coding; applying the conditional matrix and finally, creating a grounded theory. We will handle each of these in the sections below.

Open Coding. Open coding of data into multiple, high-level concepts forms the first phase of Strauss and Corbin's coding procedure. The researcher reads through the data in a mode of constant comparison and groups similar incidents into concepts. The aim here is not "thick description" of interactions (cf. phenomenology) as much as is it is "conceptual density" that will help form the categories of the grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). That is to say that the researcher seeking to create a grounded theory is interested in fleshing out the phenomena's related concepts and connections.

As a result, sampling in GTM has less to do with the number of people interviewed and more with the number and quality of concepts analysed. Corbin and Strauss (1990) advised that the density of a concept increases as more data reveal and support its various "properties, dimensions, and variations" (p. 8). These codes and the data from which they emerged are constantly revisited as new data are collected and analysed, resulting in the codes becoming more refined and errors being corrected. Concepts are then progressively grouped into categories that begin to shape the grounded theory.

Axial Coding and Selective Coding. Axial coding sees the relationships between the categories elucidated. These axial relationships represent the hypotheses constituting the grounded theory and cannot be based on a single instance (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Rather, axial relationships should express the "full range of variation in the phenomena under scrutiny" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 13).

In selective coding, one central category that provides cohesive meaning to the grounded theory is selected (see Research Conclusions below). Since this is one of the final steps in finalising the grounded theory, selective coding happens late in the research process.

Conditional Matrix. As a feature originating in Straussian GTM, the conditional matrix constitutes Strauss and Corbin's attempt to connect the local findings to a wider social, interpretive context (Annells, 1996). It is important to note that the researchers start with the data of the phenomenon and move out to the different levels of contextual influence. This can include the investigation of emerging trends, such as

> ideas, ideologies, technologies or new uses of space.... Grounded theory procedures force us to ask, for example: What is power in this situation and under specified conditions? How is it manifested, by whom, when, where, how, with what consequences (and for whom or what)? Not to remain open to such a range of questions is to obstruct the discovery of important features of power in situ and to preclude developing its further conceptualization. (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 276, authors' emphasis)

Theoretical sensitivity, including the experience and expertise researchers bring to their study, is essential here: "The more theoretically sensitive researchers are to issues of class, gender, race, power, and the like, the more attentive they will be to these matters. The procedures of theoretical sampling and constant comparison are allied with theoretical sensitivity" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 280). Strauss and Corbin (1994) also pointed to the contextual matrix as the main source of Straussian GTM's flexibility toward different philosophies and the diverse needs of different disciplines. As we will see later in the discussion, this is also the case for Christian educational research.

8.2.4 Trustworthiness in Straussian GTM

In qualitative methods, indicators of trustworthiness are preferred in lieu of quantitative measures of rigour, such as reliability and validity (Shenton, 2004). Herschell (1999) aptly refers to this aspect of qualitative methods as "process believability" (p. 5), indicating a need for transparency in the way research is carried out.

As an example for Straussian GTM, the table below summarises Teräs and Kartoˇglu's (2017) efforts toward trustworthiness, namely their article's indicators of dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability. The first column and the subheadings are borrowed from Shenton (2004).

As can be observed in Table 1.1, establishing trustworthiness in GTM requires the careful planning and consideration of one's procedures. Then, the related indicators of

Table 1.1 Qualitative indicators of trustworthiness compared to reliability and validity

Characteristics in qualitative research	Representation in Teräs and Kartoğlu 2017
Dependability (corresponds to reliability)	
Inclusion of elements that promote repeatability	• Ongoing detailed description of Straussian GTM implementation throughout paper; citing influencing works (mainly Strauss & Corbin's works) • Detailed description of all data collection and data analysis strategies implemented • Detailed description of the authentic learning and authentic e-learning frameworks • Weblink to the training website allowing navigation of the content • Frank appraisal of the project
Credibility (corresponds to internal validity)	

General inclusion of multiple research features that demonstrate rigour and transparency in
• Research design
• Selection of participants
• Data collection and analysis
• Review
	Research Design:
	• Use of GTM, a recognised research design
	• Frequent reference to Strauss and Corbin's works on GTM methodology
	• Researchers' familiarity with context
	Selection of participants:
	• Establishing the experience and qualification of participants
	• Random sampling (they did not decide who was in the course)
	Data collection
	• Appropriate literature review of previous research
	• Use of two forms of data collection
	Data analysis
	• Triangulation of different forms of data
	• Evidence of constant comparison
	  – memoing
	  – triangulation of data throughout
	  – anecdotes giving insights into how the codes and categories were refined
	Review
	• Peer-review process associated with journal publication

Transferability (corresponds to external validity)	
Transparency regarding the context and participants, allowing the readers to judge whether their context is similar	• Disclosure of the number of participants, their continents of origin, general professions, and experience with OPDs and the content at hand • Description of how data were collected via observations and interviews • Realistic suggestions of applicable professions and contexts for the research

Table 1.1 (continued)

Characteristics in qualitative research	Representation in Teräs and Kartoğlu 2017
Confirmability (corresponds to objectivity)	
Offsetting the researchers' biases	• Detailed description of methodology employed • Triangulation of observation data and interview data

Note Subheadings and first column adapted from Shenton (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information* (22)

integrity and transparency should be responsibly presented throughout the resulting research report.

8.2.5   Research Conclusions in Straussian GTM

A true GTM project must result in a grounded theoretical framework that attempts to explain the analysed data through conceptual categories (from open coding) and their relationships with each other (from axial coding). This framework can be represented diagrammatically, as with Teräs and Kartoğlu's (2017) framework pictured below (Fig. 8.2).

Note how this framework points toward the central category of "Learning as a web of interactions" (from selective coding). A subcategory that did not appear explicitly
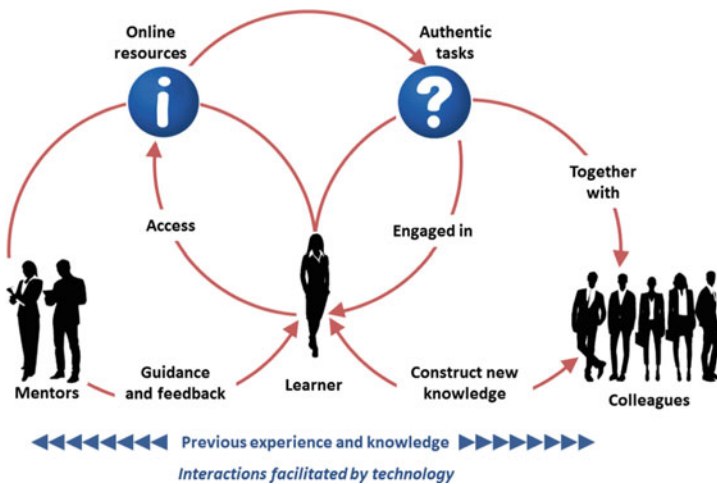
Fig. 8.2 A framework of professional learning in authentic learning-based OPD. From Teräs and Kartoğlu (2017), p. 202. Licensed under Creative Commons BY 4.0

in the diagram, "experienced impact", was handled in the conclusion under its own heading, much like the other subcategories (Teräs & Kartoˇglu,2017, p. 206).

8.2.6 Further Action in Straussian GTM

A theory is an attempt at explaining reality (Johnson & Christensen, 2004), or in Straussian terms, "theory consists of *plausible* relationships posed among *concepts* and *sets of concepts*" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, authors' emphasis). As would be expected with a theory, Strauss and Corbin (1994) affirm the predictive value of grounded theories. Researchers, therefore, must advise to what extent their theory is transferable to other contexts (see Transferability in Table 1.1). Teräs and Kartoˇglu (2017, pp. 208–209) make recommendations for transferability by naming some contexts in which they believe their grounded theory has value. They conclude by further recommending studies of OPD, similar to their own, in other professional fields.

Having reviewed the outworking of Straussian GTM's epistemology, the discussion will now turn to consider a biblical Christian paradigm of inquiry into which Straussian GTM might be modified.

8.3 Possibilities in a Biblical Christian Paradigm of Inquiry

From a Christian perspective, epistemology can be viewed as an element of an organically created worldview, which is most naturally conveyed within a narrative framework (Leopard, 2018; Peterson (n.d.); Wright, 2013). Not only does a narrative approach to worldview allow for the nuanced perspectives of complex individuals, it also follows God's approach to revelation exemplified in the biblical narrative. In this Christian worldview story, the Bible provides a primary framework and authority for epistemology (Overend, 1992; Wright, 1991). The biblical story of knowledge acknowledges history as seen through a biblical lens, particularly its key themes of creation, the fall, and redemption and restoration. We will now deal with each of those themes in turn.

8.3.1 Creation: A Relational Reality

Reality is ontologically based upon the love-based creator-creation relationship (Gen. 1:31; Leopard, 2018; see also Da Silva, 2004 and his treatment of patronage, reciprocation, and *charis* as illustrations of the human-God relationship). This revelation opens Christians up to considering knowledge as trust-based and humility-based. Kenneson (1995, pp. 157–159) has demonstrated such an epistemology to be more

congruent with the biblical narrative than modern epistemology's foundation on rationalist doubt.

In line with Paul's claim that in Christ are "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:2–3, New American Standard Bible[3]) and Jesus' self-identification as Truth (John 14:6), Knight (2006) named all truth as God's truth, leaving no possibility of secular-sacred dualism.[4] Further, as Wolfe (1982, pp. 79–80) has argued, there is no reason to completely doubt our perception of external reality since Jesus himself assumed its knowability. God created both the spiritual and the physical and declared them, along with all areas of learning and experience, as "very good"; thus, there is no reason for people to suspiciously amputate the "spiritual leg" on which their knowledge must, in part, stand.

Furthermore, the quality of one's knowledge is intrinsically linked to love and, therefore, is based squarely in the realm of lived experience (Palmer, 1993). Organic human meaning-making is a trusting, faith-based process, in which people instinctively adopt beliefs that hold up to scrutiny over time (Wolfe, 1982). This faith basis introduces a pragmatic element to which the Great Mandate, or the "cultural mandate" (Dreeckmeier, 2005, p. 88) provides an epistemological framework. In this framework, knowledge must necessarily guide humankind to better rule and subdue physical reality as God's vice-regents[5] (Leopard, 2018; cf. Gen. 1:26–30). The biblical context of "ruling and subduing" implies intelligent, creative and ethical action. Humanity's relationship to God as His *imago dei* vice-regents points to a clear ontological, relational impetus. God's *imago* in humans introduces qualitative complexity to how reality might be known, but sin, to which we now briefly turn, has further complicated the matter.

8.3.2   Sin and Power Relationships

Because of sin, humankind's relationship with Truth has moved away from its original basis of love. As humankind's "vertical" relationship with God was broken, so were their "horizontal" relationships with fellow people, self and creation also corrupted (Dreeckmeier, 1997). In rejecting God, ancient and modern societies were built on idolatries of knowledge as power and control in place of God's "power that builds and heals" (Palmer, 1993, p. 117; cf. Rom. 1:21ff).

Humanity's broken relationship to knowledge has led to what Strom (2014) has termed weak namings, which are interpretations of creation, fellowman and self that fall short of their divinely ordained potential. These lapses in identity and meaning can lead to a deluded sort of knowledge that Sternin (cited in Strom, 2014, Chapter 5)

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[3]All scripture quotations are from *The Holy Bible (New American Standard Bible)* (1995).

[4]That is, the separation of so-called secular knowledge, pertaining to everyday life and the physical world, and sacred knowledge, pertaining to God, morality and the spiritual.

[5]One who represents and acts with the authority of another, in this case the God to whom the earth belongs (Psalm 24:1).
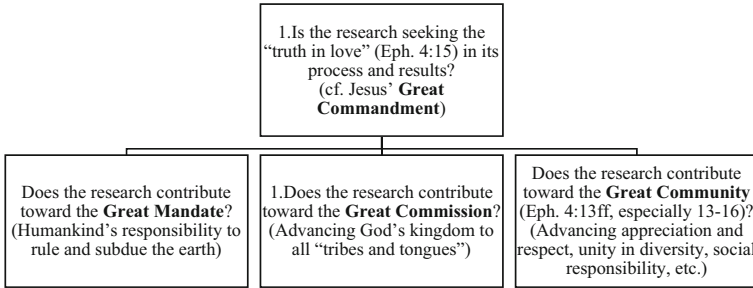
Fig. 8.3 Ethical questions for guiding a biblical Christian epistemology

described as "true but useless" solutions: theoretically sound but removed from lived experience. True-but-useless knowledge is prolific throughout all spheres of society, including the spheres of research and higher education. It is often responsible for short-sighted policies that cumulatively lead to feelings of futility in the workplace.

8.3.3   Redeemed and Redeeming Fallen Epistemologies

Among many other effects, Christ's work of redemption and the indwelling of His Spirit in redeemed humans has made possible strong, empowering namings that allow redeemed individuals to reimagine and redefine themselves and their relation to the world around them (cf. Rom. 12:2). Therefore, a return to a right relationship with knowledge is now possible. This redeemed life provides Christians with a flexible, pragmatic, epistemological framework for redeeming and restorative research that is guided by several ethical, teleological questions based on the "Four Greats" (see Fig. 8.3). The first question, related to Jesus' Great Commandment,[6] serves as a primary filter that should be clarified by one or more of the following questions. These are, respectively, derived from the Great Mandate, the Great Commission and the Great Community.[7]

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[6]The Great Commandment is found in Matthew 22:37–40 and Mark 12:29–31:

   And He [Jesus] said to him, "'You shall love the Lord you God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." (Matt. 22:37–40).

[7]As implied in Fig. 8.3, the Great Community is shorthand for the Bible's concept of Christian community. While this must include the religious, liturgical context of traditional church activities, the Bible does not stop with liturgical prescriptions. Rather, it goes on to touch many everyday concepts, such as family relationships (Col. 3:18; Eph. 5:22–24), responsibilities as citizens (Matt. 22:17–21; Rom. 13:1–7; 1 Pet. 2:13–17), treatment of foreigners (1 Tim. 5:10; Heb. 13:2); and more. In short, the Great Community embodies the total expression of the Great Commandment in all human-to-human, relational dealings. With the insight of the Great Mandate's cultural aspect, it is natural to extrapolate the Great Community to also contain all aesthetic expression, such as industrial design and all the arts. Christian communities should delight in their members' talents

It should be noted that these questions are not confined to a dualistically defined "religious" or "church life"; however, it is beyond this chapter's scope to explore the multi-faceted possibilities for finding truer expressions of God's love in education, technology, business, medicine, governance, arts and culture, agriculture, and many other spheres.

In this light, just as Bryant and Charmaz (2007) have previously proposed epistemologically repositioning GTM with constructivism, GTM can also be reconsidered from a biblical Christian viewpoint.

8.4   Discussion: Reconsidering GTM

8.4.1   Rationale

There may be some readers who query the necessity of reformulating and authenticating Straussian GTM for use in Christian educational research. As mentioned in this chapter's introduction, philosophical eclecticism, which is a philosophy of convenience, is not a desirable foundation for any serious activity performed by a professing follower of Christ. GTM's symbolic interactionist foundation was established upon pragmatism, especially the works of Dewey and Mead (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Pragmatism, being an offshoot of naturalism, has commitments that are antithetical to a biblical, Christian philosophy (Knight, 2006). To use a metaphor, Christians should be just as interested in the path their philosophical journey takes as they are in the journey's destination. We are to seek first God's kingdom **and His righteousness** (Matt. 6:33). Knowledge is intimately connected to relationship and should be sought with right, ethical means. If one has not performed the latter, she has not found the former in the truest sense. If educational research is indeed a worthwhile pursuit, then presuming God has nothing to say on the matter is a grave presumption, indeed.

Furthermore, there are ethical academic grounds for this exercise. Straussian GTM's creators have acknowledged their methodology's contextual and philosophical flexibilities and have appreciated its application in diverse areas by researchers of persuasions different than their own (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, pp. 275–276).

However, this reconsideration does not give license for abusing GTM's procedure. This author agrees with a call in much of the GTM literature to avoid using one or two ideas from its canons and procedures and labelling such a study as GTM (Annells, 1996; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Kenny & Fourie, 2015). Similarly, any GTM study should responsibly indicate which variety of GTM is guiding the research (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Reichertz, 2019) and provide justification for any departures from its prescribed procedures.

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being better utilised in creatively designing artefacts, organisations and other initiatives that advance a more just and caring society.

8.4.2   A Humility-Based Epistemology

Straussian GTM contains several elements that lend themselves to a Christian episte-
mology, which is first a humility-based and trust-based approach that affirms a rela-
tional ontology. In Straussian GTM, there is an anticipation for a theory to emerge
from the data. While Straussian GTM's call for theoretical sensitivity makes space
for the researchers' personal and professional experience of the phenomenon being
researched, Christians, even experts of their field, must assume they don't have the
full perspective on their research topic. This assumption epistemologically acknowl-
edges the "classic posture of 'faith seeking understanding'" (Kenneson, 1995, p. 165).
Scriptural wisdom also urges the researcher to go to the phenomenon with expecta-
tion: "Go down to the potter's house and there I will announce my words to you";
"Go to the ant,… observe her ways and be wise"; "[Jesus] said to them, 'Come and
you will see.'" (Jer. 18:2; Pro. 6:6; John 1:39a; see also Moreland, 1997 on Christian
reason). This humble, expectant posture fosters an interest in better understanding
the diversity of human experience, which can be explored via GTM's data collection
and analysis procedures.

This outlook is congruent with Corbin and Strauss's (1990) recommendations on
variation:

> Some qualitative studies report on a single phenomenon, establish only a few conditions under
> which it appears, specify only a few actions/interactions that characterize it, and address a
> limited number or range of consequences. By contrast, a grounded theory monograph should
> be judged in terms of the range of variations *and* the specificity with which they are analyzed
> in relation to the phenomena that are their source. (p. 18, authors' emphasis)

Straussian GTM has an inbuilt aim to thoroughly know, understand and respect
human phenomena along with their context and human participants.

For the Christian researcher, this is a desire to "know [others], even as we are
known" by God, to see people and their contexts from His perspective in fulfilment
of the Great Commandment. In terms of working cross-culturally, Straussian GTM is
a prime platform for the researcher seeking, like Paul, to be "all things to all men… for
the sake of the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:19–23). In this way, research is aimed to acknowledge
Christ's Great Commandment and Great Commission. With a researcher in the right
mode of sensitivity, it is possible that missiological insights can emerge from research
topics where such insights had not originally been expected. When paired with the
conditional matrix (see the discussion below), such insights can help ensure that
a grounded theory optimally equips educators to help their learning communities
establish formative practices that emphasise abundant Christian experience. Then
weak namings can be effectively addressed and supplanted on individual, corporate
and wider social levels.

Regarding the interpretivist stance outlined in Sect. 8.2.2, above, Christians should
modify interpretivism's interest in human interaction with a biblical understanding of
worldview, such as the conception advanced by Naugle (cited in Sire, 2004). Within
Naugle's framework, "reality is objective in essence, subjective in apprehension, and

able to be meaningfully comprehended and communicated in language" (Sire, 2004, p. 49).

In contrast to interpretivism, God is acknowledged as the absolute source of truth, but human understanding and interpretation of that truth are partial, tentative and mediated by the imperfect symbols of language. All cultures and their products are subject to such imperfections. God's objective truth introduces the possibility of people improving their subjective apprehensions through knowing and hearing God and His true perspectives. Truer subjective apprehensions can then lead to truer cultural expressions.

Alternatively, Murison and Benson (2018) have suggested Taylor's "social imaginary" as a more apt framing of worldview. Whereas traditional treatments of worldview have viewed individuals' and groups' views abstractly, the social imaginary allows for a more flowing, narrative approach toward these views. By considering "the ways people imagine their social existence" (Taylor, cited in Murison & Benson, 2018, p. 78), a social imaginary framework organically allows for more faithful conceptual abstractions of human complexity. Such a reconceptualisation of worldview may better mesh with a Christian paradigm of qualitative inquiry.

8.4.3   Spiritual Concerns in the Contextual Matrix

As discussed previously, the contextual matrix is a feature introduced in Straussian GTM to help researchers move from the observed phenomenon or process out to various spheres of its wider social context. This contextualisation may find links to the individuals involved, along with their social affiliations and other possible macrosocial factors.

Here the Christian educational researcher finds space to consider uniquely Christian issues and considerations, including spiritual concerns that would otherwise be excluded by a naturalistic prerogative that rejects supernatural causes. For example, Christian researchers can better frame and define their views of common issues, such as race, gender and power, within a biblical worldview framework, or social imaginary framework. When appropriate, there is also space for Christian researchers to consider supernatural issues that are not typically covered in traditional academia. These may include observations regarding the *imago dei*, prayer, miracles and other divine workings, spiritual warfare, spiritual bondages, and demonic possession. This is not to say that non-Christian publications will necessarily approve of such inclusions. However, for academic institutions open to such possibilities, the contextual matrix helps the researchers and their reviewers and readers to appreciate that such issues may have a level of conceptual density in the research data.

Again, the use of the conditional matrix should be guided by the Four Greats. When considering the various levels of the matrix (such as individual, group, corporate, social and so on), the researchers should use the Four Greats to check for any relevant contextual elements. In that way, the researchers can act upon every opportunity to create a grounded theory that leads them and their readers in better loving

their neighbours (Great Commandment), in better realising and responding to God's cultural mandate (Great Mandate), in better making disciples of Jesus Christ in all nations (Great Commission) and in better building up the Christian community both locally and universally (Great Community).

8.4.4 Enlightenment of the Holy Spirit and Prayer

Furthermore, GTM's allowance for the researcher's thoughts and intuitions is also space where the Christian should prayerfully allow the Holy Spirit to enlighten her intuition, imagination and conscience to more truthful observations. The researcher's experiences of the Holy Spirit's insights and promptings can be included in the memos and subjected to constant comparison in further data collection and analysis.

The activity and attitude of Christian prayer opens one of the most exciting and essential possibilities for GTM's repositioning for Christian education. Regarding the attitude of prayer, Foster's (1998) axiom is especially applicable: "To pray is to change" (p. 33). Prayer provides a biblical underpinning for Strauss and Corbin's (1994) conception of theoretical sensitivity:

> The interplay between researcher and the actors studied—if the research is intensive—is likely to result in reciprocal shaping. This is because the researcher and data (words and phrases, actions, videotapes) speak to each other. In grounded theory studies, the conversation is centered on theoretical analysis, so the shaping is also related to the process of becoming increasingly theoretically sensitive. (p. 280)

Their subsequent advice is congruent with the concept of the Great Community:

> During or at the end of the study, the researcher may give information back to the actors, in the form of a final theoretical analysis or framework or, more frequently, through observations informed by an evolving theory. In turn, the theorist, over the course of the research project, may be much affected by the experience of analysis itself…. Also, the theorist is affected by experiences *with* the respondents, who may not incidentally be contributing ideas, concepts…, and enduring perspectives to the analysis. (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 280, authors' emphasis)

And here I remind the reader of the introductory discussion of formative pedagogies of desire. If Christian educators and researchers must first give attention to their own formation, how much more should they choose an appropriate methodology that allows their own voice to be "questioning, questioned, and provisional" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 280). Taken in a humble spirit of prayer and openness, the procedures of GTM are, themselves, a formative practice that God can use instrumentally to help researchers create better formative practices in their area of research.

This prayerful, abiding practice, which acknowledges a desire to better live out the *imago dei* in one's own life and professional practice, will help ensure that research procedures and results follow the Four Greats. The resulting research and research products are thus more likely to produce real-life, humility-based knowledge and avoid futile, true-but-useless frivolity in Christians' respective institutions of education.

Readers looking for an introduction to spiritually formative practices that could be integrated in their personal practice will do well to investigate Richard Foster's classic *Celebration of Discipline* (1998), a very practical primer on the subject. The work of Dallas Willard, particularly his scholarly work on the topic (e.g. Willard, 2010) and his seminal work, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (Willard, 1988), present a valuable theological treatment of formative practices.

8.5   Conclusion

Several of the underlying sentiments of GTM are congruent to the epistemology and spirit of Christianity. They disagree at points but can be reconciled with the effect of better suiting the methodology to the needs of research in Christian education. Most importantly, the reconciliation allows for the utilisation of a distinctively Christian philosophical point of departure.

Here, I will borrow an illustration from Lewis (1952, p. 50), because GTM, much like a properly built car, with its inherent strengths and weaknesses, will only run well if it is fed the correct fuel. GTM, with its concerns historically rooted in Blumer's concern for external reality and human meaning-making, is a fine "car". But like any human endeavour, it is made to run in proper relationship to God and His eternal truths. To this end, I have made philosophical, ethical and procedural recommendations for guiding qualitative research, like Straussian GTM, according to a humility-based epistemology that aligns with God's creative, redemptive and restorative narrative.

The selection of truthful research inputs and analytical practices will decide whether GTM will be effectively used to promote relational-based knowledge that selflessly promotes God's kingdom and human flourishing. It will be God's story and its take on knowledge that provide researchers the space to "speak the truth in love" through Grounded Theory Method.

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Chapter 9
Developing a Research and Scholarship Framework: An Australian Christian Higher Education Case Study

Denise A. Austin and David Perry

Abstract Despite the ambiguity inherent in the terms 'research' and 'scholarship', both continue to play an important role in higher education in terms of regulatory requirements, measuring institutional achievement, and investment of time and other resources. It is often left to individual institutions and various interest groups to define their own understanding of the connection between the two. For Christian higher education providers with limited resources, a lack of government funding and a focus on broader community dissemination, scholarship has often taken precedence over research. Using an Australian case study, this chapter argues that a holistic understanding of both research and scholarship, and the relation between them, helps to orient institutional efforts towards positive impact and engagement for constituents and end-users.

Keywords Christian · Higher education · Alphacrucis · Research · Scholarship · Australia

9.1 Introduction

The terms 'research' and 'scholarship' and their interrelationship have caused some confusion and debate over many decades. In fact, Neumann (1993, p. 102) suggests that trying to distinguish between the two is like 'walking through a semantic minefield'. With research being the most important hurdle in reaching university status in Australia, few Christian colleges have even attempted the move, given limited resources, a lack of government funding and a focus on community dissemination (Hemmings and Hill 2014). Alphacrucis College (AC) is a private Christian higher education institution seeking university status. So, understanding the relationship between research and scholarship is of paramount importance. As senior

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academic leaders at AC, we chose our college as a useful case study within a 'highly pertinent' real-life context (Yin 2014, p. 13). Through personal interviews, an anonymous survey and critical analysis of literature, we developed the AC Research and Scholarship Framework. This posits research and scholarship as parallel, interrelated and mutually reinforcing activities that ultimately result in positive impact and tangible outcomes for constituencies and end-users. It is our hope that this study will be useful for the professional development of faculty and research students in a wide variety of contexts.

9.2   The Ambiguity of the Research/Scholarship Relationship

For core activities like research, scholarship and teaching, one might assume that there would be a consensus on the nature and place of each within higher education. Such an assumption would, unfortunately, be quickly disproved by an examination of the literature. Boyer's (1990) model of scholarship stirred intense debates on the mutually beneficial or otherwise relationship between teaching and research. He (1990, p. 68) argued that 'the time has come to move beyond the tired "teaching versus research" debate and give the familiar and honourable term "scholarship" a broader, more capacious meaning, one that brings legitimacy to the full scope of academic work'. Boyer held firmly that this was the most effective way to make positive contributions within society and move towards the ultimate goal of 'human advancement' (Messiah College 2011).

Boyer's model posits that scholarship includes discovery (research), integration, application and teaching. Rice (1992) subsequently added learning. Boyer's criticism of the over-emphasis on research led to a reconsideration of the distinctive features of higher education (Neumann 1994). Harman (2007, p. 310) notes that 'many higher education leaders have complained of an over-emphasis on research achievements in academic employment and reward structures'. They have lost what Boyer (1990, p. 15) describes as 'curiosity, imagination, and learning […] to speak with authority and advocate change'. Since Boyer's seminal work, academics have often portrayed scholarship as the solution to the research-teaching nexus.

Yet this understanding assumes certain ideas about teaching and research that may not be universally held. Even research, a characteristic of universities for over 200 years, does not have an agreed upon definition. Neumann (1993) notes that research can be defined narrowly as the production of new knowledge or more broadly as a wide and diverse range of activities determined by disciplinary context and associated knowledge paradigms. Introduce teaching as a related activity and the discussion only becomes more complex. Good research, it is argued, should impact pedagogical methods and content, and many studies affirm the symbiotic relationship between research and teaching (Neumann 1992; Rowland 1996; Semby 1998; Lindsay et al. 2002; Brew 2006; Kyvik and Lepori 2010).

By contrast, though, Ramsden and Moses (1992) find no evidence for the compatibility between research and teaching. They (1992, p. 274) state that 'these two crucial activities are essentially separate endeavours that just happen to occur in the same place. As far as the individual academic is concerned, there is no causal relation, no essential congruence'. The Bradley Report of 2008, commissioned by the Australian government, also weighed into this discussion. The report called for greater priority on the teaching-research nexus to dispel the perceived elitism of researchers. However, given the drain on time and resources that both expend, Stappenbelt (2013, p. 112) concludes 'the correlation between teaching and research should be zero'. Relatedly, the concept of 'new scholarship' was developed to describe research specifically focused on higher education learning and teaching (Zeichner 1999, p. 11). However, Peseta et al. (2007) argue that this branch of scholarship can be confronting for academics who have hitherto been comfortable in their sphere of disciplinary expertise. Macfarlane (2011, p. 127) points out that, subsequently, pedagogical research is often categorised as 'not proper research.' Cotton et al. (2018, p. 1626) agree that the 'artificial distinction made by Boyer between "scholarship of discovery", typically associated with traditional research, and "scholarship of teaching"', has led to a devaluing of pedagogic research. Consequently, 'research and scholarship' have taken on a pleonastic function, making the term 'scholarship' redundant (Ngoye et al. 2018; Smeyers 2019). Alternatively, publications often use 'scholarship' as a synonym for 'teaching', a finding supported by Brew (2003).

Unlike many other countries, Australia's regulatory frameworks have fully embraced Boyer's dichotomy of terminology and make a sharp distinction between the two categories of research and scholarship. The Australian government's Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA 2017) defines research as the 'creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions or understandings. This can include the combination and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative'. This is distinct from scholarship which TEQSA (2018) defines as 'gaining new or improved understanding, appreciation and insights into a field of knowledge, and engaging with and keeping up to date with advances in the field'. Research is just one subset of scholarship with a narrow focus on the creation, innovation and originality of new knowledge in the discipline or sector.

This apparent widespread lack of clarity around research, teaching and scholarship has real implications for academia. Positively, Boyer's breakthrough model led to a new emphasis on rewarding teaching and service in the Australian university sector (Coaldrake and Stedman 1998). Yet there remains a focus on teaching workloads in many universities and it is a struggle to balance competing priorities. In Australia, one survey revealed that university faculty spent 48% of their time teaching and only 22% of their time in research (Harman 2000). Heavy workloads have also led to decreased motivation to 'volunteer' additional time to personal research (Jensen-Lazarsfeld and Morgan 2009). Early career academics find it even more challenging to include research on top of teaching responsibilities (Hemmings 2012).

There has also been a marked increase in expectation by Australian regulators to see evidence that faculty demonstrate contemporary scholarly knowledge regarding new pedagogical approaches, challenges and opportunities. During 2019, former Vice Chancellor of Queensland University of Technology, Peter Coaldrake, undertook a commissioned revision of the Australian higher education provider categories. He (2019, p. 31) maintains that research should remain a defining feature of the term university in Australia but acknowledges 'the current lack of definitions for research quality and quantity, scholarship, and the link between research and student experience'.

The challenge of balancing research and scholarship is evident elsewhere as well. In 2016, a Higher Education Research Institute survey revealed that 72% of faculty members in the United States of America had published fewer than five articles in their career (Zuidema et al. 2019). Christian higher education institutions are particularly vulnerable. For pragmatic reasons, faith-based providers tend to focus on dissemination of knowledge rather than research (Norsworthy et al. 2018; Allen and Badley 2014; Ringenberg 2016). Nicholas Wolterstorff (1984) maintained that Christian scholarship should be undertaken for the betterment of humanity. Jones (2018, p. 258), however, warns that Christian higher education institutions need to focus on retaining their 'Christian imagination' by fostering a culture of research. Ream and Glanzer (2013, p. 11) argue that Christian institutions have traditionally focused more on 'the transmission of knowledge instead of its creation […] taking the learning produced in secular research universities and integrating faith into previously created forms of knowledge'. With heightened government accountability, members of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), the largest network of Christian higher education providers in the world, are facing increasing expectations to ensure faculty are producing high-quality research (Kaak 2016). In many cases, this has not come with reduced teaching loads (Ostrander 2018). Owing to an emphasis on undergraduate teaching, CCCU faculty spend significantly less workload hours in research and publishing then secular institutions, resulting in substantially less grant-funded research. Thus, it is a self-perpetuating cycle. Probert (2014) argues that it is up to the academic leadership of the institution to proactively promote research and scholarship. However, confusion persists regarding how to specifically delineate these two areas.

The final piece of the puzzle, in Australia at least, is that impact and engagement have recently become vital markers for the validity and accountability of research outputs. Commencing in 2018, the Australian Research Council (ARC), an independent Commonwealth body that advises the federal government, began collecting data on engagement and impact (EI) from universities. Relevant quantitative indicators include such things as cash support from end-users; co-supervision of Higer Degree Research (HDR) candidates by research end-users; co-funding of research outputs with research end-users; in-kind support from end-users and/or the proportion of total research outputs available via open access. ARC (2019) defines 'impact' as 'the contribution that research makes to the economy, society, environment or culture, beyond the contribution to academic research.' Research 'engagement' is the interaction between researchers and research end-users (including industry, government,

non-government organisations, communities and community organisations), for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge, technologies and methodologies, and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity (ARC, p. 11). The term 'end-user' refers to an 'individual, community or organisation external to academia that will directly use or directly benefit from the output, outcome or result of the research' (Australian Research Council 2017, p. 18). This relatively new focus on EI further complicates the task for higher education institutions of prioritising resources and energy in research and scholarship.

With all of this being said, where then is the way out of this malaise? As stated above, our position is that a holistic understanding of both research and scholarship, and the relationship between them, helps to orient institutional efforts towards positive impact and engagement for constituents or end-users. While research should involve the creation of new knowledge and scholarship should involve the maintenance of disciplinary knowledge and its dissemination, it is the narrowing and limitation of both which is the problem. The unnecessary dichotomy weakens both concepts by failing to recognise their interconnectedness and mutually reinforcing dynamic. It was this belief that provided the impetus for the development of the AC Research and Scholarship Framework.

9.3 The AC Research and Scholarship Framework as a Possible Solution

By way of background, AC was established, in 1948, as a ministry training college of Australian Christian Churches (ACC—formerly Assemblies of God in Australia). For the past two decades, the college has been working towards becoming a university (Austin 2013; Austin and Perry 2015, May). AC has transformed from an unaccredited, single campus Bible college into a dual-sector faith-based provider with seven onshore and offshore campuses, as well as global online delivery. Courses range from certificate up to doctorate level in arts, business, education, religious studies and social sciences. AC also has Higher Education Third Party (HETP) arrangements in Australia, the Philippines and Finland. Delivery of Languages Other Than English (LOTE) includes Korean and Finnish. In 2016, TEQSA demonstrated a high level of confidence in the quality assurance processes of the college by granting AC the same self-accrediting authority as public universities.

TEQSA states clearly that 'research is the most distinctive requirement for the university categories' (Application Guide for Registration in any University Category, p. 5). This is challenging considering independent higher education providers do not qualify for ARC grants and therefore must demonstrate university-level research without the public funding offered to universities. To structure AC in support of our university aspirations, and understanding the importance of an institutional framework for effectiveness and advancement (Scott et al. 2010), we developed the AC Academic Framework to represent the integration and intersection of the

Fig. 9.1 AC Academic
Framework
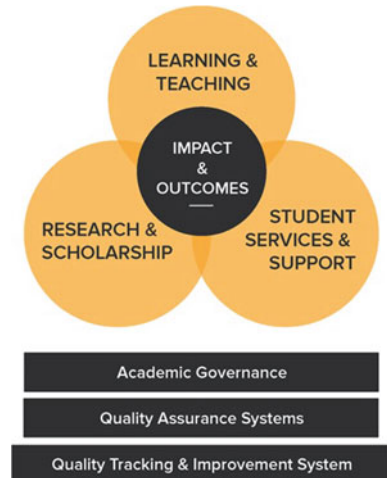
academic activities of the college (Austin and Perry 2015, November). This Framework provides an integrative model of learning and teaching, research and scholarship, and student services and support that result in positive impact and outcomes for students. These academic activities are supported by academic governance and quality assurance systems (Fig. 9.1).

Given the primacy of research for AC's journey towards university status, research and scholarship are key features of the AC Academic Framework and are promoted across all campuses, delivery sites and language modes of the college. The AC culture of research and scholarship is led, developed and sustained through a number of avenues for full-time, part-time and sessional faculty members, as well as HDR candidates, postgraduate students and collaborative partners. This includes participation in research activities to maintain currency in the various disciplines, involvement in the intellectual life of the college, internal and external professional development opportunities and broader engagement in communities of research and scholarship. Importantly, while the AC Academic Framework mentions research and scholarship separately, their obvious linkage combats the view of research and scholarship as two separate domains of activity, but rather recognises them as inextricably interrelated (Fig. 9.2).

The 'Research & Scholarship' domain within the AC Academic Framework gives rise to the focus of this chapter, namely the AC Research and Scholarship Framework. The core goal of this Framework is to view both research and scholarship broadly, demonstrate the intersection between them, and to orient AC towards producing research and scholarship that makes a positive impact and produces tangible outcomes for end-users. For AC, end-users include stakeholders, industry and community, as well as government and non-government organisations.

The summary explanation of the AC Research and Scholarship Framework is that researchers explore new fields of enquiry, resulting in the discovery of new knowledge through academic leadership. This influences communities within and

Fig. 9.2 AC Research and
Scholarship Framework

outside of academia through practical application and public dissemination. Therefore, AC is committed to creating internal structures, norms and practices that facilitate and stimulate research, imparting knowledge through reflective pedagogy. Engaging in knowledge transfer and interdisciplinary research collaboration then leads to integration through communities of practice.

It should be evident from the Framework that scholarship is viewed broadly as encompassing all scholarly activities of AC faculty, with high-quality peer-reviewed research as a central component. Importantly, though, research is also multi-faceted, and necessarily so, in order to achieve measurable results. Furthermore, this Framework does not denote a chronological order by starting in a particular domain, but rather depicts a cycle of research and scholarship that leads to positive impact and outcomes for end-users. This demonstrates the continuous symbiotic relationship between research and scholarship. Further explication of the Framework's domains will be provided below within the context of research designed to assess the adoption of the Framework.

9.4 Materials and Method

In order to establish whether the AC Research and Scholarship Framework that we developed in 2015 had gained traction amongst AC and related HETP faculty, this mixed-method research was undertaken during 2019. The strength of the case study methodology for this situation is our extensive insider knowledge and participant observation as long-term senior executive leaders of AC. We are also both members of the corporate managing body and the academic board. Therefore, we are in a unique position to analyse the research management of the college. The social-situatedness within our own work practice places us in the ideal position to investigate and implement changes in practice (Costley et al. 2010, p. 3). This is similar to

Robinson and Hougaz's (2013) use of Melbourne Institute of Technology as a case study on scholarship. While insider work-based research has inherent flaws owing to personal bias and organisational politics, these are overcome by supporting literature and institutional benchmarking.

Our case study utilises an anonymous survey sent to all AC and HETP faculty. Overall, 58 AC and HETP faculty responded to the survey, 64% of whom were from AC. While most respondents were primarily located onshore in Australia (90%), the offshore respondents (6) represented 40% of the permanent faculty at the offshore HETP. There were more male (71%) than female (29%) respondents, and in terms of employment status, the survey included full-time (62%), part-time (16%) and contract (22%) staff.

The quantitative survey was supplemented by 41 qualitative, unstructured interviews with AC and HETP faculty members, either face-to-face or on Zoom. This included 29 AC faculty members and 12 HETP faculty members. The open-ended methodology allowed for personal perspectives and reflections to be revealed without leading the participants (Morse 2012; Rapley 2019). In line with the survey categories, these interviewees have been deidentified and no interviews were conducted with staff directly reporting to the researchers in the AC organisational structure. The research was approved by the AC Human Research Ethics Committee.

9.5   Broad Results

Given that AC has over 70 years of a well-entrenched culture of scholarship, the implementation of the AC Research and Scholarship Framework has involved a significant shift in AC's institutional policies. This required an aspect of 'sensemaking' by combining an organisational narrative with a change management implementation strategy (Schwandt 2005; Colville et al. 2012; Ruge et al. 2019). AC's aspiration for university status has provided the organisational narrative necessary to support the change. Our goal was to devise a framework that AC faculty and HDR candidates could and would implement (Figs. 9.3 and 9.4).

After several training sessions between 2016 and 2017, the 2019 survey revealed that approximately 70% of all AC and 70% of all HETP faculty reported that they can clearly differentiate between research and scholarship. Approximately 30% of respondents from each organisation/location, slightly more male respondents and just under 50% of respondents with more than 10 years' experience in higher education reported that they could not clearly differentiate between research and scholarship. This highlights the traditional emphasis on scholarship experienced and embraced by long-term AC faculty. The personal interviews conducted revealed that the majority of AC faculty could reasonably articulate the difference between research and scholarship. However, HETP faculty did not demonstrate confidence in understanding these distinctions.

It is important to note that AC permanent faculty numbers increased significantly in 2018 through acquisition of another provider, and four of AC's five HETPs were

Fig. 9.3   Able to distinguish between research and scholarship by provider type
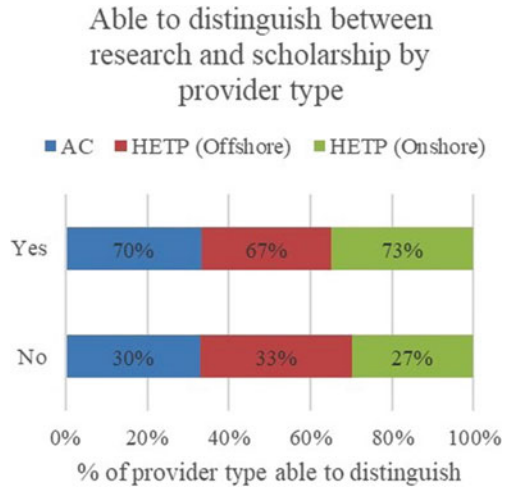
Fig. 9.4   Able to distinguish between research and scholarship by years of experience
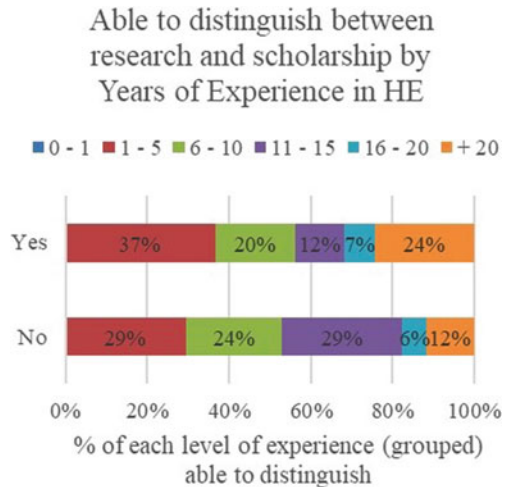
only established that year. Furthermore, many of these new AC staff members have come from other ministry training colleges, which had also focused on disseminating knowledge into denominational constituencies. Given these factors, we consider this a reasonable result and supportive of the efficacy of the Framework. Only one AC interviewee (AC3—1 April 2019), who has been on staff at AC for more than 10 years, disagreed that there was a distinction between research and scholarship. Two early career academics interviewed did express disappointment that they had not been guided by mentors in submitting research to higher ranked journals (AC7—2 April 2019; AC14—9 April 2019). This demonstrates that while the change management plan has been effective, it will be an ongoing process.

9.6   Detailed Discussion

Explore/Discover

Turning now to the detail of the Framework itself, we will begin with the 'Explore/Discover' domain for no reason other than we have to start somewhere (and perhaps because this is the least disputed area). In Boyer's model, *discovery* of new knowledge can only come about by researchers *exploring* new fields of enquiry. TEQSA (2018, p. 13) requires this research to be 'systematic, planned and purposive'. Mentoring faculty in the research and exploration process is vital in increasing research quality (Zuidema et al. 2019). Scholarship incorporates discovery as a central aspect, particularly discovery of developments within a disciplinary field, whether content based or pedagogical.

As with any intrepid explorers breaking new ground, faculty members require the support of senior academic leadership to resource research that leads to the discovery of new knowledge within disciplinary areas or regarding learning and teaching practices. According to the ERA methodology used in Australian universities, example outputs are research books, book chapters and journal articles in high-ranking, peer-reviewed journals or with prestigious academic publishers. Evidence of impact could include citation statistics, journal impact factors, financial grants or modifications to teaching and supervision. TEQSA includes undertaking HDR qualifications within this category, as well as undertaking advanced specialised practice or secondment.

On average, the survey revealed that 68% of AC faculty respondents spend less than five hours per week on writing research publications. Only one interviewee (AC1—13 February 2019) stated that there was insufficient resourcing to allocate research workloads. By contrast, over 85% of HETP respondents spend less than five hours per week on writing research publications. This is largely to be expected as none of AC's HETPs deliver HDR courses. Some HETP faculty did indicate regret that the teaching workload also made it difficult to prioritise research. Teaching workload was also an issue for AC faculty members (AC13—8 April 2019; AC17—15 April 2019; AC18—17 April 2019; AC21—6 May 2019; AC22—7 May 2019).

Interestingly, faculty members with more than 10 years of experience in higher education are still more likely to spend less than five hours per week on writing research publications. One interviewee (HETP1—18 February 2019) commented: 'Research is not a priority for us. Our focus is on transformation of students' lives'. Interviewees from several other onshore and offshore institutions indicated a similar sentiment (HETP2—1 March 2019; HETP3—16 May 2019; HETP4—16 May 2019). This suggests that faculty need more inspiration to explore original ideas and motivate them to discover original knowledge that can make a positive impact on end-users and support AC's strategic priorities (Figs. 9.5 and 9.6).

Influence/Apply

Research and scholarship influences communities within and outside of academia through public dissemination and practical application in real-world settings. While not diminishing the importance of peer-reviewed publications (without which

Fig. 9.5 Hours week spent on writing research publications by provider type
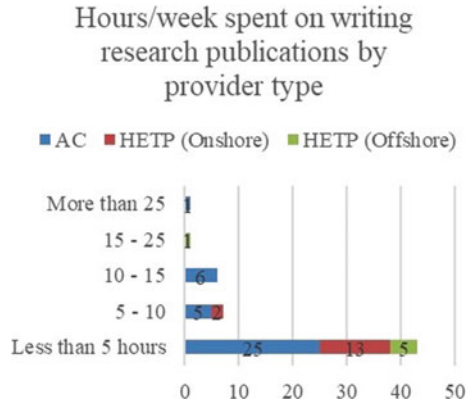
Fig. 9.6 Hours week spent on writing research publications by years of experience in HE

research cannot exist), Neumann (1993, p. 100) notes, 'the important responsibility of academics to communicate research results in other forums to students and the wider public'. The agenda of research is therefore to influence a field through peer-reviewed and, perhaps, other publication outlets, and the related activity of scholarship is application.

Scholarly publication or communication can be in a variety of forms, such as literature reviews, media interviews, newspaper articles, blogs, popular magazines and academic conference presentations. These are some ways to explore the application of knowledge acquired through research. The TEQSA (2018, p. 6) guidance note on scholarship suggests that such application can also be demonstrated by 'contributions to professional bodies or communities of practice in advancing knowledge and practice (such as developing new standards, knowledge resources or codes of practice)'. The close relationship between 'Influence' and 'Apply' again demonstrates the intimate yet finely nuanced relationship between research and scholarship.

Academic or professional conference presentations are an important way to apply new knowledge that has been influential in the field. Literature reviews in peer-reviewed journals, as well as initiating innovative higher education teaching methods based on research also come under this category. Evidence of impact and outcomes is demonstrated through hits on relevant websites, range of readership and the size of the viewing or listening audience. Evidence of increase in student performance after implementation of a new teaching method is also useful. Membership on steering committees or boards of national or international bodies relevant to the discipline or higher education sector advances knowledge and practice, as well as developing benchmarking tools, curriculum or methodology.

According to our survey, most academic faculty members spend under 10 hours per week maintaining currency in their academic discipline. This is also true of faculty members with more than 10 years of experience in higher education. One recent HDR graduate (AC11—3 April 2019) felt that it was important to publish a 'practical book for pastors and leaders', rather than for a select group of academics in the pastoral theology field. Later career academics held that disseminating work that builds church congregations was an important focus and a lasting legacy (AC12—4 April 2019; AC13—8 April 2019; AC26—27 May 2019). Some interviewees spoke of the value of mentoring postgraduate students in publishing their capstone projects (AC23—9 May 2019; AC24—20 May 2019). This area of public dissemination and practical application is clearly a priority for AC and HETP faculty (Figs. 9.7 and 9.8).

Create/Impart

The third domain, 'Create/Impart', refers to the creation of internal structures, norms and practices that facilitate and stimulate research, allowing for the impartation of knowledge through reflective pedagogy. In this way, research is viewed not just as the activity itself, but also as the structures that enable that activity to occur. This recognition is helpful in fostering a 'whole of institution' orientation to research which can be applied in reflective pedagogy. As Hartog (2018, p. 232) reveals, creating new

Fig. 9.7 Hours week spent on maintaining currency in academic discipline by provider type
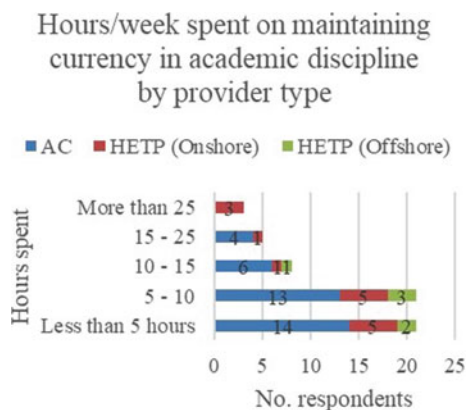
Fig. 9.8 Hours week spent on maintaining currency in academic discipline by years of experience in HE
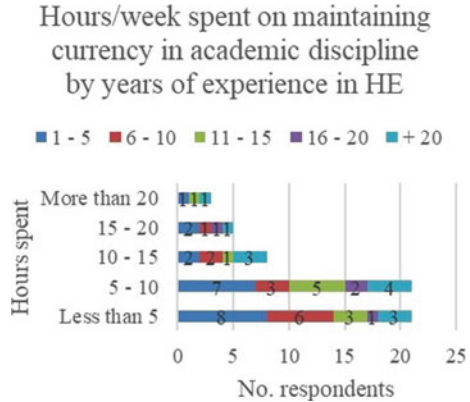
knowledge directed at improving higher education learning and teaching is often seen as 'second class research', yet it is crucial if the impartation of that knowledge is to have an impact.

As stated by TEQSA (2013), effective academic leadership requires institution-wide, interdisciplinary collaboration and contribution. Probert (2014) affirms that scholarship relies on strong leadership at the institutional level, which values scholarship and encourages reflective pedagogy through performance measurement indicators for teaching. This scholarship should be made public and can be built upon by others (Shulman 2001; Lueddeke 2003; Gurung and Wilson 2013). As Perry and Smart (2007) note, this addresses the nexus between knowledge production by researchers and knowledge utility for stakeholders.

Where faculty are engaging in writing for publication, most survey respondents reported that the purpose of this is to share knowledge with the broader community. Very few respondents reported that the purpose of publishing is to contribute to the scholarly community or to increase academic rigour and the reputation of the institution. Broadly speaking, this suggests that faith-based institutions, whether primary institutes or HETPs, are less likely to have a high proportion of research-active faculty (Fig. 9.9).

All AC and HETP faculty members were engaged in scholarship across a wide diversity of activities, such as publishing in popular journals and denominational e-magazines; speaking at academic conferences; researching in higher education learning and teaching; writing textbooks; and engaging in communities of practice. One AC onshore lecturer noted that his goal was to 'get field research out to general public' (AC21—6 May 2019). Another respondent justified publishing popular books and articles by noting that these publications were positive marketing tools for the college (AC3—1 April 2019). It was clear from the interviews that faculty members nearing the end of their academic journey were more focused on making an impact in the broader community. By contrast, early career faculty at both AC and HETPs were more interested in pursuing research publications with high-quality academic outlets as a pathway towards promotion.

The primary reason faculty members should publish their work

■ AC   ■ HETP (Onshore)   ■ HETP (Offshore)
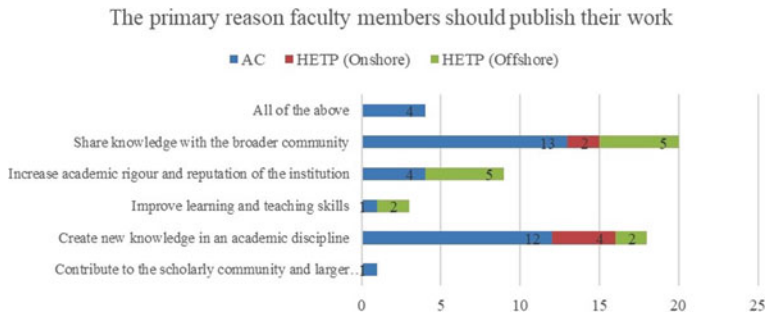
Fig. 9.9 The primary reason faculty members should publish their work

The connection between research and reflective pedagogy, therefore, still needs further development and support. While the impartation of knowledge is a recognised priority for AC and HETP faculty, connecting research to institutional advancement or learning and teaching skills remains an area requiring further focus.

Engage/Integrate

Finally, 'Engage/Integrate' highlights that engaging in new knowledge transfer and interdisciplinary research collaboration then leads to integration through communities of practice. Fundamentally, this recognises that both research and scholarship are communal rather than individual pursuits. One does not achieve positive impact and outcomes through insular or self-indulgent research. Rather, collaboration in research and scholarship is vital to ensuring that new knowledge is effectively integrated into academic and broader communities of practice. Hutchings et al. (2011) argue that innovative scholarship must focus on classroom teaching, professional development, institutional assessment and the reward of teaching excellence. TEQSA (2018, p. 6) lists as scholarship, 'leadership of advanced professional development activities (through, for example, presentations on the current state of knowledge, practice, or teaching and learning in a field, contributions to professional journals)'. One AC lecturer listed 'wellbeing, community and social impact, and faith formation' as the primary drivers for scholarly activity (AC12—4 April 2019). These activities would relate to the 'Engage/Integrate' domain.

9.7   Conclusion

In general, most academics agree that the primary responsibilities of higher education institutions are research, scholarship, learning, teaching and service. However, academic communities have demonstrated significant uncertainty about the research-scholarship relationship, especially where the rubber meets the road in practical activities and outcomes. Not surprisingly, perhaps because of a more direct connection with funding, research often seems to assume an elevated position at public

universities while scholarship may be seen as incidental or peripheral. By contrast, limited government funding and a desire to contribute to the common good has meant that Christian institutions focus more on scholarly engagement. If Christian higher education institutions are ever going to make the leap into the university playing field in Australia, corporate governing bodies must invest in high-quality research that leads to end-user outcomes.

The Framework described in this chapter is a harbinger of the global impact that is envisioned. By supporting the four modes of scholarship that Boyer described—discovery, integration, application and teaching—but also relating them more directly to aspects of research (broadly understood), we open possibilities and enrich what teaching and research can look like for an Australian Christian higher education institution. As researchers search and find new knowledge, they are encouraged to utilise this to bring internal and external change. Academic leaders facilitate impact through scaffolding research practice via communities of practice.

Both the quantitative and qualitative data obtained regarding the adoption of the Framework at AC indicate positive outcomes and trends but with further work to do. Importantly, some of the natural instincts of a faith-based institution support the emphasis on practical and impactful research and scholarship. It is our hope that seeing the AC Research and Scholarship Framework in action will assist other higher education providers to more clearly explain, and ultimately motivate, faculty members to engage in vital, fulfilling and transformational research and scholarship. Perhaps more pointedly, we trust that it will embolden senior leadership to strategically and appropriately resource these endeavours.

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Chapter 10
Christian Higher Education: A Frog in the Kettle or a Light on the Hill?

Craig B. Murison

Abstract When viewed in the context of the broad social imaginary of neoliberalism and economic rationalism of western nations, Christian education's reason and relevance is highlighted. The neoliberal, economic rationalist policies of many western countries have increasingly seen education become a servant to market forces and held accountable for its contribution to economic development. Governments have focussed on employment outcomes from higher education programmes and have attached the development of generic graduate attributes to continued regulatory accreditation. In complying with these requirements, Christian Higher Education Providers' (CHEPs) risk neglecting the broader concept of human flourishing for the common good. As a part of what makes CHEPs Christian, they not only seek to provide high quality, employable graduates who are knowledgeable and skilled in their discipline, they also seek to produce graduates who have developed character which reflects Christian values and beliefs. When human flourishing is considered in the development of graduate attributes the goal is bigger than just the narrow focus of a neoliberal view of education. This chapter provides a background from the literature to inform policy development in Christian higher education in relation to graduate attributes. It presents a cautionary message to Christian education providers, at every level, of the potential risk of simply adopting the principles of neoliberalism and economic rationalism and diluting their Christian identities. It seeks to help CHEPs to position themselves and their graduates to contribute not only to the economic prosperity of their community and nation but also to human flourishing and the common good.

10.1 Introduction

Christian Higher Education Providers (CHEPs) seek to be distinct from non-Christian providers. The differences they aspire to achieve are related to their foundational Christian values and beliefs. It seems reasonable to assume the graduate outcomes

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which they aim to achieve will be inclusive of these Christian distinctives. As a result of these Christian values and beliefs, CHEPs seek to achieve graduate outcomes which go beyond the development of employability skills and career-oriented lifelong learning capabilities. They are also motivated by developing people who will make contributions to human flourishing and the common good. Considering the current neoliberal, economic rationalist framework within which governments are making policy decisions, CHEPs should be cautious not to allow their graduate outcomes to be developed or enacted with an emphasis on fulfilling regulatory requirements more reflective of the neoliberal agenda of governments than of their Christian beliefs and values.

If CHEPs are not vigilant it is entirely possible they will find they have become the frog in the kettle rather than the light on the hill they aspire to be. Just as with the frog in the slowly heated kettle, which enjoys the unusual warmth but ends up boiled to death, CHEPs risk gradually and almost unwittingly, being shaped by the dominant neoliberal social imaginary of today, increment by increment, until the differences between CHEPs and non-Christian providers is non-existent or, at best, token.

10.2   Neoliberalism—The Dominant Social Imaginary

For some decades western political policy has been guided by what LaMothe (2016) refers to as the dominant social imaginary in society, neoliberalism. Taylor (2007) affirms all societies have a social imaginary. A social imaginary is, according to Taylor (2007) a set of normative expectations which guide the ways people behave. In using the word imagination Taylor is not suggesting anything is made up or make believe. He uses it in reference to the ways people perceive the world around them through a set of common understandings and deeply rooted expectations of what is normal. In other words, the social imaginary of any group of people, during a particular period of time, is the default position of social order and arrangement of that group. Taylor describes social imaginary as the lens through which people filter information collected from their experiences, relationships and environment. If it was common practice to wear glasses with a red tint in them things would look normal that way. The world would look odd, as if something was out of place, when the glasses were not worn. Just as a red tint in a piece of glass changes the normal appearance of things when they are viewed through it, a social imaginary establishes the norms of a society. The market-driven economy, as seen in neoliberalism, is identified by Taylor as one of the aspects which pervades the dominant social imaginary of western societies, 'once we are well installed in the modern social imaginary it seems the only possible one, the only one that makes sense' (2002, p. 99). It is the foundation upon which the sense of how people should act and relate to others of any society in any place and time (Hall and Lamont 2013).

Neoliberalism is a 'set of economic policies and supporting ideas' in which a free market is the central tenet (Connell 2013, p. 280). It changes the way social services

are viewed, including education, from being services provided to people, to objects to be bought or sold. In this way, education becomes an industry and education services become a means for government to achieve economic ends. Education, like any other product, must be seen to contribute positively in economic terms to justify government investment. Within the neoliberal economic policy framework, higher education is expected to repay any investment made by government and, beyond that, provide a return on investment. It is expected this will be realised through the future economic contributions of graduates. This approach has led to increased focus and value being placed on programmes which produce highly employable graduates with the ability to contribute to the economic prosperity of the nation throughout their working lives. Within this neoliberal social imaginary, the human being is seen as *homo economicus* (Bader-Saye 2016, p. 96). Homo economicus is largely motivated by self-interest and interested in the accumulation of wealth. Once this modern vision of humanity is accepted and life is organised around this economic telos…

> we find ourselves, ironically, needing to nurture just such individuals to serve the self-regulating function of the market. In other words, rather than seeking to restore fallen nature and inculcate virtues such as temperance, love and justice, the free market requires that we continually reproduce self-interested consumers (Bader-Saye 2016, p. 98).

Thus, the system itself becomes self-serving and self-perpetuating. Christians should be challenging the neoliberal orientation of economic policies and practices by broadening the focus to include the pursuit of the common good (Bayer-Sayde 2016, p. 98). The neoliberal social imaginary results in a kind of flourishing. The kind where some flourish in economic terms at the expense of others. Human flourishing for the common good sees the aim being that all flourish and contribute to the flourishing of others.

10.3   CHEPs—Frog in the Kettle?

In western societies, CHEPs, as with everything else, have existed for decades within the dominant social imaginary of neoliberalism. In Australia, successive governments have prioritised investment in tertiary education in career-specific degree programmes which have the potential to produce high levels of employability. There has been a commensurate lack of enthusiasm for programmes of study which allow individuals to explore more esoteric, non-career specific programmes, regardless of the ways such programmes contribute to personal development and any sense of human flourishing for the common good. The Liberal Arts is one example of this trend. Liberal Arts courses are designed to help people become flourishing human beings by helping them discover who they are not only what area of employment they will have (Langer et al. 2010). Instead of encouraging human flourishing by the development of degrees such as the Liberal Arts, higher education programmes risk being reduced to the lowest common denominator of impartation of technical skills. This is like 'reducing human flourishing to production and consumption' (Langer

et al. 2010, p. 352). As Connell (2013, p. 12) observes, this economic prioritising of education programmes increases the degree to which education, at all levels, is viewed as an economic tool of government and is thus expected to be driven by market-based thinking.

When viewed in market-based perspectives students become clients or customers, academic staff become programme deliverers, salespeople and human resources and employers and government become stakeholders. People and courses become commodities. As long as students are enrolling and paying fees and staff are generating profits in their courses, outcomes are seen as positive. The measures of success are skewed towards financial outcomes, employer satisfaction measures and completion rates. Learning outcomes which contribute to the achievement of these measures are prioritised. Evidence of the influence of neoliberalism can be seen in the graduate attributes of higher education providers.

Graduate attributes are skills, knowledge, attitudes and values which stand within, but distinct from, the discipline studies and which will make positive contributions to the potential for success of graduates in the various jobs they may hold throughout their working lives (Spronken-Smith et al. 2015). They are qualities that help the student in their non-working and working lives. As such graduate attributes are qualities, skills and understandings that equip students to contribute to the social good during their lives (Boud and Solomon 2006, p. 212).

As Woodhouse (1999, p. 29) claims, the push for higher education providers to develop graduate attributes was primarily motivated by increasing expectations of accountability by government. The neoliberal philosophies underpinning economic policy development in Australia saw accountability as essential to justify public expenditure. The Australian government was looking for ways it could ensure universities that were focusing on developing characteristics to ensure graduates are employable throughout their working lives as a way of justifying its continued funding of the sector. Universities must now have a statement of graduate attributes as a requirement for funding (Gallagher 2000). Gallagher (2000) states that future accountability measures may include evidence of the measures universities have in place to achieve their graduate attributes. This adds weight to the establishment of good processes of development and review of graduate attributes by all higher education providers. It also points to the risk that CHEPs develop graduate attributes primarily to meet regulatory requirements with little or no thought to how this might affect curriculum design and delivery and the formation of their graduates.

An internet search of the graduate attributes aspired to by Australian CHEPs is quite revealing and representative of what is discovered in a wider search of graduate attributes of CHEPs. They all include the type of generic lifelong learning skills required by the national regulator, such as communication, personal and social skills, critical and creative thinking and collaborative working capabilities. Typically, in a list of graduate attributes there are one or, at most two, graduate attributes which make any specific reference to the Christian nature of the provider. Often, there is, seemingly, no attempt to clarify any intent the generic attributes should be influenced by the overtly Christian ones. This seems in line with Hull's (2003) claim that Christian educators tend to accept an approach to Christian education which

does not meet their uniquely Christian aspirations. Hull (2003) argues true Christian education doesn't just change the personality of the institution. It reshapes it entirely.

Most Australian CHEPs make their graduate attributes readily available on their websites. The graduate attributes of two of the Australian CHEPs are not accessible via the website and have to be requested. The majority include seven or eight graduate attribute statements with one CHEP listing only three and another listing ten very detailed statements. One CHEP reveals its roots as a theological college in that its graduate attributes are statements of readiness for Christian ministry and service and, arguably, have no reference to generic work skills or human virtues. All of the other Australian CHEPs address generic work skills and include at least one graduate attribute clearly related to their sense of Christian identity. Virtues such as justice, integrity and ethics are included either clearly or implied in most lists of graduate attributes.

Only two Australian CHEPs refer to the idea of the common good, directly or implied, in their graduate attributes. None of the CHEPs include human virtues as an integrated component of their graduate attributes. It is noteworthy that the exception to the paucity of reference or connection to Christian distinctive in graduate attributes is Alphacrucis College. The six graduate attributes listed by Alphacrucis College (2019, URL) all have connections to Christian beliefs and values and have clear connections to the concept of the common good. With the importance of the development of human virtues in mind, all of the CHEPs graduate attributes have room for improvement.

While all higher education providers have a clear educative responsibility to equip graduates with lifelong learning skills, so they can thrive in the diverse range of careers and jobs they will hold in their lives, the motivation behind CHEPs to do so ought to be somewhat different to that of non-Christian providers. It is not only to create the best opportunity for each graduate to be economically successful and to find fulfilment in their lives. To be truly reflective of their claimed Christian distinctives, the Christian imperative of these providers should be evident in an undergirding goal of human flourishing and the common good. Furthermore, the organisational behaviour of CHEPs should also be reflective more of their claimed Christian distinctives than of the prevailing neoliberal social imaginary.

CHEPs make claims of being concerned about the whole person, not just the intellectual aspects of a person's development but also the spiritual aspects. They market themselves as 'Christian'. By this they imply they align their courses and institutional behaviour toward the beliefs of the Christian faith. As the Australian Christian Higher Education Alliance (ACHEA) argued in a submission to the senate legal and constitutional affairs reference committee (ACHEA 2018, p. 4), 'Faith-based tertiary institutions are places of education and learning but are also communities which educate in a context in which the spiritual life and formation of our students are nurtured'. ACHEA (2018) further argues that CHEPs teach Christian doctrine and beliefs 'around metaphysics, epistemology, human identity, morality, spirituality, sexuality, social structure, and legal and political theory' (p. 4). The submission also frames the purposes of Christian higher education in terms of character, behaviour traits, communication, relationships, and moral and ethical decision making. Yet, a

review of the graduate attributes of many of these same institutions does not reflect the same level of commitment to their claimed Christian distinctives. The weakness of Christian distinctive in the graduate attributes of CHEPs raises the question where else in these institutions the influence of neoliberalism has consciously or unconsciously subverted their Christian values and beliefs, the frog in the kettle effect.

Concern about the domination of neoliberalism in higher education is not exclusive to Christian higher education. A different approach is not only desirable, it is necessary (Rizvi and Lingard 2010) to prevent the 'disastrous effects on the public good in the name of the free market' (Edwards-Schuth 2016, p. 12). The neoliberalist philosophy, marked by its view 'the measure of man is money', impacts on every area of higher education including 'thought, action, methodology and outcomes' (Edwards-Schuth 2016, p. 12). The corporatisation of educational institutions which is encouraged in a neoliberal paradigm attempts to reduce…

> … pedagogical practice to nothing more than a commercial transaction; employ a top-down authoritarian style of power; mimic a business culture; infantilize students by treating them as consumers; […]. Higher education today has nothing to say about teaching students how to think for themselves in a democracy… Hence students are treated like commodities and research data–or, worse, as institutional performance indicators–to be ingested and spit out as potential job seekers for whom education has become merely a form of training (Giroux 2015, pp. 106–107).

The idea of lifelong learning has become a central concept informing education policy development in Australia. The interest of government in lifelong learning, shaped by the neoliberal agenda, is primarily economic. The development of lifelong learning skills can equip individuals with capabilities needed for them to acquire new knowledge and skills (Cropley 1980) after their formal education has concluded. This is considered increasingly important in a work environment in which people will have multiple jobs and different careers during their lifetimes. Watson (2003, p. 3) describes lifelong learning as, 'a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment, in all roles circumstances, and environments'. It is the internalisation of an ongoing supportive process which facilitates the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding a person will need to be confident in and enjoy, new work contexts (Longworth and Davies 1996). While government might view the development of lifelong learning in graduates by schools and higher education providers in economic terms, it can make a significant contribution to enriching all aspects of peoples' lives (Roche 2017).

Lifelong learning needs to challenge the dominant paradigm of education solely for economic purposes (Webb et al. 2017). Economically motivated approaches have not made any significant inroads towards ending inequities. Lifelong learning should be viewed as more than economic gain, it should be valued for its addition to human flourishing. CHEPs should aim to establish graduate attributes that reflect why we learn, as well as what we learn. From this approach a new kind of society, one with a focus on human flourishing for the common good, can emerge.

10.4 Human Flourishing

Many attempts to define human flourishing draw on Aristotle's concept of eudemonia which refers to the highest good in life. When translated to English, eudemonia is commonly seen to refer to human flourishing. MacIntyre (1967, p. 59) describes human flourishing, in simple terms, as people 'doing well, behaving well and faring well'. Giving an expanded description of human flourishing, VanderWeele (2017) claims the evidence of human flourishing can be seen when people experience positive outcomes in five domains of life. These include happiness and life satisfaction, mental and physical health, meaning and purpose, character and virtue, and close social relationships. Human flourishing is best achieved when people have a sense of purpose and meaning, or telos (MacIntyre 2007). MacIntyre goes beyond the idea that human flourishing is achieved when a person is engaged in the fulfilment of their telos, their meaning and purpose. He further claims that human flourishing is best attained when the telos being worked towards serves not only the individual's well-being but also contributes to what is best for all, the well-being of others. As Annas (2009) puts it, the key to human flourishing can be found when the motivation of doing the right thing is behind actions and behaviours. In other words, when it is contributing to the common good. MacIntyre claims the development of the virtues which scaffold the achievement of telos is one way to contribute to the achievement of human flourishing.

Research into well-being, happiness and mindfulness have been hallmarks of positive psychology which has asked questions about what makes life worthwhile such as what makes one moment better than another in life; what is happiness and what is an optimal experience? (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000, p. 5). Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi define positive psychology as, 'A science of positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions promises to improve quality of life and prevent the pathologies that arise when life is barren and meaningless' (2014, p. 279). It is the study of what makes life worth living, about human flourishing. They address issues of human flourishing on the subjective, individual and civic levels and claim the achievement of human flourishing is primarily through the development of human virtues. They believe the evidence that human flourishing is connected to the development of virtues so strongly that they call for 'massive research on human strengths and virtues' (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2014, p. 284).

Dahlsgaard et al. (2005) argues that the virtues of courage, justice, humanity, temperance, wisdom and transcendence are the foundations of flourishing and Park et al. (2004) connect virtues such as these to life satisfaction. In responding to the question of what leads to or makes a flourishing and happy human life Younkins (2010, p. 23) points out that human flourishing is a determinant and happiness is a derivative. In other words, happiness is a product of flourishing. It is flourishing which should be pursued if happiness is the desired outcome.

The neoliberal social imaginary pays little or no attention to the elements human flourishing which do not fit a limited mechanistic commodifying economic model.

CHEPs whose aimed for graduate attributes do not include the development of virtues to guide people to the identification of their telos and scaffold human flourishing for the common good are seriously at risk of being misleading when they claim to be Christian. Christians make the claim they are seeking to become like Christ. The evidence of becoming like Christ can best be seen through steady growth in caring behaviours towards others (Hudson 2010). The development of virtues leads a person to consistently choose to do the right thing (Mattison 2008). Caring behaviours become the behaviours of choice, informing actions motivated by good. As Langer et al. (2010) point out, '*Good* means life according to design—whether for a human being or a hibiscus' (p. 340). Christ is the ultimate bearer of God's image (Colossians 1:15, 1 Corinthians 4:4, Hebrews 1:3). Christians believe all humans are designed and created in the image of God, the Imago Dei (Genesis 1:27). To be human is to be a bearer of God's image. Thus, as Christians become more like Christ they become more human (Langer et al. 2010). This idea of compassion and caring behaviour towards others, an attitude and motivation towards seeking the best for all, as evidence of becoming like Christ represents a Christ-centred vision of human flourishing.

> Christ truly shared and completely expressed a fully human nature. If flourishing means fully living out one's nature, then our pursuit of Christ-likeness does not move us away from true human flourishing but toward it. If Christian institutions of higher learning are committed to a Christocentric vision of human flourishing, then they must not merely teach students about Christ, they must teach students to live like Christ (Langer et al. 2010, p. 352).

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 13:13, espoused the three virtues of faith, love and hope. Aquinas (2008, n. p.) referred to these as the three 'supernatural' virtues. Perhaps these need to be deeply embedded in the graduate outcomes of CHEPs.

10.5   CHEPs—The Light on the Hill?

The impact of the dominant neoliberal social imaginary for CHEPs is potentially far greater than what appears in the written institutional aspirational statements of graduate attributes. Central to Christian belief is that faith is the way salvation is achieved, and not any action people take themselves (Romans 3:26; 3:29; 4:1–5; Galatians 2:16). Yet Christianity also teaches that if someone claims to be a Christian but there is no evidence of good actions and behaviours in the ways they live their lives they are probably not really Christian (James 2:18).

Christians are endeavouring to live their lives the way Christ led His, identifying and meeting needs in others (Kärkkäinen 2016). In other words, following the Biblical example of Christ, living with care as a priority. When the members of a community are viewed as commodities, as in the neoliberal paradigm, care becomes a lower priority, as LaMothe (2016, p. 30) highlights when he states that within the neoliberal paradigm, 'Care is, at best, secondary to the values of efficiency, productivity, market expansion, and profit, all of which tend to be inimical to the seemingly inefficient, laborious, and profitless realities of caring for others'. As CHEPs seek to secure their

position in the market, there is a clear caution here to work to make sure that care, so much at the heart of what it means be Christian, does not become a secondary priority.

The central tenets of neoliberalism include—enabling people to act out rational self-interests (LaMothe 2016); commodifying people and goods (Sandel 2012); and that greed can benefit the common good (Couldry 2010; Duménil and Lévy 2011; Harvey 2005, 2010). With these tenets in mind, examination of the behaviour of organisations is one way of identifying the paradigm which is influencing them—their consciously or unconsciously chosen social imaginary. One key place to look is the ways in which people are treated by the organisation. Are they valued members of a community with needs to be cared for, or are they commodities rewarded for production and cut off for failure to produce? How are redundancies handled? Are legislative requirements the boundaries for industrial matters or is care a moderating factor. Just as the Bible teaches that claimed salvation with no evidence of changed behaviour brings the claim of salvation into question (James 2:26), the Christianity of organisations which treat their people as commodities should have their claim to being Christian brought into question.

LaMothe (2016) describes neoliberalism as a colonising force, a colonisation which extends to Christian communities. LaMothe (2016) encourages a resistance of and rejection of the values and premises of neoliberalism, stating,

> I believe the only viable position is one of Christ against culture—a stance that can be taken with brothers and sisters of other religious and humanistic traditions that seek to raise critical consciousness while establishing caring relations and collective conversations about the common good for all of creation (p. 39).

Neoliberalism, it seems, stands in the way of a telos of human flourishing, a main aim of the of the Christian faith, and replaces it with a telos of self-interest to the exclusion of the interests of others (Giroux 2014, p. 3). Within the neoliberal paradigm human flourishing is largely seen in terms of individualised economic outcomes. Less attention is given to any sense of purpose, contentment, happiness and satisfaction which are key components of human flourishing. Flourishing and the resulting happiness, rather than being a worthwhile goal in and of itself, is thought of in terms of happy workers means more productive workers and greater economic output. In this paradigm, societal flourishing is strongly connected to improved living conditions which result from better economic results. For graduate attributes to make a better contribution to the attainment of human flourishing higher education providers must address the development of virtues.

If it is a priority of CHEPs that their students become more like Christ in the time they are enrolled in their studies, their graduate attributes should reflect this priority. As the telos of human flourishing is a main aim of the Christian faith and human flourishing requires the development of human virtues, it can be concluded that, in order to achieve their Christian objectives CHEPs should clearly include the development of human virtues in their aimed for graduate attributes.

The integration of virtues into how we behave is vital to human flourishing (Craig and Snook 2014). Virtues give shape to what we treasure and give our lives meaning

and purpose. Carse (2006, p. 42) proposes that the virtues of healthy empathy, a sustainable compassion for others and joining in solidarity with those in need are processes which are important for communities to realise human flourishing. Empathy is 'feeling with' another (Noddings (1984). Sustaining compassion for others involves being able to identify suffering in others and acting and behaving in ways which make it clear we want the suffering to stop (Van der Cingel (2009). Joining in solidarity occurs when people care 'enough about the plight of others to do something in support of them' (Gunson 2009, p. 246). Again, it seems to be stating the obvious to mention the critical nature of this to institutions claiming to be Christian.

10.6   Conclusion

As long as economic rationalist policies dominate the political landscape within which CHEPs operate, they need to resist the temptation to develop programmes only to satisfy regulators. Instead Australian CHEPs should be exploring curricula with graduate attributes embedded which deliberately seek to build the potential for all graduates to experience human flourishing. Such curricula would include opportunities for learning experiences and outcomes which strategically give students opportunity to grow and develop as virtuous human beings and learning activities which explore virtues such as faith, love and hope.

Human flourishing is evidenced when people are doing well in more than just their income level, socioeconomic standing or the degree to which they are making positive contributions to international or national economic objectives of governments. Human flourishing is experienced when people can rise beyond seeking the fulfilment of their own needs and are motivated to engage in working for the common good. Within a Christ-centred human flourishing the motivation involves behaviours and actions of compassion and care which seek to achieve flourishing of all. As mentioned earlier, it may be possible for an individual to flourish by themselves, however for all to flourish the flourishing must be directed for the good of many—for the common good. In this way, people who experience human flourishing have a sense they are contributing to something higher, to a purpose beyond themselves, to a telos. No doubt there is a minimum position of prosperity required before people can truly experience human flourishing, but economic prosperity should not be the central aim.

As CHEPs review their graduate attributes and how they can be better embedded in curricula, vision and mission needs to be a significant reference point for the work (Popham 2007). To be deliberately Christ-centred, instead of consciously or unconsciously adopting the dominant social imaginary, human flourishing must be a part of this vision and mission along with prosperity. Graduate attributes can provide an excellent scaffolding within which Australian CHEPs can develop courses which transcend the current economic rationalist focus of governments. In fact, if Australian CHEPs are to effectively contribute to the common good, in ways which lead to

equal access to both prosperity and other aspects of human flourishing, they must not restrict their graduate attributes to economic outcomes alone. Graduate attributes must be extended to encompass goals to develop virtuous as well as knowledgeable and skilled graduates.

If the Christian virtues of faith, love and hope are deeply embedded in the graduate attributes and organisational practices of CHEPs and they drive the decision-making for leadership and management in both corporate and academic areas, it is more likely they will instil a sense of purpose, vision and calling into the lives of their students than if they are not. CHEPs can help students develop a 'compelling vision of the flourishing life, and to strive alongside them to cultivate it' (Langer et al. 2010, p. 358).

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Chapter 11
Clarifying Australian Christian School Purposes in the Neoliberal Marketplace

Jacqueline Greentree

Abstract This chapter explores how Australian Christian Schools wrestle with competing purposes. There are demands from various stakeholders including government, churches, parents, teachers, students, school boards, higher education providers and employers. The chapter will highlight some of the foundations and purposes of Christian Schools, and how these relate to the neoliberal purposes that underpin much of current educational policy. The neoliberal agenda is the prevailing agenda in many developed economies and can reduce education to be a competitive pursuit with its chief aim to produce workers with the capacity to drive economic growth. While Christian Schools often take a broader educational focus, with a Christ-centred ethos to promote spiritual and character development along with doing good for the community in which you belong, the relationship with neoliberalism is complex. This chapter is part of an on-going study analysing public facing, web-based information from Christian Schools. It will use discourse analysis and an order of worth framework to look at representations of value and purpose. Considering on-going public debate about the funding of Christian Schools and the Ruddock Review into religious freedoms, this chapter looks to unpack and provide understanding about what Christian Schools bring to the Australian educational landscape.

Keywords Christian schools · Neoliberalism · Purpose · Public perception · Orders of worth

11.1 Introduction

Christian Schools in Australia have been the fastest-growing schooling group in recent history (Maddox 2015). This growth and emerging prominence has brought its share of contention as these schools find their place in the communities in which they are placed. Christian Schools, in Australia, are independent schools that often operate in isolation. However, they often share a similar purpose and understanding

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about what a Christian education means. This chapter investigates how changing expectations for schools have brought the purposes of Christian education into the public spotlight. It will briefly highlight the impact of the overarching neoliberal frame that often dominates national and global education policy development and how a Christian understanding of education might be understood within this frame.

This chapter is based on an on-going research study that compares how Christian schools position themselves in the marketplace, and what 'orders of worth' they draw on. Orders of Worth is a pragmatic sociological framework developed by Boltanski and Thévenot (1999) and used scholars by such Anagnostopoulos et al. (2016) to analyse the values that underpin discursive statements of purpose and to show competing purposes might be identified. The study aims to assist Australian Christian Schools to better evaluate how they are promoting their school's purpose via websites both their own sites and the information published on Government sites such as My School.

Debates about the purposes of school and the role of religion and church in education have been evident in the Australian media and public discourse. Most recently these have been centred around funding and religious freedoms (Karp 2018a, b; Koziol 2018). There has been a strongly held view by some that there should be a clear separation between religious instruction and education and schools that promote religious worldviews should not be funded by the government (Maddox 2014; Symes and Gulson 2008; Byrne 2013). The funding private schools again became a prominent issue with the Morrison Government signing an agreement with Independent and Catholic schools to guarantee $4.6 billion in funding in 2018. The agreement was due to concerns about recurrent funding levels due to the recommendations of Gonski Review into education funding (Koziol 2018; Karp 2018a). Further fuel to the discussion about the kind of schools and education Australia desires occurred when elements of the Ruddock Review into Religious Freedoms were leaked to the media in October 2018 (Karp 2018b; Elton-Pym 2018). The leaks provided some limited information about recommendations of the review which supported on-going religious freedoms including the freedom to discriminate based on religious grounds (Karp 2018b; Crowe 2018). Even more recently the Israel Folau case, where religious statements on social media sites caused the termination of a sporting contract, further inflamed discussions about free speech, religious freedoms and the grounds upon which discrimination should be allowed (Koziol 2019).

These debates are not new in Australia. Historically the issues of religious freedom and which schools should receive government funding have existed since their formation in colonial Australia (Byrne 2013). Up until 1830 schools were largely the purview of the Anglican Church, who established the majority of them. State Governments, as an arm of the English Parliament, supported the Anglican Church in setting up schools, providing the Church land and funds (Barcan 1995; Byrne 2013). From 1830, the Anglican Church was not the only church prioritising education, the Catholic, Presbyterian and Methodist churches also were establishing schools in the colonies as part of their charitable activities. Both the State and church saw education, as the best way foster morality and religious understanding in the colony. Providing a moral grounding was the primary purpose of these early schools (Barcan 1995). This

parenting role was required due to the lack of family life, as Australian society at the time was largely made up of convict or newly ex-convict families (Barcan 1995).

11.2 Church and State Based Schooling in Australia

The establishment of State Schools in Australia firstly came about to service small communities where the churches found it more difficult to fund and establish schools (Barcan 1995). State, common or national schools (as they were known) were more deliberately established from the 1850s as a way of removing denominationalism from education (Byrne 2013). This was in part to marginalise the Catholic influence in education. Religious education could occur as first and last part of the day with the middle four hours devoted to 'secular' education (Ely 2014). The term 'secular' used to describe this move of schooling away from direct control of the church is described by Ely (2014, p. 385) who quotes Parkes, the New South Wales Premier, when introducing secular education into the Education Act in 1872, "In the construction of this Act the words 'secular instruction' shall be held to include general religious teaching as distinct from dogmatical or polemical theology". Parkes, representative of his time, believed schools did not require clergy to instruct children directly but that anyone who regularly attended church could impart the moral and religious requirements into classroom teaching. Therefore, teachers, through their own church based understanding of religion and morality, would be equipped to carry out this instruction (Barcan 1995). The teaching of the religious components which occurred before formal school lessons was granted to protestant churches. This move towards a 'secular' education was controversial and required statements by leaders such as Parkes to reassure the community and ensure religious and moral foundations of schooling would remain (Byrne 2013).

The Catholic church resisted these moves to 'secularise' education and established themselves as independent from State funding (Barcan 1995). The Catholic system had been marginalised through these moves as they, along with other religious minorities such as Jews, had their access to State schools largely removed (Ely 2014). It was not until 1962 that Catholic schools were able to access governments funds (Barcan 1995). The change was prompted when Our Lady of Mercy Preparatory School in Goulburn closed due to a lack in facilities, and the local State School could not cater for all the additional students (Down 2000). The disruption caused by the school closure and the associated strike actions by teachers paved the way for other funding reforms for schools that flowed from the Karmel Report which was commissioned in 1972 (Barcan 1995). Each Australian State, in their move to a 'secular' rather than a religious foundation for schools, applied the understanding of the term differently due to different interpretations of what a 'secular' education entailed (Ely 2014). The view espoused by Parkes laid the foundation for New South Wales' approach. However, other States such as Victoria saw the secularisation more about the removal of religion from schools more completely. Sunday School, which most children attended, could fulfil the religious instruction for families thereby removing

some of the denominational and other tensions that existed (Ely 2014). These early moves to an ill-defined 'secular' education laid the foundation of the debates that continue about the purposes of education, the role that church and religion plays and how Christian Schools are viewed today (Byrne 2013).

11.3   Modern Christian Schooling in Australia (Themelic Schools)

Modern Christian schooling in Australia makes up a small but significant part of the schooling landscape (Cross et al. 2018). Christian schools sit within the independent school sector; independent schools make up approximately 14.5% of all Australian schools (ISCA 2018). The establishment of modern Christian Schools began with Dutch immigrants bringing a Kuypernian version of Christian education to Tasmania in the 1950s (Maddox 2011). Kuyper, a Dutch theologian, journalist, philosopher and Prime Minister of the Netherlands (1901–1905) saw the importance of family and community involvement in education. He also believed that schools should be supported by the State financially in providing a suitable education including a faith-based education but that it should be free of State interference in operation as the State should not interfere in what is taught in the classroom (Maddox 2011). Changes to Federal Government funding of schools from the 1950s by the Menzies, and subsequently, Whitlam and Hawke Governments provided opportunity for development of independent schools to be established with Federal Government funding support (Maddox 2011).

Long (1996a) has provided a history of modern Australian Christian Schools, whose early growth occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The emergence is due to several factors including the changes to school funding. The Karmel report delivered to the Whitlam Government in 1972 provided a path for the Federal Government to become more involved in school education by providing funding programs for schools (Lingard 2000). The federal government had come under pressure to intervene due to demographic changes which were adding large numbers of students to the school system, and State Governments were finding it difficult to fund them (Down 2000). The demographic change was due to several factors, including social and technological changes which led to students attending and completing high school rather than going to work after primary school and the post-war baby boom. Through the recommendations of the Karmel Report the federal government provided recurrent funding for schools for the first time along with further grants for capital projects and teacher programs (Lingard 2000). This funding was for both State and private schools as funding was based on need (Lingard 2000). The Karmel report in its summary and recommendations states that.

> The deficiencies are not spread evenly among all schools and school systems. Differences in deficiencies require differences in treatment. Accordingly, the Committee is recommending relatively larger grants for some schools and school systems. Its long-term aim is that, by the end of the present decade, Australian schools should all have reached minimum acceptable

standards; and its detailed recommendations have been determined on the principle that help should be given to all schools below these standards to approach them by that time. It follows that those schools which are presently nearer the standards will receive somewhat less help. It should be apparent· that this approach to need implies that schools with fewer real resources have greater needs than those with more. This is the interpretation of need that has been adopted by the Committee (Interim Committee of the Australian Schools 1973, p. 140).

The Whitlam Government's philosophy on broadening the base of funding to schools was a deliberate systemisation to promote equality and access. Education was a national concern and equality of opportunity and access to education across all educational levels (primary, secondary and tertiary) should be ensured (Lingard 2000). The late 1970s and early 1980s were a time of economic turbulence which brought about further changes to education. The Whitlam Government was the last to have a Keysian approach as economic and other global forces turned the Australian, and other economies of the developed world, towards a neoliberal frame for policy decision-making (Lingard 2000). The Keysian approach with its social democratic solutions to problems did not seem to be able to provide economic solutions to problems such as the oil shock and stagflation in the 1970s. Instead the market, through the neoliberal frame, was seen to be able provide efficiency and solutions to modern economic problems. Neoliberalism looks to markets to solve not only economic but also societal problems as the market is seen to provide the most efficient solution (Ball 2016). Neoliberalism and its impact on education will be explained more fully later in the chapter.

Federal Government funding and changes to legislation to allow for the establishment of new schools was a significant factor in the development of independent schools. However, other factors contributed to the sudden growth in the number of Christian Schools being developed at this time including.

- political anxiety about socialism, exacerbated by the Cold War and the post-Whitlam conservatism;
- increased permissiveness in general society;
- the drive to outlaw corporal punishment in schools;
- the declining influence of the church on societal change;
- the declining educational outcomes in State Schools;
- teacher strikes in various states disrupting school functioning;
- the move in several states to discontinue Religious Instruction or Scripture classes in schools and
- a revised humanities curriculum with a humanistic, secular approach (Long 1996a).

These last two points, the removal of Religious Instruction from schools along with proposed new Queensland humanities curriculum provided the strongest groundswell amongst conservative Christian parents and churches to begin their own schools (Long 1996a). Debates and discussions about the issues highlighted the changes that Australian education was undergoing and the response of many conservative Christian parents and churches was that if traditional values and moral underpinnings were to remain then a new type of schools was required to counter this societal shift (Long

1996a). This was most evident in the humanities curriculum debate where activists from the United States were brought to Australia by concerned Christians to help lobby the Government. Through these actions, the debate was broadened to include federal government senators and members of the media. Similar arguments are still in play particularly with the Queensland Teachers Union wanting to remove all religious education from State Schools so that they may be purely secular institutions (Moore 2019).

11.4 Themelic School Definition

Long (1996b) has provided a definition of Australian Christian schools using the term 'themelic' to describe them. This term has been picked up by other scholars working in the field such as Murison (2010), Twelves (2001), Maddox (2011), Cross et al. (2018) and Iselin (2010). The term comes from New Testament Greek and means 'Christ is the foundation' (Long 1996b, p. 10). A new terminology was required as these schools are only loosely aligned, not a formal sector of education. Themelic is a term that is not hampered by other meanings and encapsulates well the purpose and ethos of these schools. Using the term 'Christian' as the sole identifier could inadvertently marginalise other schools with Christian foundations such as Anglican or Lutheran Schools as it might be inferred that these were somehow less or not Christian if the term Christian schools was used as an all-encompassing term (Long 1996a).

Being classified as a Christian School in the themelic sense is about self-identification rather than being a member of a formal structure, this can make it difficult to know precisely how many schools are part of this broad association (Engelhardt 2012). Themelic schools are not from any one denomination but rather have a similar theological mindset which provides a point of understanding (Long 1996a). Although schools can identify as themelic without being part of a formal umbrella organization, one of the national advocacy organizations, Australian Association of Christian Schools has indicated that (as of 2015) there were 301 schools that identified as a themelic Christian School by their association with at least one the peak bodies; and they collectively had approximately 133,500 student enrolments (AACS 2015).

Themelic schools hold deeply to a Christ centred, biblical foundation, which is what many claim is their distinctive. The schools were usually established by churches or parent groups that held a conservative theology in understanding God, personhood and community which is vital to their ethos and functioning. Themelic schools as described by Long can be identified by the following six characteristics:

1. 'A Christian School [appears in the name of the school].
2. Christ centred, particularly in ethos and curriculum.
3. Biblically based pedagogy.
4. Confessing the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible directly or indirectly through formal associations.

5. Interested in and consciously confessing a Christian world view of schooling, which is perceptible as a common piety.
6. A school that is God's School [ultimate purpose is …..]' (1996b, p. 10).

The Christ-centred identity is common to all themelic schools, how this is outworked and explained theologically will differ from school to school. Christ centred, most broadly, means understanding who Jesus Christ is; he is God incarnate and, therefore, someone who Christians strive to become more like. This Christlike-ness is evident in commitment to serve others and contribute to common good and human flourishing. The Bible also is central in themelic understanding in that it is the written word of God and a revelation of who He is. Developing an understanding of the Bible and Christ is a key element in how themelic schools express themselves and how they seek to develop difference and provide opportunity for those in community to become more Christ-like. This broad understanding allows schools from different denominational backgrounds to have a common language in expressing what brings them together.

It is these themelic characteristics that underpin their identity and provides their educational telos, or purpose. This telos is formed around a Christian worldview which provides an understanding of the Christ-centred ethos; the importance of the Bible to provide a basis for both life and teaching practice; and the way cultural and other practices are formed in the school. Sire (2004, p. 115) provides one of the more commonly accepted definitions of worldview that is used by Christians particularly in education:

> 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.

Schultz and Swezey (2013) point out that the heart orientation is important when considering a Christian worldview as a Christian educator. It is more than a set of beliefs or knowledge, it is the orientation and outworking of the beliefs and knowledge that is as important as any understanding (Schultz and Swezey 2013). Themelic Christian schools see their purpose as greater than imparting of knowledge or even belief, it is this worldview understanding that a heart orientation and outworking of belief that is important. The goal is not to produce only well educated, skilled graduates but ones who are orientated to a larger purpose of service to the community to which they belong.

11.5   Neoliberalism and Australian Schooling

Recently Education policy and schools in Australia have been substantially influenced by the overarching neoliberal agenda (Anagnostopoulos et al. 2016). Neoliberalism has no one clear definition but rather is a broad ideology based on market-driven

economics with competition purportedly creating new efficiencies and, therefore, better ways of achieving societal aims (Boas and Gans-Morse 2009). Neoliberalism is strongly aligned with a human capital view of education that views individuals and their capacities in terms of what they might add to economic prosperity (Connell 2013a, b). The neoliberal logic looks to markets to solve problems of inequality and access by allowing choice and competition to drive economies and societies as they push to be on a continual cycle of growth (Ball 2012). It was the move to a market-focused economy that embedded the recurrent Federal Government funding of education. The Hawke-Keating Government looked to deregulation and promotion of competition as part of the economic structural change they saw was necessary to take Australia out of the economic challenges facing the country. Savage (2013, p. 186) describes this shift.

> From the mid-1980s, 'equality of opportunity' and 'redistributive' approaches to educational justice, which defined the Keynesian-inspired 1960s and 1970s, gave way to new economic rationalisations as education was broadly re-imagined in terms of its role in building human capital and productivity.

Both the neoliberal and human capital agendas are evident not only in national but also global education organisations such as the OECD who claim market-driven approaches 'helps individuals and nations to identify and develop the knowledge and skills that drive better jobs and better lives, generate prosperity and promote social inclusion' (OECD 2018). This approach claims to provide opportunities for those at periphery, as this continual growth cycle is purported to demand more from society in the sheer numbers of workers and resources required bettering outcomes for individuals and society (Connell 2013a). It has been argued that neoliberalism, through its free market and globalisation approaches, has led to a reduction of poverty worldwide and providing access to more and better services (OECD 2018). However, there is mounting evidence that neoliberalism has increased inequality, because the push for continual cycles of growth and competition is not sustainable, and that at some time capacity is reached and resources are exhausted (Harvey 2005). Only the most privileged have the cultural and economic capital to 'choose' which can reinforce the lack of privilege for those who do not have funds and resources to participate in the 'choice' (Connell 2013a, b).

A 'winners' and 'losers' narrative pervades neoliberalism as members of society strive to become 'winners' as 'losers' are made visible through metrics and arbitrary measures (Connell 2015). Neoliberalism can create the unintended consequence of reducing life to competitive pursuits and numbers (Ball 2012). This can be seen in the narrowing of educational goals to those that are easily quantifiable (such as school and system improvements based on NAPLAN results) thereby creating a regime of testing and competition between schools, individuals and systems. Schools are now expected to compete with each other to achieve with measures and performative accountabilities (Ball 2012). In this sense, those within the system are positioned as competing on multiple levels (Lingard 2010). Scholars, such as Lingard (2013) and Connell (2013a, b), have highlighted a range effect of this competitive approach to education which includes a narrowing of curriculum and an increase in pedagogies

that effectively 'teach to the test'(Klenowski 2012). Lingard (2010) points out that improved performance on tests is not necessarily indicative of better educational outcomes, but rather can be an improvement by students in test-taking ability. Schools that function in this performative way not only become part of the 'winners' and 'losers' narrative (Connell 2013b, p. 282) framed around high stakes testing such as NAPLAN, which can also contribute to reductionist attitudes about learning amongst students and teachers (Connell 2013b).

The discourse of neoliberalism in education is evident not only the policy and economic frames but also in the way neoliberalism shapes the identity of schools and those within (Ball 2016). The impact on teachers can be seen in through the need to be visible and performative rather individual and allowing for a broader expression of self (Ball 2016). The performative frameworks that shape and push teachers to conform can be seen through tools such as professional teacher standards and other formal reporting requirements that generate more data to further improve teachers, schools and the community (Ball 2016). Shamir (2008, p. 3) defines the social impact of neoliberalism as.

> A complex, often incoherent, unstable and even contradictory set of practices that are organized around a certain imagination of the 'market' as a basis for the universalization of social relations, with the corresponding incursion of such relations into almost every single aspect of our lives.

The reliance on markets to provide answers to societal questions could be problematic, particularly as it comes to the educating and preparing citizens for the future (Shamir 2008). Ball (2016) contends that within a neoliberal educational environment, professional accountability based on efficient, measurable outcomes such as test results and placing students in bands of achievement has replaced seeing individual need and making judgements based on that need such as targeting interventions for students on measures other than these quantitative results. Examples from the Australian context include My School website publishing NAPLAN results and Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) implemented by many schools to provide alternative data sources for student achievement. Christian schools operating in this market frame need to be mindful of the pressures of the quantification and performative standards placed on education and understand how their Christ-centred ethos can set them apart.

11.6 Christian Education and Broader Educational Purposes

Macallister (2016) has argued that a focus on broader purposes, such as education for the common good and human flourishing, need to be part of the educational narrative. Similar arguments have been made by scholars such as Apple (2018) who claims education has the power to challenge existing paradigms, but that this can be

lost if the focus remains on the measurement, results and the advancement of individuals in terms of economic prosperity. This narrowing of education to input/output competition further disenfranchises those who do not fit the prevailing educational mould which can limit outcomes, and reproduce (and amplify) inequalities (Apple 2018; Macallister et al. 2013). A common good and human flourishing view of the purpose of education calls for a focus that allows for an exploration both in depth and breadth to advance knowledge and understanding (Macallister et al. 2013).

Themelic schools, in desiring a deeper and broader frame for education can look to other scholars. Biesta (2010) developed a framework to describe different types of purposes of education, these being qualification (knowledge, habits, skills and understanding), socialization (both intentional and unintentional transmission of culture, norms and values) and subjectification (the opposite of socialization, an awareness of one's independence and separateness). Labaree (1997) has developed a similar framework based on a societal approach which views educational purpose as achieving democratic equality, social efficiency and social mobility. Labaree's framework has been used to critique how Australian State schools have reduced the focus on democratic equality in the neoliberal push for efficiency and mobility (Cranston et al. 2010). Both Labaree and Biesta's frameworks support public schooling approaches that emphasise equality and social inclusion. Critics may argue that private or faith-based education is incompatible with the ideas of social equality and the inclusive nature of education as privatization of education requires the ability to pay, and this would exclude students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. There are many private and faith-based schools that are low fee paying and serve communities that have low-socioeconomic catchment areas. Macallister (2016) highlights an alternative approach by Macintyre (2002) who supports a differentiated approach to education that allows for different sectors, including religious schools. This multi-sector approach embraces different expressions of education, which encourages the challenging prevailing views of education so that new and different ideas can emerge thus helping ensure the education field does not become homogenized (Macallister 2016).

Christian schools are operating in an environment where funding and other support is tied to a neoliberal approach based on competition, quantification and preparing people for their economic future. Worsley (2012) argues that in this contemporary context, Christian schools should be striving for more than a 'standard' education. He contends that if Christian schools truly want to be Christ-like, they need to embrace the grace, forgiveness and love as exemplified by Christ (Worsley 2012). This will be seen through the actions of the schools and those within who will embrace difference, value others, look beyond the self to serve the community for the greater good and hold to standards other than academic excellence and those mandated by governments. As themelic Christian schools continue to mature in their identity and purpose, understanding who and what is valued is important. A criticism of Christian education purposes is that the quality of education is at risk when its focus is not purely on academic outcomes (Buckingham 2010). However, themelic Christian schools that have a clearly articulated purpose that is promoted through a Christian

worldview can develop a richer learning that extends beyond competitive measures and is interested in the development of those within the school, and to making a contribution to society more broadly (Long 1996b).

11.7   Orders of Worth—Understanding Justifications

The continuing debates in Australia about the role of Christianity in public life has implications for Christian schools. Christian schools in a neoliberal marketplace need to be able to articulate their purpose and the underpinning values, as well as confidently articulate how these values align with or stand apart from other worldviews or imaginaries used by people when making decisions and judgement.

Orders of Worth is a pragmatic sociological framework that helps to provide clarity about what is valued and how this justified by societies and why certain attributes, behaviours, and outcomes have importance to people (Anagnostopoulos et al. 2016). The basis of an individual's values is continually shaped by a person's deeply held beliefs about the world and their place within it. How people act and react can often be seen as arbitrary, however, this is not the case it is based on their frames of understanding and worth (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006). People provide justifications to perceived conflict based on these internally held value basis (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006). Because people ground their stances on what they perceive is worthy, the Orders of Worth framework provides a mechanism for understanding how evaluations are made and expressed (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006). This framework uses six main logics of justification, these have been developed from influential texts that exemplify each logic showing the underpinning values and justification by people holding to that order of worth (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999). The 'worths' developed in the framework as presented by Boltanski and Thévenot (1999) are briefly explained below.

- **Inspired worth** is based on St. Augustine's *City of God* particularly on the treatise on the problem of grace. The worth rests on upon the attainment of grace and is independent of recognition of others. It can be seen in holiness, creativity and imagination. Success does not lie in recognition by others.
- **Domestic worth** is based upon commentary from Bossuet's work, *La poli-tique tiree des propres paroles de l'Ecriture sainte* . The worth depends on a hierarchy of trust based on a chain of dependencies. It requires a respect for tradition and belonging to a family or lineage. Everyone has a place in the network to which they belong and from which they draw their authority.
- **Civic worth** is best described by Rousseau's *Contrat social*. Civil peace depends on understood authority structures and an authority who priorities the common good. It is not dependent on others like the domestic worth and does not prioritise the individual rather is more a collective approach. Individuals are relevant or worthy depending on the group(s) to which they belong.

- The **opinion worth** or world of renown draws from Hobbes' *Leviathan*, in particular the chapter on honour. This worth is dependent on the opinion of others and depends on measures of public esteem. It is not based on a person's self-esteem rather the esteem of others for the person.
- The **market worth** can be seen in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* with market dominant and the distributor of the goods and services that links individuals. This is a competitive worth with value being placed on those who are able to purchase what they want. Opportunistic behaviour is encouraged as a way of gaining advantage and is not to be seen as personal or emotional. Individuals are not prioritised rather the market sets the worth of what is important.
- **Industrial worth** draws from the work of Saint Simon, founder of French sociology. This worth is based on efficiency, productivity and capability. It looks to the organsisational ability for planning and investment. Expertise is valued along with organisation and measurable, functional standards.

Using a framework, such as Orders of Worth, can potentially enable the arguments around education and what is being valued to be unpacked (Anagnostopoulos et al. 2016). Through these Orders of Worth justifications, the neoliberal and themelic similarities and differences can be better understood. Neoliberalism in the humanistic reliance on markets and the themelic in its spiritual reliance on God. Evidence of how these different values might underpin the same words is exemplified in the example of 'excellence'. Neoliberalism with its reliance on market to best determine efficiency and prosperity relies on competitive pursuits to continue to develop ideas, products and thinking so that prosperity can be continually built through a striving to be the best (maybe seen in the Market worth). Excellence in the neoliberal frame can be seen in the promotion of striving for more and achieving better results in a race for the top of ladders, tables and charts. The themelic understanding of excellence is rooted in a biblical understanding of doing your best as unto the Lord drawing from bible verses such as Colossians 3:23:

> Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.

The 'striving for the best' in biblical terms is looking beyond what you could achieve based on human worth but rather to strive to do your best for a Godly purpose (this might be seen in the Civic or perhaps inspired worth). This example of excellence shows that neoliberal and themelic understandings do share some common ideas but understanding the worth on which they are based could change how the terms are understood.

Using this framework, discourses and arguments can be analysed to identify what is being valued and promoted. Such a framework could then be used to interrogate school documents, where the values or mission statements may expose tensions between themelic views and values, and wider, dominant education discourses such as neoliberal and human capital views of education.

11.8 Conclusion

Themelic Christian Schools wrestle with competing purposes due to demands from various stakeholders including government, churches, parents, teachers, students, school boards, higher education providers and employers. Themelic schools in order to maintain their distinctives need hold to their understanding of human flourishing and common good in a society with a neoliberal emphasis on performance, efficiency and competition. The study being undertaken will examine My School profiles, a Government site that provides information about all Australian schools, and school websites to discover how themelic and neoliberal discourses are represented through self-authored descriptions. A comparison between the discourses will be analysed using the Orders of Worth framework to better understand the discourse presented and why the discourse may have been chosen. Through this analysis, a greater understanding of both the themelic and neoliberal discourse can be achieved, and areas of tension might be identified and better understood. The examination of discourse, through the study, aims to provide an understanding of how representations might be perceived, and allow schools to have a better understanding of the messages that they are consciously or unconsciously presenting.

Themelic Christian Schools were founded to bring a difference to education in Australia, they aim to be deliberate and purposeful in preparing students not only academically but also personally and spiritually to add positively to society and to value others (Engelhardt 2012). In order to maintain their distinctive approach to education, through a Christ-centred ethos, and provide a broader educational focus than academic pursuit for individual gain, understanding the dominant discourse and how it can shape the day to day outworking is important. It is important for themelic schools to continue to remain clear about their purpose in fostering spiritual and character development and doing good for the community to which you belong. The debate about the role and functions of schools is likely to be on-going in Australia, particularly as Government continues to provide funding to independent and faith-based schools. It is necessary for themelic Christians schools to be able to articulate the positive difference they bring to the neoliberal 'marketplace' for education.

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Chapter 12
Do We Live in a Pluralist Society Any More? Christian Education as a Case Study

James Dalziel

Abstract Christian schools and higher education have enjoyed relative freedom in many western societies in recent years, but there are growing pressures on Christian educational institutions to support ideas and practices that may run counter to their Christian ethos. This paper considers a range of recent legal challenges for Christian schools and higher education from Australia and around the world, and identifies common themes in the nature of the challenges. In particular, it considers issues related to secularism and pluralism, including international legal agreements and national laws on human rights issues, especially religious freedom. It also considers how these challenges affect not only Christian educational institutions, but other religious educational institutions as well. Of particular note are challenges related to matters of sexuality, and the rise of a new 'sexual fundamentalism' in some western societies that can run counter to beliefs in religious freedom. It also explores the issue of offence and harm arising from different views of sexuality and religion, and a related problem of 'concept creep' for definitions of harm. It concludes with a school comparison based on a different set of ethical issues (an ethically founded vegan school) as a 'turnabout test', and reflections on future issues for Christian education.

Keywords Christian education · Pluralism · Moral values

12.1 Secularism, Pluralism and Religion in Modern Western Societies

In recent decades, the secularisation theory, that as societies become more modern, they become less religious, has not evolved quite as earlier theorists expected (Taylor 2007). While in western societies there has been the anticipated broad decline in active religious participation and the role of religion in societal institutions, there has also been a resurgence of religion in various contexts (e.g. Pentecostalism), as

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well as broad interest in alternative forms of spirituality, and acknowledgement of various forms of 'civic religion'. Chavura et al. (2019) note 'Classic secularisation theory, which dominated the social sciences in the middle of the twentieth century, eventually lost credibility due in part to its teleological overreach, but also to its tendency to smuggle in (consciously or not) particular political commitments'.

One of the benefits of acknowledging problems with the classic secularisation theory is that it allows for more nuanced explorations of the many different types of intersections among religion and civil society, as well as more careful examination of the rhetorical role of the secularisation theory itself. It also provides additional avenues for exploring the underlying role of Christian ideas in the foundations of modern western political thought. While these issues are relevant to various western societies, Australia is a particularly informative example:

> Australia was a pre-eminent case of the triumph of 'Enlightenment' over 'religion'. This seems to have been a case of what the philosopher-historian Charles Taylor refers to as the subtraction story of secularism; namely, that the secular is that which is left over once 'religion' has been removed. This narrative frame is widely shared today, but as Taylor and others have shown it stands in the way of a proper appreciation of the complex relation between religion and secular, and ultimately, the debt that secularism owes to Christianity. 'Contemporary secularism' says Edwin Judge, 'is in serious danger of misunderstanding its own credentials.' (Chavura et al. 2019).

Among Taylor's (2007) many contributions to debate over secularisation, he draws attention to the different meanings for the term 'secular' in our current age, and that the 'subtraction story' of secularism is only one contestable interpretation of the complex current state of religion in modern western societies.

Under the classic secularisation theory, an argument can be made for the irrelevance (or even inappropriateness) of various religious freedoms that run counter to an increasingly non-religious society. However, the critiques of secularisation theory identify the need for a different approach, and Chavura and Tregenza (2019) warn.

> Though over the past few decades the standard secularisation thesis has lost much of its explanatory purchase within the international academic community, the implications of its demise have yet to be fully taken up in Australian political science and historical circles.

And while there are major differences concerning religion across modern western societies, many of the points made above are relevant not only to Australia, but also to other western societies.

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to debate different theories of secularisation, one particular issue is relevant here—the ways that pluralist western societies engage with religious freedoms. Historically, religious pluralism in western societies in the eighteen and nineteen centuries revolved around the rights of various non-dominant religions and/or Christian traditions to receive fair and equal treatment (Chavura et al. 2019). In recent times in western societies, certain debates over pluralism are between religious entities seeking various religious freedoms and non-religious entities (sometimes including government entities) seeking to deny these freedoms on non-religious grounds.

It is in the context of these recent debates that Isaiah Berlin's (1953) open-handed definition of pluralism is relevant:

> Let us have the courage of our admitted ignorance, of our doubts and uncertainties. At least we can try to discover what others… require, by… making it possible for ourselves to know men as they truly are, by listening to them carefully and sympathetically, and understanding them and their lives and their needs, one by one individually. Let us try to provide them with what they ask for, and leave them as free as possible.

Among some interested in these debates, a popular way of discussing the different implications of secularism and pluralism is to identify a 'soft' secularism (Kosmin 2006), in which society accepts that the government is not based on any particular religious principles, but at the same time the government makes no overarching claims about the truth or falsity of religious beliefs, and hence it is expected to support the existence of a diversity of religious beliefs within society; and a 'hard' secularism that rejects the truth of all kinds of religious belief, with relevant implications for law and society.

Some forms of hard secularism take an observation about the benefits of the scientific method for acquiring knowledge about the physical world, and then transforms this into a set of ideological beliefs about the non-religious or non-spiritual nature of ultimate reality (this ideology is sometimes called 'scientism'). 'New' atheists such as Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens argue for this ideology—although other (atheist) philosophers have noted the significant flaws of scientism as an ideology, and have pointed out that the arguments presented are not new (e.g. Pigliucci 2013).

The confusion arising from different meanings of the word secularism can complicate discussion of religion in the political organisation of society—as 'soft' secularism and religious pluralism can be complementary, but 'hard' secularism and religious pluralism can be incompatible. A number of popular Christian writers (e.g. Dreher 2017; Eberstadt 2018; Edlin 2018; Guinness 2018) perceive a growing intolerance of Christianity among certain sections of modern western societies. This can take the form of an argument for tolerance of diversity in society (a pluralist argument) that is then used against Christian beliefs—leading Don Carson to name a book '*The Intolerance of Tolerance*' (2012) discussing this phenomenon. The recent work of Heterodox Academy in universities has made similar observations about the intolerance of some who argue in favour of diversity (Heterodox Academy, n.d.).

12.2   ICCPR Article 18 and Religious Freedom

An alternative approach to the philosophical questions of secularism, pluralism and religious freedom is a legal approach of looking to the constitution of a society, and the international agreements it accepts, such as the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights. While a detailed discussion of these issues is beyond the current scope, of particular importance here is the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

(ICCPR, United Nations 1966), which together with the UN Declaration on Human
Rights makes up the International Bill of Human Rights. The key section of the
ICCPR on religion is Article 18:

1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right
   shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom,
   either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his
   religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt
   a religion or belief of his choice.

3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as
   are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals
   or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

4. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of
   parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education
   of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

While all of Article 18 is relevant here, Sect. 12.4 has particular importance for
school education, such as in faith-based schools, with its recognition that parents
and guardians may seek education for their children in accordance with their reli-
gious convictions. Section 12.1 notes that this includes public beliefs and their
manifestation in behaviour, including worship, practice and teaching those beliefs.

12.3   Recent Legal Problems for Christian Education

There have been several recent legal cases, disputes and legislation that run contrary
to ICCPR 18 and the principle of religious freedom in western societies. While some
of these cases relate to higher education and others to schools, the general concerns
have wide potential application for Christian education, as well as other kinds of
faith-based education (e.g. orthodox Jewish schools—see UK example below).

In the USA, during the Obergefell case on same-sex marriage, the then US Solic-
itor General Verrilli was questioned by Judge Alito about whether a Christian college
could lose tax-exempt status if it opposed same-sex marriage—Verrilli said that 'it
is going to be an issue' (Mohler 2015). In California, the initial form of a recent
bill (SB1146) would have limited the religious freedom of religious colleges over
LGBT+ issues. While it permitted an exception to these limitations for ministerial
training, the exception would not have applied to any other aspects of Christian higher
education (such as studies in education and counselling). After concerns raised about
religious freedom issues (Berg 2016), the bill was modified from a limitation to a
'disclosure only' requirement—that colleges must provide public information on any
limitations they have arising from LGBT+ issues.

In the UK, the school inspection body Ofsted has recently threatened to deregister
some orthodox Jewish Primary schools if they do not teach LGBT+ issues to primary
aged children. In the case of Gateshead Jewish Primary School (a Charedi school), the
Ofsted Report noted '[School] Leaders do not feel that they are able to identify to their

pupils groups of people who are gender reassigned or have sexual orientation other than heterosexuality, as this contravenes some aspects of the community's Jewish faith' (Graham 2019). Of considerable interest has been the political discussion of this issue—one Labour MP has stated that 'Charedi schools… will not breach deeply held religious convictions and they should not have to, because religion or belief is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010'. And yet at the same time, the Labour Shadow Education Secretary stated that 'there can be no opting out of the Equality Act 2010 and that all schools must teach the law on these issues [LGBT+] so that pupils understand it' (Graham 2019). This last comment illustrates a problem where religious freedom has been demoted to a lower status than sexual orientation and gender identity freedoms, despite the lack of an explicit hierarchy of freedoms in either the Equality Act 2010 or international agreements such as the ICCPR.

In Australia, prior to the release of the Religious Freedom Review ('Ruddock Report') in late 2018, there were a number of recent examples of problems with religious freedom in Australian schools and higher education. For example, the University of Sydney Student Union had attempted to forbid religious student societies from having religious belief requirements for office holders (Holgate 2016). This is despite the fact that, for example, student political groups discriminate over political beliefs for their office holders.

In another example, the Tasmanian Roman Catholic Archbishop was sued for 'causing offence' under State Anti-Discrimination legislation for sending school parents a pamphlet describing traditional church teachings on marriage. This case was subsequently dropped without a judgment, and it could return in the future (Foster 2018). Among Christian schools, there have been various instances of Christian schools being challenged over Christian beliefs and staffing requirements (e.g. in Victoria). In the Public (government run) school system, there have been ongoing attempts to limit or stop 'Special Religious Education' (SRE, also known as 'Scripture'—the option for students in Public schools to receive one class per week in their religious tradition, taught by religious volunteers—see Green 2019).

Some academics in Australia have argued that historical government statements about schooling as 'free, compulsory and secular' support restrictions on religious schools (Byrne 2013; Maddox 2014). However, as Hastie (2014a, b; 2016) has noted, the context of the term 'secularism' in the history of Australian schooling does not match a modern 'hard' secularist interpretation—rather, it was designed to foster religious pluralism. This can be seen as an example of the phenomenon noted by Chavura et al. (2019): 'Modern commentators on the history of Australian secularity can err in retrojecting their own contemporary understanding of the secular-sacred distinction onto historic debates occurring within a very different cultural and intellectual milieu'.

The Ruddock Report, released soon after same-sex marriage legislation was passed, provided a detailed discussion of current religious freedom issues (Foster 2018), including a suggestion for a new Religious Discrimination Act. However, the bulk of media discussion of the report focussed on Christian schools 'expelling gay students', even though this was not a right that Christian schools (or others) had requested (Sandeman 2018). The report was subsequently referred to Australian Law

Reform Commission for further review. In the 2019 federal election, in response to questions from Christian Schools Australia about staff employment requirements, the Labour Shadow Attorney General Mark Dreyfus stated Labour would ask the 'ALRC (Australian Law Reform Commission) to provide recommendations on how best to remove the exemptions from discrimination against LGBTQI students and teachers contained in commonwealth legislation as a priority' (Kelly 2019). Subsequent analysis of the surprise loss of Labour in this election has indicated that religious freedom issues were a significant factor (Parkinson 2019).

The most striking recent example of concerns for Christian education and religious freedom comes from the experiences of Trinity Western University (TWU) in Canada. As an explicitly Christian university, TWU has a student community covenant that includes a statement that sexual relationships are only appropriate in a marriage between a man and a woman (in keeping with traditional Christian belief and the teaching of the Bible). From 1995–2001, TWU had multiple legal battles with the British Columbia College of Teachers (BCCT) over the BCCT's refusal to provide certification of TWU teacher graduates due to the existence of the community covenant (arising from BCCT's concerns for LGBT+ students). The Canadian Supreme Court eventually ruled in favour of TWU, noting 'BCCT erroneously concluded that equality of rights on the basis of sexual orientation trump freedom of religion and association. They do not'.

The student community covenant was again the focus of legal cases from 2014 to 2018 when some Canadian State legal societies refused to accredit the graduates of the proposed new TWU law school. The British Columbia Court of Appeal in its 2016 decision in Trinity Western University v. Law Society of British Columbia found unanimously in favour of TWU (Canadian Press 2016), and made the following comment:

> A society that does not admit of and accommodate differences cannot be a free and democratic society—one in which its citizens are free to think, to disagree, to debate and to challenge the accepted view without fear of reprisal… This case demonstrates that a well-intentioned majority acting in the name of tolerance and liberalism, can, if unchecked, impose its views on the minority in a manner that is in itself intolerant and illiberal.

However, in the subsequent Supreme Court judgment, this appeal was overturned, with the court noting it was "'proportionate and reasonable' to limit religious rights in order to ensure open access for LGBT students" (Harris 2018). Discussing this judgement, Hutchinson (2018) notes the comment from the two dissenting Supreme Court Justices regarding 'Diversity' as the central value used in judgement:

> First, *Charter* "values" — unlike *Charter* rights, which are the product of constitutional settlement — are unsourced. They are, therefore, entirely the product of the idiosyncrasies of the judicial mind that pronounces them to be so. … What *is* troubling, however, is the imposition of judicially preferred "values" to limit constitutionally protected rights, including the right to hold other values.

> Secondly, and relatedly, *Charter* "values", as stated by the majority, are amorphous and, just as importantly, undefined."

Hutchinson (2018) goes on to suggest that.

> Like beauty, it seems diversity may be in the eye of the beholder; and, beheld differently conditional on setting, whether similar or dissimilar. With such ambiguity, how does one restrain a State "beholder," particularly one that has authority to impose its view on a private institution, a profession, or a nation?

The recent TWU Supreme Court majority decision provides an example of how religious freedom has been demoted below sexual orientation freedom, despite the warnings about this demotion from both the Appeals Court decision, and the dissenting Supreme Court judges. One way to explain this development is by observing the broad rise of a moral framework in which the morality of sexual freedom and sexual orientation (and also gender identity as illustrated by the UK case) has become more important than other moral values such as religious freedom. This development could be described as a new form of 'sexual fundamentalism'.

12.4 Sexual Fundamentalism

The term 'sexual fundamentalism' has been used in a number of different ways. An older usage arises from criticism of the 'sexual counterrevolution' (Cohen 2012), a political movement initially led by conservative women in response to the sexual revolution of the 1960–70s (Critchlow 2005). Cohen (2012) explains the phrase as follows:

> I want to particularly clarify what I mean by "fundamentalism," especially since it's often linked to sex, as in the term "sexual fundamentalism." I use "fundamentalism," lower-cased, *not* as a reference to Protestant fundamentalists, but rather as a term about a politics characterized by cultural traditionalism and an orthodox belief in the literal rules issued by some higher authority. Most of the sexual fundamentalists who appear here are indeed orthodox religious traditionalists…

On this view, religious believers who accept the orthodox teachings of their sacred writings that place restrictions on sexual behavior (such as the idea that sexual relations are only appropriate within a male/female marriage) can be called 'sexual fundamentalists'. This can include Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus and others.

A second quite different use describes cases where sexual freedom becomes the paramount moral issue in any conflict between sexual freedom and other moral values, such as religious freedom (e.g. Johnston 2017). As noted above in the discussion of the Obergefell case, the UK Equality Act, and the TWU Appeal Court judgment and the dissenting judges in the TWU Supreme Court judgment, both religion and sexual behavior are seen as human rights that should not be a basis for discrimination—however, there is no explicit basis for one right to override another. Hence the idea that rights related to sexual freedom rank higher than religious freedom can be described as a new form of sexual fundamentalism.

This new sexual fundamentalism does not have an explicit basis in international law (such as the UN Declaration on Human Rights or the ICCPR), or an explicit basis in the constitution and/or foundational laws of the countries where judgments

have been made that may override religious freedom for sexual freedom. While a country could create an explicit law that made clear that sexual freedom was a more important human right than religious freedom, to date no such foundational law exists in western democracies.

Although not using the phrase 'sexual fundamentalism', Baskerville (2017) and Kuby (2015) describe the same problems identified here with the second meaning of the phrase (Baskerville uses phrases such as 'sexual political ideology', while Kuby uses the phrase 'a new soft totalitarianism'). Baskerville (2017) describes the difficulty of scholarly debate about the new sexual fundamentalism:

> One feature of sexual politics is the almost complete absence of critical scholarship that approaches it from any viewpoint other than enthusiastic advocacy. Ostensibly objective scholars are often active participants and promoters of the phenomenon they should be studying and understanding critically. Scholars who refrain from endorsing sexual liberation and insist on analysing these subjects from a detached perspective find it almost impossible to publish their work and are quickly driven from the universities.

If Baskerville is correct, then the tendency to privilege sexual freedom over religious freedom may have corrupted the essential truth-seeking quality of the university. This may have implications not only for higher education, but also for society as a whole.

As Isaiah Berlin suggests, pluralism is best expressed through a humble approach to seeking truth and understanding others. In the current context, this could mean accepting a range of views on sexual behaviour and on religious beliefs, and not accepting fundamentalism from either group against the other. According to Baskerville (2017) and Kuby (2015), a growing number of the cultural elite in western societies (including some judges, progressive politicians, university academics, bureaucrats and companies implementing progressive social justice agendas) are more likely to support the views here identified as sexual fundamentalism, and are less likely to support religious freedom on matters of sexuality.

12.5   Sexual Freedom, Offence and Harm

One of the main arguments offered for the relative importance of sexual freedom and sexual orientation compared to religious freedom is the offence that is caused to LGBT+ people in society by statements of traditional religious beliefs about sexual relationships, such as the belief that the appropriate place for sexual relations is in a male/female marriage.

An example of this issue is the recent controversy in Australia over a personal social media post by footballer Israel Folau in which he circulated a paraphrased version of 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 stating that "hell awaits homosexuals" (and seven other groups) who do not repent, and that Jesus saves. This post resulted in termination of his employment by Rugby Australia and the loss of his $4M contract, a decision which was later appealed, and then settled out of court.

While there are many issues with this situation that go beyond the current scope, an interesting aspect of this case was support for Folau and religious freedom from notable commentators who might not otherwise be particularly sympathetic to traditional Christianity, such as atheist philosopher Peter Singer (2019):

> as John Stuart Mill argued in his classic *On Liberty* – once we allow, as a ground for restricting someone's freedom of speech or action, the claim that someone else has been offended by it, freedom is in grave danger of disappearing entirely. After all, it is very difficult to say anything significant to which no one could possibly take offense.

Similar concerns were raised by former President of the Australian Human Rights Commission Gillian Triggs (Skelton 2019), and prominent gay rights activist Dawn Grace-Cohen (2019), who said:

> [A] queer fascism that rules through fear rather than reasoned persuasion is gaining momentum … It is a left-wing version of the McCarthy era when American actors and singers who were suspected of communism were denied work… Did Folau threaten to kill, maim or abuse anyone? Did he insult gay people at work? Did he use contemptuous or abusive language? Did he tell deliberate lies? No? Then let him keep his job…

While there is no doubt that the Folau post, and similar kinds of statements, are deeply offensive to some people in modern western societies, being offended is not normally a basis for silencing others, as freedom of expression and freedom of religion are essential rights in liberal democracies. As Singer notes, it is almost impossible to say anything significant that will not offend someone, and it is worth noting that many of the statements of those who believe in sexual freedom are deeply offensive to believers of many faiths, as well as some others of no religious faith. And the statements of those of no faith about religion can be deeply offensive to those of religious faith—such as this quote from Richard Dawkins (2006):

> The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.

While the issue of causing offence has been understood as part of the necessary landscape of free speech for centuries (as noted in Singer's reference to John Stuart Mill above), a newer dimension of this debate is the concept that offensive statements cause harm to those who are offended by them.

There has also been discussion of whether statements such as Folau's constitute 'hate speech'. While it is possible for religious believers to state their views on sexual freedom in hateful ways that might meet a legal definition of hate speech, it is important to consider the actual statements and their context. To the extent that statements reflect the traditional teaching of a religion over centuries, and are presented in a context that is measured rather than hateful, then it is not likely that they would meet a legal definition of hate speech. One of Australia's leading legal experts in this field (and a member of the Ruddock Review panel), Nicholas Aroney (2019) stated:

In addition to repeatedly expressing his love and acceptance of all people, Folau has confessed to having committed many of the sins about which he now warns his readers. This makes it difficult to attribute any intention on his part to advocate hatred against these classes of people, for he numbers himself amongst them. Considered as a whole, and in the full context in which they were expressed, it is very difficult to conclude that Folau's posts would be likely to incite people to act in a manner that is discriminatory, hostile or violent. What Folau has said is not an example of hate speech, and he should not lose his rugby career as a result.

One of the difficulties in the areas of both 'harm' and 'hate speech' has been a recent attempt to extend these terms to cover issues that would not previously have been included within them. In a recent paper within the discipline of psychology, Haslam (2016) describes the problems with this extension as 'concept creep':

[Concept creep] primarily reflects an ever increasing sensitivity to harm, reflecting a liberal moral agenda. Its implications are ambivalent, however. Although conceptual change is inevitable and often well motivated, concept creep runs the risk of pathologizing everyday experience and encouraging a sense of virtuous but impotent victimhood.

Concerns about concept creep, and a related phenomenon of insufficient resilience among young people, have recently been noted as a major new problem in universities (e.g. Lukianoff and Haidt 2018; Campbell and Manning 2018), and similar issues can increasingly be observed among some secondary school students. Haidt (2016) notes a further dimension to the problem of concept creep:

I extend Haslam's analysis to explain why they change in one direction only: they "creep to the left." As psychology has become politically purified, its concepts have morphed to make them more useful to social justice advocates trying to prosecute and convict their opponents. This political shift poses a grave danger to the credibility of psychology.

One solution is not to restrict the freedoms of everyone because of the potential for offence or harm, but rather to acknowledge that free speech means all people in a liberal democracy they will hear views they find (deeply) offensive from time to time—for that is the price of democracy. The alternative to broad free speech runs the risk of eventually devolving into some form of totalitarianism, where the views of one group in society come to silence those of others through an overly broad definition of concepts such as 'harm' and 'hate speech' arising from a political use of concept creep.

12.6   Rethinking Pluralism and Faith-Based Schooling—A 'Turnabout Test'

When dealing with contentious moral and political issues, one way to investigate potential bias is to conduct a thought experiment known as a 'turnabout test' (Tetlock 1994). This is where the conceptual issue remains the same, but the individual or group in question is substituted for another from a different (often opposite) moral or political perspective.

In the current context about the freedom of Christian schools (or other faith-based schools) to act in accordance with their beliefs, an interesting turnabout test would be the freedom of a (hypothetical) vegan school to act in accordance with its beliefs. Figure 12.1 provides a summary of comparisons. Note that while the vegan school could be religious (e.g. Buddhist) or non-religious (e.g. based on Peter Singer's work), religion per se is not the key issue for this turnabout test, but rather beliefs based on an ethical vegan framework (for this reason, a vegan school based solely on health benefits is not sufficient for this example).

The conclusion in both cases is the question of whether a government would close the relevant school if it will not change its beliefs and practices. While this might seem extreme to some, the earlier cited UK Ofsted example of the Jewish Primary school makes clear that this is a real and present concern for faith-based schools that seek to maintain their current beliefs and ethos in the face of a rising sexual fundamentalism.

An ethically founded vegan school
- Clear public statements about its **vegan** beliefs, widely known
- School requires all staff to be **vegans** as exemplars to students of the ethics of the school ("modeling" as part of learning)
    — Not simply "act **vegan** at school" – whole-of-life view of ethics
    (NB: A different **vegan** school might not have this requirement – up to each school depending on its pedagogical and ethical theories)
- Prospective staff would be informed of **vegan** beliefs and behavioural requirements – only those who accept these would choose to work at the school
    — No compulsion to work at a **vegan** school (there are many other schools)
- Staff who later reject **vegan** beliefs and/or behaviours would leave the school
- Students would not be expected to be **vegan**, but teaching would include discussion of the **ethical** arguments in favour of **veganism**
    — Not just in "**vegan** studies" classes, but in all subjects where appropriate
- Question: In a pluralistic society, where many people are **omnivores**, why would a government force this school to close?

A traditional Bible-based Christian school
- Clear public statements about its **Christian** beliefs, widely known
- School requires all staff to be **Christians** as exemplars to students of the ethics of the school ("modeling" as part of learning)
    — Not simply "act **Christian** at school" – whole-of-life view of ethics
    (NB: A different **Christian** school might not have this requirement – up to each school depending on its pedagogical and ethical theories)
- Prospective staff would be informed of **Christian** belief and behavioural requirements – only those who accept these would choose to work at the school
    — No compulsion to work at a **Christian** school (there are many other schools)
- Staff who later reject **Christian** beliefs and/or behaviours would leave the school
- Students would not be expected to be **Christian**, but teaching would include discussion of the **religious** arguments in favour of **Christianity**
    — Not just in "**Christian** studies" classes, but in all subjects where appropriate
- Question: In a pluralistic society, where many people are **agnostic**, why would a government force this school to close?

Fig. 12.1 Comparison of ethically founded vegan school with a traditional Christian school

12.7   Are Christian Schools Too 'Insular'?

One of the concerns raised about faith-based schools is that they are too 'insular', and do not encourage students to engage positively with the wider society (e.g. Maddox 2014). This concern has been used as an argument against allowing parents to choose different types of schools according to their beliefs. However, a number of high-quality research studies in North America have investigated the 'insularity' concern empirically using nationally representative samples of adults five or more years after leaving school (to investigate long-term effects). These studies have found not only that the 'insularity' concern for Christian schools is unfounded, but indeed the opposite is often the case. Summarising the findings of multiple Cardus Education Surveys in Canada and the USA, Casagrande and Pennings (2019) note:

> Private and religious school attendance exerts a long-term positive influence on civic measures and outcomes, with one component of adult civic engagement standing out in particular: giving and volunteering. Religious school graduates make more charitable donations and are more likely to have volunteered in "Other Causes" than public school graduates. Graduates from protestant schools are much more likely to go on a social service trip and to donate money or goods to an important cause or organization. And graduates from Catholic schools are the most consistently positive on giving and volunteering, showing a higher likelihood of volunteering outside the congregation and donating to charity, including secular and political causes. In other areas of civic engagement, religious school graduates report levels similar to public school graduates and have strikingly similar attitudes and experiences in civic and political matters as well. This is evident in levels of political interest, feelings of obligation to participate in civic affairs, levels of civic participation, and trust in organizations. Seeing themselves as citizens of the world, these graduates live out their faith by contributing to and engaging with society in a number of important ways.

These findings echo some of those found in the Australian 'SEIROS' study (Hughes and Reid 2016), especially around charity/volunteering. The broader importance of these findings is that they provide empirical evidence for the benefits of school choice (Berner 2012).

12.8   Concluding Reflections

Liberal democracy, and international agreements like the ICCPR, are based on a pluralistic approach to religious freedoms. However, recent times have seen the rise of a 'hard' secularism that is eroding this kind of pluralism. This is particularly notable in the area of sexual freedom, sexual orientation and gender identity, where religious freedom is being demoted below these other freedoms, despite the non-hierarchical balancing of rights seen in international agreements (and while the main focus of this paper is sexual freedom and orientation, for further discussion of these concerns in the area of gender identity, see Anderson 2018). This paper has argued that where sexual freedom becomes a pre-eminent right, then society is at risk of a new kind of sexual fundamentalism.

One response to the current situation is to re-examine the assumed neutrality of secularism in a constitutional context. Deagon (2017) has recently shown how the Australian constitution does not provide a special 'neutral' place for 'hard' secularism, but rather that an ideology of 'hard' secularism should be viewed in the same way as religions and other ideologies. Only a 'soft' kind of secularism that endorses some form of pluralism has a reasonable claim to a more neutral middle ground. This is not to suggest that hard secularist beliefs are unwelcome in Australian or other western societies—but it does mean that these beliefs do not have a privileged place in debates over moral or religious issues.

From a social scientific perspective, Pennings (2016) makes a similar point (using the phrase 'exclusive secularism' rather than 'hard secularism'), echoing some of the concerns of Taylor:

> in our evolving post-secular society, exclusive secularism is finally being seen for what it is: a worldview that is making as absolute a truth claim as any other and therefore does not deserve a place of privilege in a public square protected by the "neutral" state. Continuing down this trajectory allows us to imagine a more open, healthier debate in the public square regarding the balance of freedom and order.

Pennings is notable for his optimism that a better understanding of the proper place of 'hard' secularism as one among many competing ideologies will ultimately make for a healthier debate about the balance required for a pluralistic society.

For Christian schools (and other faith-based schools with similar beliefs about the issues described here), I believe that different approaches are required for staff and students. For staffing decisions, it should be acceptable for a school to have a publicly stated set of Christian beliefs that describe the nature of the school community, and hence the beliefs and character that are required of staff at the school (comparable to the vegan school example). On this basis, hiring decisions, and ongoing employment, would be made on the basis of the publicly stated Christian beliefs. This hiring approach can apply to all staff, not just teaching staff, as all staff contribute to the nature of the school community and act as models to students. The fact that some people in society, including teachers elsewhere, may find these beliefs deeply offensive would not be a justification for stopping the school from making staffing appointments in accord with its publicly stated beliefs.

For the more difficult case of a Christian school that decides to change from a previous staff employment policy that did not include (certain) faith-based requirements to one that does include (certain) employment requirements arising from the school's publicly stated Christian faith, wisdom and care for existing staff affected by this change will be required. For older staff, a plan for retirement at an appropriate age could be mutually agreed; for other staff, arrangements by mutual agreement could be made for a transfer to another school that has a different employment policy. However, a wise approach would not seek to force the removal of a staff member who took up employment in good faith under the previous employment policy.

For school students who are beginning to experience their own developing sexuality, primarily at a secondary school level, a different approach should be taken. Students will need to find their own path in relation to their sexuality, and it is not the

place of the school or staff to coerce students. However, students will need to accept that part of the ethos of the school is the relevant religious beliefs about sexuality, and that they will hear these ideas in the context of school religious teaching. Students should be able to critique these beliefs in appropriate settings (such as class discussions), and to offer alternative ideas without fear of repercussions, and students who identify as LGBT+ should not be expelled (or experience any other repercussions) for this identification (and as noted above, this was not a right that religious schools had requested in the Ruddock Report). Relevant laws should be clarified on all sides to address these issues, in particular, the unresolved Tasmanian discrimination case about offence at a statement of traditional Catholic family beliefs—there should not be a legal basis for students (or others) to make a complaint of offence or harm arising from a statement of belief within a school which is part of the publicly stated religious beliefs of the school.

In the case of Christian higher education, the same staffing requirements can be maintained as for schools described above. In the case of the adult students who attend Christian higher education, their greater maturity and development (compared to secondary students) can support a requirement like the TWU community covenant (contrary to the Canadian Supreme Court decision, but in keeping with the earlier Appeal Court decision). However, any such decision on student requirements would depend on the publicly stated Christian beliefs and requirements of the institution, and the mission and context of the institution.

Some Christians have taken the view that matters of sexual freedom and sexual orientation should be dropped entirely from public discussion of faith, and that Christian educational institutions should never seek to limit staffing on these issues. While these are matters of conscience for different believers and institutions, one of the reasons given for this approach is that it would be better for Christians to focus on the core issues of their faith, rather than less important issues such as sexuality. One difficulty here is that there is no reason that arguments based on offence and harm cannot be applied to other religious beliefs, including those most central to Christianity. Similar concerns could exist for other religious traditions that share the concerns with sexual freedom noted here.

This concern has already arisen for Christians during a recent campaign against Special Religious Education (SRE), in which a billboard by a group against SRE (FIRIS) said "Did you sign your child up for this? 'God says you are stuck in your sin and need to be rescued from his judgment'", accompanied by a picture of a young girl with her head in her hands. The quoted statement summarises a central Christian belief, but the implication of the billboard was that this is an unacceptable idea. Given the discussion of harm and concept creep above, it is not difficult to imagine a future attempt to silence the teaching of the central Christian beliefs of sin and divine forgiveness on the basis of a 'concept creeped' argument about their negative effects on student self-esteem.

Overall, a solution is unlikely to be found in parsing the fine detail of particular religious beliefs to demarcate sets of beliefs that are acceptable from those which are unacceptable. Rather, a more workable solution is to respect religious freedom in general as a core part of the pluralism that is at the heart of liberal democracy.

In the context of Christian (and other faith-based) schools, this means allowing a school to publicly state its beliefs, to teach these to students (but not to require their acceptance) and to employ staff in keeping with the beliefs of the school if this is a public requirement of employment.

Given the contentious nature of some of the issues addressed in this paper, and in order to avoid certain misunderstandings, I feel a need to add some final personal notes. I would be entirely happy to teach with colleagues who have a different view and practice of sexual freedom, sexual orientation and gender identity to my own traditional Christian beliefs if we worked together in an educational institution that supported this diversity of belief and practice. This would include a Christian educational institution with a staffing policy that supports the employment of Christian LGBT+ staff. I have learned much from my LGBT+ friends and value their insights, particularly about the ways that those with traditional views on sexuality can find it hard to understand the many challenges experienced by LGBT+ people.

However, I believe that people and organisations should be allowed to promote views that others do not agree with, and that this diversity of views is part of the foundation and lifeblood of liberal democracy. I would not expect a vegan school to appoint me to its staff given my non-vegan beliefs and lifestyle, but I do not believe that this is a basis for a government to outlaw the employment practices of such a school (when they are in accordance with its publicly stated ethos). I equally do not expect a political party that holds different political beliefs to my own to allow me to be an office holder within that party while I retain my contrary beliefs.

On the basis of the arguments presented in this paper, the treatment of Christian education institutions provides a valuable current and future test for pluralistic western societies.

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Chapter 13
A Reason for Revelation: The Place of Sacred Texts in Secular Middle-School Science Curricula

David M. Benson

Abstract For Christian teachers in secular State schools, who are committed to educating out of their distinctive ethos, there are few more contentious subjects than Science. Set against the unthinking acceptance of a classic secularisation narrative which frames religious dogma as endangering discovery—where objective scientific knowledge is seen to have vanquished subjective superstition—even the suggestion that there may be a transcendent perspective on material reality is met with hostility. What place, then, is there for Sacred Texts and the orienting stories of diverse communities to inform subject matter? If revelation and reason are positioned as polar opposites, is religion irrelevant to the study of science? This chapter considers the telos of the Australian Curriculum, and the purposes animating the content of year 7–10 Science therein. By recognising the predominately socially reconstructionist aims—that scientific knowing should facilitate students making sense of the world and working together for the common good—a path is opened for appropriate multidisciplinary incorporation which advances received curricular goals and enriches the development of creative and critical thinking, akin to international developments such as the 'Epistemic Insight Initiative'. Provided the plurality of students and cultures are fairly represented, and revelation is oriented toward immanent ends, Scriptures in Science can illuminate foundational cosmologies that awaken wonder and warrant investigation of the natural world; in so doing they add meaning to sensory data that shapes our ethical use of technology in complex situations. A brief defence against detractors is offered, establishing the legitimacy of referencing non-scientific revelation alongside otherwise materialistic reasoning. This exposes the non-neutrality and historical ignorance of secularist accounts of nature, calling for a more imaginative approach in State schools to science education which engages the many students for whom methodological atheism is exclusionary. Anything less borders on secularist indoctrination.

Keywords Australian curriculum · Secular · Science · Reason · Revelation

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13.1 Introduction: Finding a Place for Revelation in Scientific Reasoning

What place, if any, is there for Scripture in the teaching of middle-school Science in 'secular' Australian schools? In seeking a multi-disciplinary perspective to explore the interrelationship between reason and revelation, and the relevance of faith in a State institution, there are few more vexing questions for Christian school teachers wanting to bring their biblical worldview to bear in an ethical way, supporting rather than subverting received curricular goals.

To be sure, the place of religion in 'public' schools is highly contentious (Thomas 2006, pp. 135–150).[1] It comes to a head with vocal opposition by secularists resisting attempts by Christians to teach Creationism as 'science', whilst opposing standard evolutionary theory (Ferrari 2012; Hennessy and Donaghery 2010; Dixon 2008; Maddox 2014). While such confusion is rightly rejected, this antagonism is arguably a cipher for a deeper disagreement wherein we presuppose a dichotomy of transcendent revelation that speaks to an ethereal existence beyond the earthly plane after death, versus material reality in the here and now, understood exclusively and positively through scientific enquiry (Crotty 2012). Seeking to introduce revelation into the reason-driven scientific enterprise may thus initially strike the reader as impermissible mixing, joining what must remain separate.

Even the suggestion that there may be a transcendent perspective on material reality is met with hostility by leading curriculum theorists. Academics such as Cathy Byrne, who typically are on the side of multi-cultural education and equitable inclusion, demonstrate a modernist back-flip when confronted by the possibility of revelation and reason mixing in the sterile beaker that is science education:

> If one particular story, the evangelical Christian story is 'allowed' to be part of the science curriculum (where rational thought, logic, scientific method and common sense must reign supreme), it has similar justification to be incorporated into history, English, drama, music, and so on, until we return to the pre-secular situation of church-run, dogmatic education (Byrne 2014, p. 259).

With warrant, Byrne resists 'the positioning of religious story as pseudo-science', hermetically sealing religion into the myth compartment, thus affording science exclusive say over material reality: 'Such vigilance will be essential in public education … to separate science and religion in the nation's schools. … it is up to education agencies to be clear about what is, and is not, science' (pp. 56–57, 255–259).

Such views are not formed in an historical vacuum. Intended or otherwise, this policing hallows secularist beliefs, echoes Enlightenment rhetoric, and thus sidesteps the potentially legitimate interaction of secular and sacred perspectives in education. The unthought of this opposition is built upon the highly questionable and yet classic

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[1]Australian State schools are to be 'public' and 'secular', independent of religious authority (Meadmore 2001).

secularisation narrative which frames religious dogma as endangering discovery—where objective scientific knowledge is seen to have vanquished subjective superstition and recourse to miracles (Warner 2010, pp. 23–27).[2] The mundane world defines existence, freeing us up to discover truth and determine our own fate without fear, fully under our technique-driven control (Taylor 2007, pp. 322–330, 430). This conflict thesis placed science and religion in a zero-sum game (Draper 1874; White 1896; see also Harris 2007; Dawkins 2006; Stenger 2012). In this Enlightenment frame, incorporating Scripture into science is a category error, even a retrograde step threatening to send us back to the Dark Ages.

Contemporary sociological analysis, however, has revealed that scientific advance is not related to religious decline; if anything, the proportion of scientists who believe Sacred Texts is more than sociologists, this representation holding steady for the last century (Martin 2008, pp. 57, 63; Larson and Witham 1998, p. 313). The sociological story of science's unhindered rise is, in fact, its own self-fulfilling prophecy and substitute 'sacred project' (Smith 2014; Milbank 2013, 2014); revelation and an authoritative God have been supplanted by *scientism*, which uncritically sets the boundaries of knowledge, thereby defining the sum total of reality (Smith 2019; Stenmark 2013). In the humanities, at least, this modernist powerplay has made secularisation suspect, an 'unfashionable theory' that requires defence (Bruce 2011).

Nevertheless, in the sciences, this thesis, which has underwritten the separation of reason and revelation, remains the practical norm. As David Martin relates, 'intellectual history remains affected by a master narrative treating religion as inchoate and backward superstition or as pathetic froth obscuring the surface of the real until blown away by revolution' (Martin 2008, p. 62). Scientific progress is arguably the heart of this mythical Enlightenment story (Edelstein 2010, pp. 2, 117). Crucially for our purposes in this essay, education constitutes secularisation's primary vehicle, shaping impressionable minds to a priori reject the transcendent in text-book fashion and settle for 'official' definitions of reality reduced to this immanent frame (Berger 1999, pp. 2–3, 10–11).

13.2 International Comparison: A Literature Review

While this essay is principally concerned with analysing the place of Sacred Texts in secular Australian science curricula, it is instructive to locate this study relative to an antipodean analogue in British education. Cooling (1990; see also Billingsley et al. 2014) traces the longstanding tension between science and religious education, where secular metaphors of conflict routinely embedded in the curriculum and pedagogy poison the religious well; as such, many adolescents unthinkingly assume scientism and reject revelatory perspectives. Controversy is avoided under the guise

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[2]Charles Taylor debunks this narrative, which he calls a 'subtraction story'; serving up a modern cocktail requires more than simply subtracting religion from the ignorant ancients and adding science (Taylor 2007, pp. 26–45, 221–260, 375–376, 539–542).

of sticking to the facts—a content-heavy curriculum favouring 'recipe' investigations that reinforce formulaic experimentation toward a defined end, rather than the messy work of being a scientist that centres on open-ended discovery and asking 'Why?' (Fensham 2015). The transcendent is simply ruled out as 'unreasonable' and impracticable (Cooling 2012b). Compartmentalisation of subject matter means that a middle-school student need never integrate life's material mechanisms with greater questions of metaphysics and meaning (Bernstein 2000; Billingsley et al. 2016, 2017; Astley and Francis 2010).

And yet, epistemological shifts have necessitated acknowledgement among educators that exclusively this-worldly perspectives are not 'neutral'; rather, we must aspire to 'fairness' where a diversity of views are critically and respectfully brought into dialogue, particularly in the biological sciences where questions of what it means to be a 'person' are directly countenanced (Cooling 2010a, b, 2012a; Smith 2011). Everyone sees 'from' somewhere, with their own culturally conditioned 'fiduciary framework' that influences how we read the world (Cooling 2019a; Wright 2013). Thus, educators do well to openly acknowledge both secular and religious worldviews at play in the scientific enterprise, moving beyond conflictual metaphors to a framework of cross-pollination (Cooling 2019b; Borgeaud 2018). Furthermore, the heavily conceptual science curricula of the 1960s, geared for information transfer, is no longer fit-for-purpose; in a polarised world facing wicked problems such as climate change, nuclear energy and genetic engineering, we must become 'connoisseurs of science' who can identify misinformation, dialogue across dividing disciplinary lines, and find a rationale for diverse people to participate in this shared endeavour that meets the demands of our rapidly changing society (Fensham 2015, 2017).

In response, Professor of Science Education at Canterbury Christ Church University, Berry Billingsley, has spearheaded the 'Epistemic Insight Initiative' (EII) of 'wising up to how knowledge works', with multi-million-dollar funding from the Templeton World Charity Foundation among others, all to challenge the constraints of school curriculum especially in the study of science (Canterbury Christ Church University 2019; EII 2019a, b). 'Epistemic Insight' (EI) concerns the 'nature of science', though is a broader multi-disciplinary project to help form students with 'scholarly expertise and [the] capacity to be wise about how knowledge is and can be formed and tested' (Billingsley and Hardman 2017, p. 57). Building on a platform of 'Big Questions' (Shipman et al. 2002) such as "what does it mean to be 'alive'" and "how do we know what is 'real'", student learning springboards from secondary school science to interact with other subjects in a multi-disciplinary way with 'permeable walls' between classrooms (Billingsley et al. 2018; EII 2019d; Billingsley and Ramos Arias 2017; Science Box 2017). This approach has been forged out of empirical research into how the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) curriculum might be leveraged to deconstruct outdated binary thinking among adolescents, instead charting a new model of fruitful interaction

between science and religion that enriches the experience of teachers and students alike (Billingsley et al. 2013, 2018; Billingsley 2017).[3]

While Billingsley and others (2018, p. 1115) are principally based in Britain, they argue that their project 'could be adopted and tailored to work in many other countries'. Short of a thorough curriculum analysis in Australia, however, this is merely conjecture. Since this first national curriculum emerged in 2011, relatively few studies have analysed the Australian middle-school Science plan. Tuovinen (2013), for instance, notes that the aspiration for education to contribute to holistic development is unrealised, suggesting a range of 'science–faith elaborations' that might provoke a conversation. This is made possible by the three-dimensional curricular structure of traditional subjects intersecting with both the seven general capabilities (including ethical and intercultural understanding) and three cross-curriculum priorities (including Sustainability). Relatively little attention is given by Tuovinen to the structure and details of the science content itself, concluding that this document tends to 'a very isolated view of science, as a field or discipline of study all on its own, with minimal contact with issues of spirituality, religion and faith' (p. 9). Similarly, O'Toole minimally concludes that the curriculum is 'not anti-religious and if teachers understand where they swim, they have a lot of room without moving outside the syllabi […]' (2011, p. 30). More recently, and in dialogue with the EII, Fraser (2018) explores how Australian students can move beyond antagonism or compartmentalisation of science and religion, toward a view where 'ideas are emerging together'. Helpfully, Fraser attends to all three strands of the curriculum, being Science Understanding, Science Inquiry and Science as a Human Endeavour. However, her focus is principally upon the nature and development of science and habits of thought, leveraging cross-curriculum linkages to subvert scientism. This is an important, but relatively narrow, scope for evaluation.

Summarising the preceding literature review, there is a growing recognition internationally of the problem of scientism and reductionist thinking, calling for a fruitful cross-pollination of scientific and religious perspectives that attend to the nature of science and ways of knowing. Early analysis of the Australian Curriculum suggests similar challenges and opportunities, though it is typically confined to the interaction of Christian theology with scientific ideas (see also Faull 2012), treating very lightly the actual content of these documents and side-stepping the personal and communal stories of differently believing students, whether secular, spiritual or religious. Sacred Texts are never directly considered as resources to open up the nature of science, nor how they might spark not simply better thinking about the world, but wise action therein toward 'making a life on a tough new planet' (McKibben 2011; see also Laynesmith 2018; Maxwell 2007). As such, we are warranted to reconsider what scope there is for mixing what many believe to be incompatible elements (Rooney

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[3]See the Association for Science Education's (2017–2019) *School Science Review*, where Issues 365–368 were all themed on 'Epistemic Insight'—for instance, 'The Power and Limitations of Science' and 'Public Understanding of Science'—with the March 2020 issue dedicated to 'Science, Engineering and Big Questions' (EII 2019c).

2012; Giroux 2005) in Australian education. Perhaps a new combination of reason and revelation is possible, resulting in a stable compound?

13.3   Sacred Texts in Secular Education: Methodology

This chapter is located within a larger doctoral research project exploring the purpose of education—theologically and philosophically considered—and how this potentially dovetails with the aims of the Australian Curriculum, thereby creating a legitimate place for Scriptures to serve the overarching and socially reconstructionist aims of forming students as active citizens who can 'make sense of the world, and work together for the common good' (Benson 2016). In a pluralistic and secular educational setting, the principles of reciprocity and equity demand that no one religion is privileged, thus Christians must be open to the incorporation of a diversity of Sacred Texts into any given subject, or settle for none at all. The Bible alone is not permissible, or just, overwhelming and silencing other voices. In response to concerns of secularists and multi-culturalists alike, we must adopt 'the plural principle' whereby religious revelation can only be included to the degree that it is relevant to curricular aims, accountable to professional educators, diverse in perspective, inviting critical evaluation by students as they come to their own beliefs and practices. Scripture only has a place in secular education to the degree that it serves flourishing in our common life together as part of an inclusive and peaceful democracy, and fosters the integration of a student's existence toward life-long learning.

Even with these stringent limitations, supposedly transcendent revelation from beyond does have a role to play in illuminating and enriching our immanent frame toward more fruitfully engaging the physical world which we all share, as seen in subjects such as Civics and Citizenship, English and History. For how can we 'make sense of the world' without reference to these repositories of a people's wisdom, a shared symbolic world the story of which orients individuals and guides life together for millions (Gifford 2010, pp. 389–405)? And how can we 'work together for the common good' without an understanding of the *telos* painted by these accounts toward which people strive, acting on what cannot be ascertained by the material senses alone? Is this same reasoning valid, however, when it comes to STEM subjects and the hard truths of the law-driven cosmos (ACARA 2020)?[4]

This larger project follows a public and practical theological methodology, which is inherently multi-disciplinary in its pursuit of 'truthful action' (Forrester 2000, p. 22; Pattison 2007). That is, we begin with *explaining* the place of diverse Scriptures in the secular curriculum, before *understanding* what place they should occupy through a mutually critical conversation between secular and theological sources; finally, enacting this wisdom, we set about   *changing* the curriculum and teaching practice to make for more faithful practice (Heitink 1999; Tracy 1983; Stanton

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[4]See also https://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/learning-areas-subjects/science (accessed 1 July 2019).

2013). The integrity and effectiveness of one's revised action, however, is only as good as the initial analysis of what is going on and why (Osmer 2008). In light of the literature review above, this detail is largely lacking, making it premature to proceed from in-depth explanation to synthesis and new pedagogical practice. As such, in what follows, my primary task is descriptive-empirical, merely seeking to answer this research question: What place, if any, is there is for Scripture in the teaching of middle-school Science?[5] Answering this is the first but crucial step toward strategically enacting the curriculum vision received by Christian teachers in typical Australian 'secular' schools. Only when one can truly 'see anew' curricular connections can they choose an appropriate pedagogical engagement and reshape practice (Cooling and Green 2015).

Such a focus is served by the application of content analysis as a qualitative-textual research approach (see Swinton and Mowat 2006; Krippendorff 2013; Schilderman 2012). That is, we progress from numerical data of explicit uses of words such as 'religion' and 'Scripture' in both the overarching *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Science* vision and the more detailed *Australian Curriculum: Science* scope and sequence, to discerning patterns of implicit reference to Sacred Texts in dialogue with diverse literature that illuminates the polyvalence of the curriculum writing practice. With terms defined, we will then map the curricular data and discover a place for revelation amidst scientific reasoning's myriad dot-points. This draws us back for a second look at the Social Nature of Science, in turn exposing an inconsistent and yet hopeful pattern as applied to the integration of Indigenous perspectives. Seeking coherence, and beyond religious revelations being treated as out-of-bounds, we finally return to the relevance of 'Epistemic Insight' and similar initiatives that warrant further exploration in Australian education.

A few qualifications are in order, before we proceed. We must be careful not to confuse texts such as the *Qur'an* , *Bible*, *Vedas* and *Tripitaka* with 'science', or reduce them to empirical claims for an easy solution in the science–faith conversation. The use of Scripture in schools raises questions as to the historicity and 'truth' of meta-physical claims—issues which warrant consideration but are beyond the scope of this chapter (Wright 2006). Whether these texts are 'true' is debatable; that for many they *function* as true and thus influence public behaviour is uncontested. Such a realisation circumvents the need for a foundationalist grounding by adopting a 'taking-as-true' epistemology (Adams 2006, pp. 44–45). This less critical frame, however, potentially opens the curriculum up to ad hoc and inappropriate integration which connect dots best left as outliers, reducing the whole to an amorphous mess. The world is a complex place with many features which require differentiation and even separation—think protons and electrons, lions and lambs, calculus and calligraphy (Jardine et al. 2004, pp. 323–330). Therefore, this is not a case of 'anything goes'; Christian teachers must proceed with caution and wisdom.

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[5]Early adolescence is a pivotal developmental period characterised by 'hypothetico-deductive thinking' where it is crucial to bring one's deepest and often subconscious beliefs to the surface; as middle-school teens interact with a range of perspectives, they learn to integrate their identity around critically held beliefs that can exist amidst a plurality of positions (see Elkind 1998, p. 48; Weiten 2001, pp. 445–447; Fowler 1995, p. 153).

Conversely, scientists do well to recognise that by very nature, these diverse Scriptures with their dissonant revelations promise to integrate all of life—not simply making private and immaterial claims which can be compartmentalised, thereby keeping science 'pure'. They offer a type of ascent to Enlightenment making 'paradigmatic claims to truth and reality' thereby disclosing 'a manifestation and meaning and truth of the whole by the whole' (Tracy 1981, pp. 163, 197–202). An a priori quarantining of revelatory contributions falls foul of misunderstanding religion and reifying science.

In this chapter, then, I will consider the middle-school subject of Science within the Australian Curriculum, to discern whether there may be an appropriate multi-disciplinary integration of Scriptures that augments the stated purposes therein. Through this case study, we will gain clarity on the relevance of revelation to reason, addressing both malpractices by Christians in the public educational sphere, and the unthought of secularists which would dismiss all such perspectives as superstition. Students may thereby discover the re-enchantment of science for the flourishing of our shared earthly existence.

13.4 Controlling Variables and Defining Terms

Turning now to the context in which the Australian Curriculum was written, it is not surprising that meaningful discussion of Scriptures in science education is scant, conflating this possibility with ignorant malpractice restricted to the question of origins. The Australian Academy of Science has released statements opposing the consideration of Creationism and Intelligent Design in science classes (AAS 2018). Both beliefs are identified as untestable and therefore 'unscientific worldviews'; they constitute a metaphysical intrusion equivalent to the introduction of 'astrology, spoon-bending, flat-earth cosmology or alien abductions' into an otherwise empirical discipline (AAS 2005). The Queensland Studies Authority has followed suit. They recognise, however, that older students may benefit from diverse perspectives: 'It is therefore possible for Creationism to arise in a range of contexts, such as an assessment task that requires the comparison of a scientific theory to a non-scientific one' (QSA 2013). Following these peak bodies, supernaturalist theories are understandably excluded from the Australian Curriculum. It does, however, raise important questions of what science is (Walker 2013).

Surprisingly, *science* is absent from ACARA's glossary (ACARA 2011e).[6] Similarly, philosophically loaded terms such as *nature/natural* are missing. While *evidence* expansively includes any 'data that is considered reliable and valid and which can be used to support a particular idea, conclusion or decision', the reliance of *hypotheses* upon *observable* measurements (confined to the five   *senses*) bears

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[6]Scientist, Scientific language and Scientific literacy are defined, but—beyond mentioning 'evidence-based conclusions'—none serve to define science. Italicised terms are defined in the glossary.

out a materialist orientation. Thus, Sacred Texts as a form of extra-sensory and non-repeatable revelation are outside the disciplinary confines. Nevertheless, the dependence of *models* and *theory* upon 'consensus by a group of scientists' reflects sensitivity to the inter-personal nature of this pursuit.[7] Worth quoting at length, a description of what science does—rather than what it is—must suffice:

> Science provides an empirical way of answering interesting and important questions about the biological, physical and technological world. The knowledge it produces has proved to be a reliable basis for action in our personal, social and economic lives. Science is a dynamic, collaborative and creative human endeavour arising from our desire to make sense of our world through exploring the unknown, investigating universal mysteries, making predictions and solving problems. Science aims to understand a large number of observations in terms of a much smaller number of broad principles. Science knowledge is contestable and is revised, refined and extended as new evidence arises (ACARA 2011f).[8]

As defined above, Scriptures and the sacred stories they encode are also concerned with exploring mysteries and making sense of the world as a basis for action toward a common good. Indeed, ever since John Hedley Brooke's in-depth exploration of 'science and religion' across history (Brooke 1991, pp. 5, 16, 36–37), it no longer suffices to speak of each as a monolithic entity unchanged across time, related through neat typologies of conflict, harmony, independence, dialogue or integration (Barbour 1968, Ch. 1; see also Efron 2010, pp. 247–262). There is no clearly defined and singular thing called 'religion'. Rather, there are a plethora of religious and non-religious worldviews—arguably as distinct from each other as the individuals holding them—each offering a map of reality which goes beyond empirical reductionism (Van Der Kooij et al. 2013, pp. 210–228). Interestingly, however, it is the same situation with 'science'. While these abstractions may be necessary linguistically, ACARA appears unaware that

> it is the category 'science'—a way of identifying certain forms of knowledge and excluding others—that is constructed. … An inevitable consequence of the construction of the category is that science will have a disputed content and contested boundaries. … There can be no normative science–religion relation as such, for the sciences are plural and diverse (Harrison 2010, pp. 29–30).

As such, any attempt to set the boundaries between reified versions of 'science' and 'religion', particularly through aggressive labelling of those not respecting such boundaries as 'fundamentalists', may be interpreted as epistemological violence enacted by 'secular extremists' (p. 32; see also Taylor 2007, pp. 568–578). All such language is inflammatory, obscuring the central educational issues.

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[7]O'Toole, for instance, commends ACARA's 'sophisticated view of the nature of science that requires us to take a complex view of content that includes the history and nature of the ideas to which we expose students' (O'Toole 2011, pp. 28–30).

[8]A less precise account can be found in Sect. 2.4 of ACARA, Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Science [hereafter SAC:S] (ACARA 2009, p. 4).

13.5   Mapping the Data and Finding a Place in the Dot-Points

Based on the broad picture supplied by analysis of the overarching *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* document (ACARA 2009; hereafter SAC:S), and the fluid definitions therein, we may rightly inquire whether there is any legitimate place for religions and Sacred Texts—a reason for revelation in the teaching of science, as it were.

Turning our attention to the finer details, then, the answer is: not explicitly, at least. Across the thirteen page *Shaping* document, and the 82 content descriptors and 413 elaborators of the curriculum proper (ACARA 2011c "Science: Foundation to Year 10 Curriculum" [hereafter AC:S]), there is not one reference to *religions*, *Scriptures*, *beliefs* or *meaning*. This may be appropriate. Again, it depends on what the curriculum is aiming at.

Questions of purpose have come to the fore. ACARA points to Professor Russel Tytler's report, *Re-Imagining Science Education* (2007; hereafter, *RSE*) as a model of the way-forward with which they accord (SAC:S, Sect. 2.2). And yet, Tytler talks of a 'crisis in science education' that requires 'broadening the purposes of school science, and expanding the voices speaking to the curriculum' (p. 88).

In short, Tytler's analysis parallels Billingsley and her British 'Epistemic Insight Initiative' (see Billingsley et al. 2017). There is a growing shortage of science-based professionals to service Australia's 'technologically driven future', alongside only superficial scientific literacy among citizens to face complex global problems such as environmental sustainability, nuclear technology and stem-cell research (pp. 1–3, 7, 14–16). This has resulted from a middle-school 'flight from science', female students in particular moving away from an increasingly theoretical and irrelevant content-driven curriculum and toward more interesting subjects (pp. 1, 7–13). We have limited control over multiple variables simultaneously in flux: a societal complex of changing scientific practice (less individualistic and more collaborative to cope with the knowledge explosion), changing public engagement (more controversy over scientific findings and ethical implications [p. 23; see Ziman 1998, pp. 1813–1814]), and changing schools and students (less elitist and more democratic and constructivist to engage "the real world"; see *RSE*, pp. 3–5).

Tytler gives special mention to 'challenges to science' (pp. 4, 24–25) posed by the 'postmodern science wars' and critiques of its privileged knowledge status (see Ziman 2000), and postcolonial critiques of its philosophical materialism which has marginalised both Indigenous and mainstream religious ways of knowing (Alexander 1999). The failure to acknowledge cultural perspectives—whether complementary to, or competing with, scientific accounts—has contributed to some communities such as religious minorities avoiding this subject altogether, which is a civic concern (Aikenhead 2001).

The solution, in terms of curriculum stories, is a move away from the traditionally scholar-academic *telos* of science, with its discipline driven 'structured canon of abstract concepts'. Instead, the curriculum must centralise scientific process

through inquiry-driven learner-centred pedagogy (*RSE*, pp. 32–40, 63–64),[9] serving the social-efficiency and socially reconstructionist ends of a scientifically skilled population able to 'support a more prosperous and just society' (pp. 2, 5, 18–20, 29–31, 48–50, 63–68; see also Schiro 2008, pp. 11–12, 196–197, 205). It also requires 'a substantial commitment to students understanding the *nature of science* [NOS]' to avoid naïve and reductionist accounts of knowledge (*RSE*, pp. 24–25, 26–28; see also Driver et al. 1994). This can be achieved through historical explorations of how science has developed, and contemporary case studies drawing out the real-world moral and ethical dimensions of contested knowledge (*RSE*, pp. 24–25).

13.6   Interrogating the Results: A Second Look at the Social Nature of Science

Turning back to SAC:S, then, we may see the curricular *telos* with new eyes. Furthermore, we may discover an implicit place afforded to religions and their diverse Scriptures. The overriding content orientation of science remains, seeking to lay a 'solid foundation of science knowledge and understanding' (SAC:S, Sects. 3.1, 4.3). The conceptual component is represented by the 'science understanding' strand in AC:S, broken into four sub-disciplines of biological, chemical, earth/space and physical sciences (Sects. 5.1.2, 5.2.3).[10] And yet, this is accompanied by a stress on scientific skills and values that serve 'science for life and active citizenship' (Sects. 2.9, 3.1). The process and epistemic underpinning of science is given equal billing with conceptual knowledge, represented by the other two AC:S strands, 'science inquiry skills' and 'science as a human endeavour' (Sects. 2.7, 5.1.3–5.1.4, 6.4.1, 6.4.3–6.4.4). Aligning with general curricular trends and Tytler's report, learner growth and societal transformation have come to the fore (Sects. 2.5, 2.8, 4.1, 5.1.4, 8.1; see also Haeusler 2013).

Students are expected to explore the social, ethical and moral dimensions of this communal endeavour, and the contribution of diverse cultures across history to the development of science (SAC:S, Sects. 5.1.4, 5.2.3 under 'Science as a Human Endeavour', Sect. 6.2.5; see also ACARA 2011b). This is furthered by considerations of 'equity and opportunity' to engage 'particular groups [which] may have previously been excluded' (SAC:S, Sects. 6.1.2–6.1.3). As such, it is reasonable to expect some consideration of religious perspectives—held by most Australian citizens—while students debate complex social-scientific issues like stem-cell research and nuclear energy. This also supports the integration of critical thinking and ethical understanding toward 'flexibility and open-mindedness as students speculate about their observations of the world' (sects. 6.7–6.8; ACARA 2011d).

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[9]The use of narratives about the lives of scientists is a key theme, drawing out the epistemological and aesthetic elements of science in real life to help students create meaning (pp. 38–40).

[10]The explicit shift to a disciplinary division occurs in years 11–12 (Sect. 5.2.4).

Thus, it is warranted to anticipate the crucial yet mixed role of religions in the rise of science to be addressed (Bala 2006; Numbers 2009; Kuhn 1957, p. 107; Stark 2003, pp. 121–200; Harrison 2007, 2010; Hanby 2016).[11] Granted, the materialist orientation of the discipline righty rejects the teaching of supernaturalism as science. And yet, given that the curriculum acknowledges science as *a* way of knowing—an empirical and arguably more 'objective' way than revelation (ACARA 2011f; SAC:S, Sects. 2.4, 2.8)—it is reasonable to expect that students might discuss the personal nature of all knowing and the limitations of materialism (Polanyi 1962; Nagel 2012; Plantinga 2011), as British students can with the Epistemic Insight Initiative, aligned with the GCSE. Furthermore, students should at least be aware of non-empirical ways humans claim to know about the material world (both natural and supernatural), and why some topics surrounding origins and evolution are so religiously controversial. This facilitates the integration of intercultural understanding as '[s]tudents become aware that the raising of some debates within culturally diverse groups requires cultural sensitivity' (ACARA 2011d). These perspectives, in turn, are best understood as part of each religion's larger cosmic story relating humanity to nature (see, for instance, Chapple 2001; Berry 2009; Swimme and Tucker 2011; McGrath 2018; Foster 1934). Anything less falls short of the ends envisaged for this subject.

13.7   An Inconsistent Pattern: Ethics and Indigenous Integration

At times, the curriculum proper lives up to this task. Across years 7 through 10 of AC:S, there are 12 mentions of *ethics*, 2 of *morality* and 2 of *values*. In year 7, for instance, students reflect on 'ethical considerations' surrounding the societal impact of scientific and technological solutions to contemporary issues like ecological sustainability (AC:S, ACSHE120). As year 8 students discuss 'ethical issues that arise from organ transplantation', this should broach religious views of the body contained in a community's authoritative text (AC:S, ACSHE135; see also NHS 2020a). In years 9 and 10 students consider how 'the values and needs of contemporary society can influence the focus of scientific research', whether of nuclear energy and pollution reduction or genetic engineering and reproductive technology (AC:S, year 9 ACSHE228, year 10 ACSHE230). Religious perspectives shaped by Scriptures speak to each of these issues, thus justifying some form of inclusion.

Additionally, and somewhat controversially, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) peoples are seen to have 'longstanding scientific knowledge traditions' and

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[11]Interestingly, while the contributions to technology and science of 'early Egyptian, Greek, Chinese, Arabic and Indigenous Australian cultures extending to modern times' are considered (SAC:S, Sect. 6.2.5), religions—and notably Christianity, given its historical necessity in the rise of science—are not mentioned at all. Language of 'multi-culture' becomes a diffuse catch-all that tends to (unintentionally?) overlook 'multi-faith'.

'particular ways of knowing the world' (ACARA 2011a).[12] Three examples illuminate this integrative curricular design and pedagogy, raising questions about how religion is treated. First, middle school students develop 'science inquiry skills through an investigation of an invertebrate and the Mamutjitji Dreaming story' (ACARA 2018). One of four outcomes for this unit is that students 'engage in committing learning to memory through visualisation and performance of traditional Ngalia Mamutjiitji song'. This relates to the year 7 outcome, 'people use science understanding and skills in their occupations and these have influenced the development of practices in areas of human activity (ACSHE121)', and the specific ATSI elaboration with students 'investigating how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge is being used to inform scientific decisions, for example, care of waterways' (see ACARA 2019a, b).

Second, students in year 7 investigate 'the ways traditional knowledge and western scientific knowledge can be complementary' in practices of sustainable land management (AC:S, year 7 ACSHE223, ACSHE121; year 8 ACSHE136). This could include a discussion of their inseparable spirituality and sacred stories in this personal knowing of nature (Lawlor 1991; Sveiby and Skuthorpe 2006, pp. 184–209), challenging a hidden curriculum of scientism that would otherwise be inculcated in science students (Aikenhead 2001, pp. 337–339).

Third, and most provocatively, when year 9 students 'use knowledge of scientific concepts to draw conclusions that are consistent with evidence' (AC:S, ACSIS170), the content elaboration encourages classes to 'consult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' histories and cultures that reveal scientific information about the past'. If this is legitimate—even best practice as contextualised science education—then surely this could be considered for other non-Indigenous cultures whose Sacred Texts no less share a larger story that impacts core pursuits such as sustainability? This would only augment the justified elaboration of 'us[ing] knowledge of scientific concepts to draw conclusions that are consistent with evidence' (AC:S, year 10 ACSIS170) by "acknowledging and identifying the relationship between First Peoples' knowledges and contemporary science and the co-contributions in arriving at shared understanding when working 'both-ways'" (see also Barnhill and Gottlieb 2001; Tucker and Grim 2001, 2009, 1998–2011). These 'On Country' units take

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[12]For the 95 ATSI elaborations introduced by Professor Mark Rose into the Science curriculum in 2018, as a cross-curriculum priority, see https://natsiec.edu.au/2018/11/australian-curriculum/, https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/media/4695/new-content-elaborations-for-the-australian-curriculum-science-f-10.pdf and https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/media/4693/how-to-access-to-science-elaborations.pdf (accessed 27 June 2019). This more significant integration of ATSI perspectives was in response to critiques such as offered by Lowe and Yunkaporta (2013), highlighting that integration was only at the lowest level of understanding (e.g. remember, consider, acquire, compare, versus evaluate and create), thus foreclosing "the possibility that Indigenous knowledge has its own ontological validity that is independent of that of the 'hard' sciences" (pp. 7–8). Subsequently, ACARA has produced a creative and detailed suite of videos and resources at https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-histories-and-cultures/illustrations-of-practice/ (accessed 27 June 2019), exploring different cultural perspectives even in science through 'two-way teaching and learning'.

context and culture—including sacred stories—seriously, which is to be championed, and equitably extended to other religious communities to engage the scientific process, embedding learning in a way that values their identity.

This is not necessarily to confuse religious and empirical ways of knowing. Nor is it to call spiritual intuition 'science' (a concern registered by Australian Academy of Science [AAS] 2018 and Maratos 1995, deconstructed by Thomas 2006, pp. 72, 163–177). It is, however, to 'give voice' to sacred stories through which diverse cultures 'make sense of the world' as a core aim of ACARA's curriculum (Aikenhead 2001, p. 343; see also Callicott 2001, pp. 77–97). It is a form of 'culture-brokering' to engage diverse communities in the scientific project and learn from each other as we sustain our shared existence on this planet (Aikenhead 2001, pp. 340, 343; Bowers 2003, 2006, p. 94; Wright 1996). Provided teachers are given the opportunity to meaningfully dialogue over the path to appropriate integration, even the initially sceptical have become engaged toward inclusive and just practice (Baynes 2016). As year 7 students, for instance, hear rich narratives of Copernicus and Khayyám, Galileo and Al-Battani, they may hear religious motivations for their scientific exploration and identify individually and communally, thus becoming more scientifically literate citizens who contribute toward the common good (AC:S, ACSHE119; Horton 2013, 38–41).

Nevertheless, religions and Scriptures are nowhere explicitly mentioned. Even implicit references are few and far apart, the curriculum becoming less critical and multi-cultural as it moves from years 7 to 10.[13] Eight of the twelve uses of *ethics* narrowly consider 'ethical' planning and conducting of experiments, bypassing larger ethical and moral concerns of societal import in years 9 and 10 (AC:S, year 7 ACSIS125; year 8 ACSIS140; year 9 ACSIS165; year 10 ACSIS199).[14] Science and technology are spoken of in unequivocally positive terms, never questioning how these pursuits may have contributed to the consumption-driven ecological crisis we presently face (AC:S, year 10 ACSHE192). While students are at times encouraged to identify 'alternative explanations that are also consistent with the evidence' (AC:S, year 10 ACSIS20), it would seem the only evidence they are exposed to in controversial topics of genetics, evolution and Big Bang cosmology is that which supports a purely materialistic mechanism (AC:S, year 10 ACSSU184, ACSSU185, ACSSU188). There is no discussion of scientific epistemology or how the same evidence of fine-tuning genetically and cosmologically is interpreted by esteemed

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[13]For instance, in years 7 and 8 under 'use and influence of science', students consider the ethical dimension of scientific solutions. Yet, in years 9 and 10 in the same section, 'ethics' is dropped and students instead consider how scientific advances may 'significantly affect people's lives, including generating new career opportunities' (see AC:S, ACSHE161 and ACSHE195). The socially reconstructionist curriculum orientation has reduced to a social efficiency instrumentalist agenda of career opportunities. This has legitimacy economically as ACARA addresses the "crisis in science" (see Tytler 2007, p. 1). And yet, it is educationally and developmentally lacklustre.

[14]This reduced scope may allow, however, for consideration of the religious status afforded animals within a community's Sacred Text, in the context of discussing animal dissection in the biological sciences (AC:S, Year 9 ACSIS165). See, for instance, Chapple (1993, pp. 75–84), Byrne (2006), Bauckham (2011), and Creegan (2013).

scientists and philosophers as evidence of non-material agency and an underlying *teleology* to nature (see, for instance, "Evolution and Historical Explanation" 2014; Marshall 2017; Davies 2007; Collins 2007; Meyer 2005, 2013, 2009; McGrath 2010; Craig 2000).

To ignore live debates on the place of design in science—whether Intelligent Design as a theoretical construct and sub-set of this larger question is truly 'scientific' or not—is philosophically questionable (Audi 2009). Furthermore, it misses a golden educational opportunity that will engage students and reveal the real-life nature of science, sensitively considering 'the full range of solutions explored by their fellow human beings' (Noddings 1993, p. 144; see also Nagel 2010, pp. 41–59).

And yet, ACARA remains silent. The curriculum offers no mention of religious dissent, nor how religious beliefs supplied the rationale for scientists such as Isaac Newton to research (AC:S, year 10 ACSSU229). As a whole, the science curriculum is an intra-disciplinary monologue rather than the inter-disciplinary and holistic dialogue promised by the *Melbourne Declaration* [*MD*], which includes 'spiritual' development.

13.8   Discussion: Religion Treated as an Outlier

Therein we discover the central disconnect. In response to longstanding criticism of a *scholar-academic* curriculum orientation (Paige and Zeegers 1999), the Tytler report (see Peacock 2007), and indeed the overriding philosophy of the *MD*, ACARA has promised an integrated and *learner-centred* approach to science. Not only is student growth relevant to the mode of delivery; in SAC:S it becomes an end in itself: 'In particular, the science curriculum should foster an interest in science and a curiosity and willingness to speculate about and explore the world' (SAC:S, Sect. 3.2). This especially applies to students in the middle-school, whose pressing questions combined with 'intrinsic curiosity and simple wonder' drive an inquiry-based approach (SAC:S, Sect. 2.7, also Sect. 8.1). One would thus expect 'Big Questions' such as feature in the EII to predominate.

As David Tracy has noted, there is a 'religious dimension of science' (Tracy 1975, pp. 94, 96–100; see also Toulmin 1950, pp. 204–208). As students look beyond their everyday experience to see the beauty and complexity of our cosmos—whether microscopically in the elegance of DNA or macroscopically in the symmetry of the solar system—they will surely ask questions at the limit of the scientific enterprise. Where do these 'laws' come from, and why should they be stable and life-permitting (Smolin 2006)? How can we as people make sense of the world if it has an impersonal and unintelligent foundation (Tracy 1975, p. 98)? Why should we care for the environment, and how do we determine the right and wrong of scientific solutions? Where did we come from, anyway? And what does it all *mean* (Nord 2010, pp. 32–36, 242–243)? Curiosity and wonder elicit such unbounded questions, readily moving from immanent and material matters to transcendent and holistic perspectives that sit naturally side-by-side (Laynesmith 2018). These questions go well past creation

versus evolution, and would seem to be within the purview of SAC:S's purposes. Compartmentalisation, whether of one's life or of a school subject, has a cost. As curriculum theorist Dwayne Huebner warned: 'The closing of the asking mouth and the shutting of the wondering eye lead eventually to the hardening of the responsible heart' (Huebner 1999 [1961]), p. 12).

Granted, empirical enquiry crucially informs our understanding of and action on this planet. Science may even shed light on the morality of human flourishing (Harris 2012). However, to restrict our set of answers to what can be physically measured is to privilege scientism, further marginalising religious citizens from the scientific enterprise (Green 2011). Education today requires 'collective enquiry and collective action' as a way beyond fragmented discourse and a fragmented society (Hogan 2011). ACARA's desire for students to make sense of the world and function as well-formed citizens calls for that great conversation between science and religions, between reason and revelation. As multiple traditions attest, and former Chief Rabbi of Britain, Jonathan Sacks, expressed, 'Science takes things apart to see how they work. Religion puts things together to see what they mean' (Sacks 2012, p. 59; see also Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho 2005; McGrath 2011a, b). As Einstein said, 'Science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind' (Randerson 2008; McGrath 2019). Empirical and Scriptural perspectives both seek to explain and inform our shared this-worldly existence.

13.9   Conclusion: A Call to Change the Paradigm

Since the content- and conceptually heavy curricula of the last century, the conditions under which revelation and reason have mixed in this middle-school subject have changed. Some would have religions and science occupy entirely separate compartments, like hermetically sealed elements forbidden to mix (Gould 1997, 2002). As we have seen, however, the principled incorporation of Scripture in Science can serve ACARA's ethos, illuminating foundational cosmologies that awaken wonder and warrant investigation of the natural world; in so doing they add meaning to sensory data that shapes our ethical use of technology in complex situations. As Billingsley et al. (2018) supposed, the latest British developments in 'Epistemic Insight' are equally relevant in the antipodes, in turn augmented by the turn to personal and communal sacred stories that locate learners on this pale blue dot. Therefore, we have cause to experiment again in a new paradigm with fresh eyes.

Curiosity cannot be contained along disciplinary lines. Christian teachers in public schools need not force integration through obtuse references to God particles, quantum physics, subversively repackaging particular religious dogma as quasi-scientific (Rosenblith 2008, 509–510)—a transcendent overlay to an otherwise self-enclosed and immanentist 'secular spin' on the physical world (Taylor 2007, pp. 549–550). A vital combination is possible, affirming best practice through appropriate incorporation which advances received curricular goals and enriches the development of creative and critical thinking.

And yet, the curriculum vision undergirding SAC:S would seem to require more than permission for creative teachers to amalgamate learning strands, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities. There is little in the curriculum proper that leads teachers forward and facilitates student wonder. It lacks inquiry questions to direct each unit. The conceptual strand still drives the subject, with minimal clarity on how deeper epistemological and ethical considerations are to be integrated. Students are not required to engage in transformational projects for their local community, applying science to the real-world.[15] And the majority of verbs directing what students will do draw from the lower cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (*recognise, describe, understand*), rarely moving into the fullness of thought (*apply, evaluate, create*) that should characterise education at its best—let alone engaging the affective dimensions of learning (*valuing* the material world, for instance).[16]

Ironically, in a curriculum that purports to promote critical thinking, the failure to engage religious communities—of a piece with ATSI cultures—is a blatant double-standard. The null curriculum ensures that most students will assume our cosmos can be explained purely through physical processes without reference to anything above and beyond this immanent frame. This enshrines *secularism* and *scientism*—both equivalent to non-neutral religious ideologies (Clouser 2005, pp. 61, 64–71; Astley 1998, 2001; Nagel 1986; cf. Dickerson 1992). It falls short of equitable education, unreasonably privileging one perspective. The automatic exclusion of revelation and a community's framing story of the cosmos 'marginalizes and discredits religion. … such education is not neutral with regard to religion. Indeed, it borders on secular indoctrination' (Nord 2010, pp. 71, 286; see also Haynes 2011).

As Elmer Thiessen argues, science has 'doctrines' too: not everything believed in complex theories is falsifiable and uncontested, especially the claim that material reality can only be explained by naturalistic processes (Thiessen 1998, pp. 219–221). Strikingly, while students are suspicious and naturally critical of Scriptures claiming to reveal 'truth', they are more susceptible to indoctrination in Science—which is presented culturally as trustworthy—than in religion (p. 222). Australian academics and secularists like Cathy Byrne summarily dismiss enfaithing approaches to religions in State Schools, and yet this entirely naturalistic 'facts only' vision for compartmentalised induction of students into the scientific method (see Byrne 2014) would seem to be science *instruction* rather than *education* (Cooling 2010b, pp. 13, 40; Cooling 2015). In the absence of competing stories, ACARA's approach meets the criteria for indoctrination into methodological atheism. Religious perspectives may thus be necessary for this curriculum to deliver on its laudable goal of forming students who can make sense of the world and work together for the common good.

What place exists, then, for incorporating Sacred Texts? Religions have no monopoly on aesthetics, ethics, morality and meaning. Nevertheless, if ACARA

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[15]This is despite Tytler's (2007, pp. 48–56, 63–64) recommendation for a praxis orientation to science structured around 'socio-scientific investigations' such as the local usage of wetlands. See also Tytler et al. (2001, pp. 360–362).

[16]See Bloom (1956, pp. 4, 201). For contemporary reworking of this framework, see Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) and Marzano (2009).

envisages science being more than a rehash of the 'current orthodoxies'—wherein the 'major narrative of the science curriculum … focuses on the establishment of a body of knowledge that is assessed largely by declarative means'—then it would benefit by explicitly engaging religious narratives (Tytler 2007, pp. 3, 30–31, 88). The learner-centred and socially reconstructionist *telos* of science requires that students not only establish truth but also create meaning (pp. 38–40, 63). And for most of the world's citizens, meaning—comprising the transcendentals of truth, goodness, and beauty—is wrapped up in their fundamental cosmology. As Ursula Goodenough, the esteemed Professor of Biology at Washington University, has asked

> If meaning and ethics are responses to large stories, and if our scientific understanding of nature is disallowed as a source of new stories, then where are the new stories to be found? By what criteria do we validate our moralities if we throw out revelation, authority and scientific inquiry? (Goodenough 1999, pp. 264–268).

Until physicalists can hurdle the naturalistic fallacy of generating an 'ought' from an 'is', ACARA's science curriculum—indeed Australian society as a whole—will be richer for inviting Scriptures as the first source of our cosmological narratives back into the dialogue.

In conclusion, at first glance secular education would seem to deny Scriptures a place on the basis that dogma endangers discovery. Upon further investigation, however, this represents reactionary boundary setting built upon a discredited secularisation narrative that shields scientism from critical investigation (Poole 1998, pp. 368, 372–374). In contrast, there is much to be gained from the cross-pollination of Scriptures and Science education, implementing and even advancing initiatives such as 'Epistemic Insight', 'wising up to how knowledge works'. As William Doll writes

> I believe that for a curriculum to be alive, to be vital, we need to draw on and combine three traditions: one of science, logic, reason; another of story, culture, narrative; and a third of spirit, vitality, wonderousness (Doll 2002, p. 61n30).

What, then, is required? Lesslie Newbigin poetically surmises 'It is a matter of removing the wall and recovering the unity of human knowledge, of the endless and enchanting enterprise of discovering how things really are' (Newbigin 1998, p. 98).

Christian teachers, let the mixing begin.[17]

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[17]For my experiments toward this end—enriched by the biblical narrative of the Fall (especially Genesis 3–11) which was instrumental in the rise of science (see Harrison 2007), and incorporating Scriptures within a Year 7 unit on biological classification and diversity—see Benson (2015, pp. 255–265, 332–343, 482–501).

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Part II
Empirical: Research that Examines Data to Test Theory, Answer Big Questions and Develop our Understanding of Christian Education

Chapter 14
Distinctively Christian Higher Education as the Wholistic Formation of Students

Sunaina Gowan and Maureen Miner

Abstract Christian colleges are in a unique position to honestly address the spiritual and moral issues that people of every age face daily. What is distinctively Christian about Christian higher education is the wholistic formation of students—personally, professionally and spiritually. This chapter considers Excelsia College as a case study of the challenge of building a distinctively Christian higher education Institution, especially in the context of the increasing secular nature of higher education in Australia, the diminishing Christian student market and challenges brought about by the growth in international student enrolments. More specifically, this chapter investigates staff perceptions of student formation and considers their understanding of the College mission and their role in the wholistic development and growth of students. Using interviews, this qualitative study aims to understand how teaching staff at Excelsia College perceive student formation, their attitudes towards the varying dimensions of formation, and how they act in ways that might promote or hinder student formation. Key findings relate to student formation as involving development of a coherent worldview as well as rich relationships; challenges to formation in cognitive, psychological and social domains; and suggested strategies for optimum formation. Staff perceptions are discussed in light of psychological theory and Trinitarian theology.

Keywords Student formation · Christian higher education · Wholistic development · Worldviews · Trinitarian theology

14.1 Faith and Higher Education

Educators have a unique opportunity to influence students and play the role of a mentor by guiding them both inside and outside the classroom. Recent literature does focus on the role of faith and religion in higher education and the role of academics as mentors, impacting a student's continued spiritual development. This

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study focuses on the role faculty mentorship can have on the faith development of students and also investigates their understanding of the College mission and their role in the spiritual development and growth of students.

The purpose of higher education according to Schreiner (2010) is to nurture students to make them better human beings. Therefore, it will not be incorrect to say that the faculty should look for ways to mentor the students and have a positive influence on their lives. Burchell and Larson (2010) highlight the importance of faculty offering empathy and spiritual encouragement to their students and modelling Christ-like behaviour before their students. White (2006) states that educators should view students 'as created in the image of God and therefore they must nurture the whole person'. Therefore, Christian educators have a significant opportunity to help shape the faith of their students and be their spiritual role model.

Higher education is often considered to be a commodity in which investment in education provides dividends for individuals in the form of income, position and power. This 'factory for degrees' model is prevalent amongst students: about three-quarters of Australian students enroll in a bachelors' degree in order to increase employment opportunities (Grattan Institute, 2012). In support of this perception is the Australian Government's listing of economic development as one of the main goals of higher education, along with community leadership, knowledge, international competitiveness and the attainment of social goals (Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, 2013). As a result, and despite rhetoric depicting universities as centres of learning for its own sake, higher education providers generally focus either on teaching and learning for designated careers or foundations that might apply to a range of careers. Nonetheless, as well as operating under an economic ideology, higher education also uses the ideology of human potential (Gidley, Hampson, Wheeler, & Bereded-Samuel, 2010). In this ideology, there is an emphasis on learning throughout the lifespan, social justice and upholding human rights. Clearly, ongoing human resource development is critical if people are to pursue career trajectories over their lifetimes (International Labor Organization, 2005).

Both the economic and human resource goals of higher education are visible in the metaphor of social capital in which people who are skilled to act in new ways come together in social networks having norms, information channels, trust and expectations that together facilitate effective actions (Plagens, 2011, p. 44). Jensen and Jetten (2015, p. 2) define social capital as "the value derived from membership in social groups, social networks or institutions. Such membership gives individuals access to resources and collective understanding". Resources provided by universities to support peer networks of students can be seen as social capital (Pusztai, 2015). Although the concept of social capital in higher education is not without criticism, there is evidence that some forms of social capital, such as bonding and bridging networks, facilitate academic and professional identity formation respectively (Jenson et al. 2015).

Soreide (2006) proposes that identity is the meaning and voice one gives to one's experiences and is therefore constantly shifting and transforming. Academic identity is defined as the extent to which students experience personal academic worth and

belongingness to the academic community (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Additionally, with the growing recognition that it is important for students to be prepared for the workforce, there is an increasing pressure on students to develop their professional skills and know-how. Therefore, University and Colleges are now increasingly interested in the integration between academic skill development and the development of workplace skills of students, which has led to the focus on opportunities to develop not only academic but professional identities (Trede, Macklin, & Bridges, 2012).

14.2 Goals of Christian Higher Education

The goals of Christian higher education are more inclusive than those associated with ideologies of economics and human potential: they are focused beyond academic and professional identities to personal and spiritual identities. Educators understand that religion and spirituality play an important role in student motivation and emotional development. According to Paredes-Collins and Collins (2011), students believe that spiritual development contributes to the development of their personal identity including character, maturity, self-confidence and work ethics. There are both general and theological arguments in support of these goals of Christian higher education. General arguments are derived from philosophy and the social sciences; theological arguments are based in various approaches including systematic theologies of sanctification and Trinitarian theologies. Arguments of both kinds are outlined below.

Firstly, the formation of a person who is a lifelong learner, a contributor to social justice and committed to upholding human rights (as in the ideology of human potential) requires more than the development of academic and professional identity. An undisputed role of educators is also to nurture their students by establishing a sense of community and the means for spiritual development. At the least, development of a personal identity as a moral actor is required for human flourishing that includes ethical behaviour towards others. As Miner and Dowson argue (2012, p. 9) from ancient Greek philosophy to contemporary psychology there is an emphasis on cultivating virtue as a way of attaining the good life: "The goal of such virtue was not individual happiness alone, but the good of society as individuals actualized their virtuous potential in the service of society and in the pursuit of their own needs. Subsequent moral philosophers have discussed the relative importance of virtuous motives, dutiful action, and due consideration of consequences as indicators of ethical living. Clearly, the approach to flourishing according to moral philosophy is not primarily through pleasure (*hedonism*), but rather through actualising one's true nature as a person capable of virtue (*eudainomism*). Hence flourishing is defined primarily in terms of the actualisation of virtue rather than the sensation of (usually physical) pleasure".

Further, Miner and Dowson (p. 2) also argue that spirituality (and Christian spirituality in particular) is essential for flourishing, particularly in the context of universal suffering. Spirituality is defined as multi-dimensional (with dimensions of *meaning*, *transformation* and *connectedness*) and multi-modal (with modes of *state*,

trait and *experience*). They propose a causal sequence from suffering to spirituality to flourishing, with flourishing reciprocally causing higher attained states of spirituality. In their argument, the authors draw upon positive psychology, humanistic psychology and research into relationships between spiritual behaviours, spiritual states and flourishing (this last defined in terms of virtuous actualisation and altruistic behaviour).

A number of theological arguments support the formation of personal, professional and spiritual identities through Christian higher education. These are premised upon the existence of God and the importance of a Christian worldview which is a biblically based "guiding narrative and comprehensive framework" of assumptions and beliefs (Ledbetter, 2017, p. 20). Christian educators who emphasise the shaping of a distinctively Christian way of thinking focus on the cognitive, rational aspects of identity. Although this 'worldview' perspective is widely held within Christian Colleges and Universities it has been criticised for reducing people to thinkers and faith to agreement with propositions (Smith, 2012). Instead, Smith uses Charles Taylor's idea of the social imaginary to argue that we have pre-cognitive understandings of the world drawn from actual, embodied practices. Hence, Christian formation is less about cognitive development and more about developing practices of Christian worship that underpin an affective, intuitive understanding of the world.

This chapter cannot do justice to philosophical and theological claims and only some limited examples of theologically informed formative approaches are given here. Reflecting on God's self-revelation throughout Scripture with particular reference to concepts of peace, blessedness and completion Pennington (2015, p. 16) commented: "Holy Scripture understands human flourishing to be a function of God's redemptive work in the world, the very core of his relation toward his creatures". TenElshof (2000) reported a project at Talbot Theological College to apply a biblical theology of sanctification to students' spiritual formation. Activities relating to intentional self-examination and purposeful responses to God were then proposed. From a Christological perspective, Volpe (2013) argued that Christian identity is a journey of formation towards the likeness of Christ; tools comprise ascetical practices and reflection upon Scripture. Commenting on a study of professional formation of nurses, Haugland, Lassen, and Gisske (2017) used the theological concept of diakona (caring) as a guide for training towards courage, compassion and reflection. In these examples both limited, selected biblical concepts and more extensive reflection from systematic theology are used as warrants for activities designed to promote formation and flourishing.

14.3   The Context of Excelsia College Within Australian Higher Education

Higher education in Australia is largely provided by government-funded universities with a clear secular orientation; there are very few privately funded or religiously influenced universities. In Australia the only public university not established by

special statute is the Australian Catholic University (ACU) which was incorporated under the general corporate legislation and recognised by special statute as a public university. The two private universities are Bond University and Notre Dame University. In parallel to the universities there is also a tradition of theological colleges offering specialist courses in theology for those preparing for a religious vocation or desiring a theological qualification. These colleges are often funded by, and affiliated with, a particular church denomination. Excelsia College, the case example for this chapter, was previously funded by Wesley Mission that was historically associated with the Methodist Church but is now privately funded. Characteristics of Excelsia College of relevance to a project of student formation are its establishment as an explicitly Christian and non-denominational college. Excelsia is a nondenominational college with an employment policy of hiring only staff who profess the historical creeds of Christianity and are affiliated with a Christian church. Excelsia College is affiliated with CCCU, a consortium of Christian colleges and universities the mission of which is "advancing the cause of Christ-centered higher education" (CCCU, 2016, para. 2).

US research indicates Christian staff at Christian colleges endorses the spiritual formation of students and many support the integration of faith and learning, where integration refers to a curriculum informed by a Christian worldview (Lyon, Beaty, Parker, & Mencken, 2005; Kaul, Hardin, & Alexander Beaujean, 2017). From Lyon et al. (2005) and a replication study by Kaul et al. (2017) faculty were more likely to endorse integrationist positions if their own denominational affiliation matched that of their employing institution. At Excelsia College, there is no specific denominational stance and so there is no particular theological position endorsed by the employing institution. However, Kaul et al. (2017) also reported (p. 182): An unexpected finding from this study was that faculty at nondenominational institutions were more likely to be integrationists than faculty whose own religious practice did not match their institution's denomination. The reason underlying this finding is unclear. One possible explanation may be that faculty at nondenominational institutions have an increased sense of freedom to express a broader range of religious views than faculty at denominationally affiliated institutions.

14.4 Perceptions of Student Formation by Academic Staff Employed in Christian Higher Education

The integration of faith and learning is a characteristic of perceptions of student formation labelled the '**systemic model**' (Litfin, 2004). In the systemic model the Christian faith provides the vision and mission of the College, the curriculum is governed by a Christian worldview, and staff are required to live and work from the Christian ethos. Hence, the Christian faith is systematically incorporated into all aspects of the life of the College. Most of the studies of student formation within Christian higher education are conducted from a systemic perspective. For example,

Lennox (2016) wrote a white paper for Indiana Wesleyan University on the purpose of higher education in schools of the Wesleyan tradition—*Sanctifying Context White Paper*. Such schools, he argued, would "operate as a 'sanctifying context' influencing students, faculty and staff towards full salvation for themselves and the world" (p. 1). By full salvation Lennox refers to reconciliation between nature, self, others and God. He also asserted that the meta-identity of a believer is one in whom the image of God is being fully restored. He stated in summary (p. 7) that college is 'necessarily a time of formation and all formation has spiritual implications' (and thus), 'Christian higher education provides an optimal context for true spiritual formation'. In addition, the papers cited above by Lyon et al. (2005) and Kaul et al. (2017) were written from the perspective of the systemic model.

An alternative model is the '**umbrella model**' in which a diversity of perspectives and religions are nested within an overall Christian framework (Litfin, ibid.). Usually, the college maintains a majority of students and staff from a Christian background, but others are welcomed provided they respect the foundational ethos. In this model, difference is welcomed within a 'relatively non-sectarian environment that can encourage rigorous Christian thinking even while serving as a venue where that thinking can engage other ideas in full".

However, Ream, Pattengale, and Riggs (2012—Introduction) acknowledge the limitations of the dominant systemic model where faith and learning are integrated. They consider the problem of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary integration in a context where some would privilege theology as a dominant discussant. In the same volume, James K. A. Smith (Ch1) argues that rather than having a cognitive focus on worldview, Christian integration projects should adopt Charles Taylor's concept of the social imaginary as "an embodied sense of how we are oriented in the world" (p. 33). Christian scholarship (and, we would add, Christian formation) thus requires a "reshaping of the social imaginary" (p. 37). In a practical sense, this reshaping involves "the formative value of the language of prayer and worship" so that liturgy becomes 'the university's fulcrum for both credit-bearing and student development strategies' Ream et al. (2012—Conclusion, p. 189). Alongside 'systemic' and 'umbrella' models, then, one must consider more recent models of integration based on the concept of the 'social imaginary'.

14.5   Summary and Aims

Contemporary thinking about Christian higher education points to the need to consider the professional, personal and spiritual development of students. These three dimensions of formation are linked to theoretical and empirical understandings of human flourishing (Miner & Dowson, 2012). Christian colleges typically work under a 'systemic' model of the integration of faith and learning (Litfin, 2004) although 'umbrella' and 'social imaginary' models have also been articulated. In Australia, there has been a period of re-evaluating higher education, and Christian

higher education providers are faced with similar challenges to those expressed by Hemmings and Hill (2014, p. 185):

> In Australia, both Christian and non-Christian HEIs are experiencing a rapidly changing external environment. Forces of competition and consumerism dominate the landscape and many workers in the sector are questioning the real purpose of higher education (Billot, 2011; Freebody, 2010). Under these conditions, employees are considering how they, their institutions, and their colleagues will compete for limited resources, undertake quality research, and provide effective teaching and service (Comodromos & Ferrer, 2011).

They add (p. 185):

> Obenchain, Johnson, and Dion (2004) raised concerns for Christian HEIs, including pressure to be innovative in response to technological change and the need to identify alternative revenue streams in order to become less tuition dependent. Clearly, non-Christian HEIs also face each of these concerns; however, Christian HEIs face a real tension between "a desire to maintain the integrity of their spiritual identities on the one hand, and a push toward achieving excellence in their academic reputation on the other hand" (Matthias, 2008, p. 145).

In light of different dimensions and models of student development and challenges to reconsider the purposes and strategies of Christian higher education, this study aims to clarify understandings of these issues by staff at Excelsia College. The objective of this research is to understand how teaching staff at Excelsia College perceive student formation, their attitudes towards the varying dimensions of formation, and how they act in ways that might promote or hinder student formation.

14.6   Method

The design of this study is a case study focusing on staff understandings of a core aspect of their work. The design includes qualitative, descriptive, exploratory and contextual elements. The qualitative aspects allow investigation of attitudes and understandings in a particular context (Excelsia College) where there is no previous research. Descriptive aspects provide a basis for understanding in the absence of prior knowledge. The exploratory aspects allow for a richer appreciation of the current experiences of academic staff. The contextual emphasis allows the phenomenon of staff understandings to be "studied in terms of its intrinsic and immediate contextual significance" (Klopper, 2008, p. 69).

The population of interest is the body of full-time, part-time and contract academic staff employed at Excelsia College in 2019. A sample of ten staff participated in the study. Volunteers were approached through a method of purposive sampling in order to include respondents who taught in each of the Schools of the College (Business, Counselling, Education, Integrative Studies and Performing Arts) and were employed at different levels and modes of employment. Volunteers were excluded if they did not hold a current paid academic (teaching) position at Excelsia College.

An inductive strategy was used in which no formal model was tested, and the literature was largely used in the phase of data analysis. Data were collected by means

of semi-structured interviews in which open questions and illustrative probes were developed (see appendix for interview schedule). Interviews were audio-recorded, and the recordings transcribed by the researchers. This method of data collection allowed for the exploration of respondents' perceptions and understandings in a flexible manner whilst maintaining a focus on the topic of student formation as reflected in the structured questions.

The rigour of the research is based upon the criterion of credibility, evidenced by its truth value, applicability and consistency. Truth value was assessed using the standard of credibility and strategies of peer examination of coding, and analysis of negative cases. Applicability was assessed by means of the standard of transferability and strategies of thick description and data saturation. Consistency was assessed by the standards of dependability and conformability with associated strategies of an inquiry audit and participant checking.

The method of thematic analysis was used to examine the interview data. Underpinning the use of thematic analysis in this research is an epistemology of critical realism in which the goal of research is the development of truthful models of reality. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 9) assert that thematic analysis: can also be a "contextualist" method, sitting between the two poles of essentialism and constructionism, and characterised by theories such as critical realism (e.g. Willig, 1999), which acknowledge the ways individuals make meaning of their experience, and, in turn, the ways the broader social context impinges on those meanings, while retaining focus on the material and other limits of "reality".

The method of analysis follows (after Braun & Clarke, 2006). Firstly, all transcriptions were read through to get a sense of the whole interview and some preliminary topics were noted. Next, each transcription was examined carefully for topics raised in response to the interview questions. These topics and related excerpts from the transcription were pasted into a spreadsheet that used headings such as 'respondent' (pseudonym entered), topic and excerpt. The spreadsheet was then populated with topics and excerpts from all respondents. The spreadsheet was inspected for recurring topics and a new column labelled 'themes' was inserted for notations of the major topics. These themes were reviewed and revised throughout the process of data analysis. Finally, a column labelled 'literature' was added in which reflections from the literature on the themes were noted.

The research proposal was submitted to the Excelsia College Ethics Committee for assessment and data collection began after their approval was given.

14.7   Results and Discussion

14.7.1   *Why Staff Joined Excelsia College*

Of relevance to staff attitudes to student formation as a core academic goal is the issue of why staff chose to work at Excelsia College at the time of their appointment.

A recurring theme was the opportunity to provide Christian education. This focus was also referred to as a Christian worldview, a dialogue between a discipline and theology, an opportunity to speak to Christian things. Some illustrative comments are:

Initially I was attracted by the Christian education focus of the college - Donald

I wanted to work in an organization that was undergirded by a Christian worldview. That was my primary motivation - Les

I was attracted by to that opportunity because of that chance to have that dialogue between theology and Performing Arts - Stuart

… there was that sense that I could speak to the Christian faith, I could speak to those things - Stuart

The Christian worldview fitted very well with my personal worldview. I was excited to be invited to an institution where my personal worldview was upheld - Jenny

These comments reflect an implicit systemic model of Christian higher education (Liftin, 2004) in which the Christian worldview is central to the teaching and life of the college. Associated with this systemic model is a focus on formative relationships with students: Studies of CCCU faculty show staff use a range of Christian curriculum and student-focused approaches for student development—see Allemen et al. in CSR.

14.7.2 Student Formation Is Wholistic

Staff perceive student formation as incorporating professional, personal and spiritual development in a wholistic way. Wholistic development includes intellectual, interpersonal, social, moral, emotional and physical growth and maturity (Eberhardt & Dalton, 2007). They want to enable students to think deeply about themselves, their work and their lives in the context of a Christian worldview. There is a clear recognition that higher education is much more than skills acquisition: staff espouse an ideology of lifelong learning in which students become thinkers, practitioners and ethical professionals in relationship with others (c.f. Gidley et al., 2010) but also informed by an understanding of their own faith. Some illustrative comments:

Certainly, independent thinkers, self reflective with a strong um awareness of their faith and values and how that hinders or an advantage in their work and very practical, not just theoretical but certainly students who are able to have a cognitive framework about what they do but are able to put it into practice - Stephanie

We are also trying to teach them how to be a good human. That is framed entirely in the Christian vision for us. That is the professional mission for us. We want well rounded professionals in whatever discipline who flourish for their art. We want musicians who are not going to suffer for their art. Business people who aren't going to use business as a means of harming and destroying cultures and the world but use business to promote human flourishing. I think that's our goal for students professionally - Mathew

Informed by Scripture, confident in their understanding of their view of [their profession]so they have their own well-formed [professional] philosophy, as practising [professionals] they

are confident, well prepared for the tasks that are taken on, and that's quite a challenge, to have a desire for lifelong learning and to be passionate about [their profession] - Les

It seems there is a sense of movement from and between academic development through which students gain the capacity for critical thinking and deeper reflection (as indicated in the first quote above and second quote below); professional development in which professional knowledge, ethical awareness and personal understandings coalesce; and spiritual development in which students frame their personal and professional lives in light of a personally chosen spirituality. The importance of professional and spiritual formation, together with personal formation, is attested in:

> We often get Christian young people attracted to Excelsia because of our Christian stance, our Christian worldview, our Christian mission, so we are helping them to really form a strong understanding of what it means to be a Christian in an educational setting, in the workplace - Les

> Through CHE we are exposing our students to Christ, for instance how we do devotions or integrate a biblical world view into our teaching. We create discussion forums to enable people to really think through what their relation with God is and we have assessments and whole teaching units where our students are told really deeply about how they can understand their relationship with God. We consider this very important in their formation and to be reconciled with god - Jenny

There is a professionalism that is both an external image and an internally held belief or knowing that the students can hold on to. So in my work, I help—hope students self-reflect at a really deep level and a part of this is … about what do they really believe in? How do they think people change? What do they think is the process of change? Is there a spiritual element in that and if so, what? How have they changed in life? All of those questions internally for them to grapple with so they know who they are in a spiritual sense (Stephanie).

These comments resonate with views of CCCU staff members in the USA. From Alleman, Glanzer, and Guthrie (2016), CCCU faculty use worldview language in their integrative work; personal spiritual growth of students is a goal of CCCU faculty; CCCU faculty 'employ specific interpretive views' in their teaching; the first integrative mode of CCCU faculty is to 'introduce the data of Scripture'; and the personal spiritual growth of students is a goal of CCCU faculty. Thus, the views of many Excelsia College staff members around the ideal of student formation are similar to those of staff at evangelical Christian Universities in the USA. However, a respondent was careful to distinguish proactive evangelism from responding to student questions:

> I don't think it is my role to evangelize in the sense of convert students but certainly to speak to my faith experiences if questioned by a student - Stuart

There are also staff at Excelsia College who take a less forthright approach to spirituality in their teaching. One respondent (Donald) endorsed some aspects of professional, personal and social development of students but eschewed responsibility for their development and particularly their spiritual development. He stated:

I think the degree we are giving them will absolutely help them get a job and help them get permanent residency status. Some of them come in pretty immature but they learn through having to dedicate 40 h' work a week whatever. They grow up pretty quick I think. So yes, I think we are contributing to their personal maturity, absolutely. So what do I want them to be? I don't think I have a goal. I'm not trying to make them anything. I would just treat them with as much grace and compassion as I can muster at any particular point in time and hopefully they will go out and just be decent well-integrated citizens in the Australian community. That would do. I think that would do.

My role cannot be evangelism. I'm a teacher. My role is not to evangelize the students that the college brings.

14.7.3 Student Formation Is Challenged by the Intake of International Students

These last comments by Donald reflect a recent change in the student composition at Excelsia College with more than half the intake in some courses comprising international students. These international students are predominantly from non-Christian backgrounds. As Donald noted, many of them seek permanent residency status rather than studying in Australia in order to work in their home country. One respondent commented succinctly on the difficulties for the project of formation posed by enrolling international students at a Christian college;

Student formation is changing because of the vast needs of the non-Christian international students who are incredibly needy and take up massive amounts of time for lecturers and there's not a lot of time left over for the sorts of experiences that develop our students' sense of self and connection with who they are and who we are and their overall development - Nancy

The academic and personal needs of international students are well documented in the literature. Mesidor and Sly (2016, pp. 267–8) reported a number of academic challenges for international students: A study conducted by Kuo (2011) found that international students faced language challenges in the area of listening comprehension and oral proficiency. Students were not able to understand the lectures presented in class. They commented on learning styles: Learning styles such as auditory, visual or pragmatic learning can influence the students' ability to comprehend. Some students are from educative systems where rote memory, hands-on experience or pragmatics are valued. They also noted the stress of different expectations and methods of evaluation, and the challenge of negotiating the educational system. One respondent said:

The classrooms are very different now. We don't have warmth in the class rooms as was. We teach differently. We are struggling to teach because of the language differences. Our frustration shows sometimes due to the constant demands from the international students. I get frustrated that they are sitting outside my office to talk to me yet again. I think it comes out in my marking too. I think this compromises their development as I am not able to contain it. I have not had this experience with our domestic students - Jenny

Recommendations to help address academic needs of international students at Excelsia College, and thereby their academic and professional development, include provision of more staff, library support and student counselling.

> Is there enough staff? Neve enough staff. Is there enough library resources? Never enough library resources. Is there enough student support – centre or whatever? Never enough but I guess we do what every other institute of higher education does - Donald

Other respondents elaborated on the psychological difficulties that international students faced, including high levels of stress and anxiety due to past trauma and current adjustment issues. Again, these issues are well canvassed in the literature. Mesidor and Sly (2016, p. 263) reported on five areas in which international students are likely to experience adjustment issues. These areas included academic, physical health, financial, vocational and personal/social. Language barriers, unfamiliarity with available resources and how to access those resources, lack of an established social support system and/or social network compound the problems experienced in those areas (Smith & Khawaja, 2011) and often manifest in depression, loneliness and isolation (Wei et al., 2007). Wang, Wei, Zhoa, Chuang, & Li (2015) used the term "cross-cultural loss" to describe the process in which international students struggle to adjust to the loss of things familiar to them (e.g. personal relationships, home/country environment, and educational system). Wang et al. (2012) found that higher self-esteem, positive problem-solving skills and lower maladaptive perfectionism were significant predictors of better acculturative adjustment. Establishing a social support system, and utilizing coping skills, such as acceptance, reframing and striving were associated with better cross-cultural transition. Gómez, Urzúa, and Glass (2014 – in Mesidor & Sly, 2016)) found that international students' acculturative process was positively associated with participation in leisure activities, such as sports, and social events. However, respondents noted that international students had little time for such positive activities:

> I don't think they have much time for student life, the BBQs and all the other things, I don't think that supports them. It is a shame because campus life should be fun - Stephanie

The needs of international students impact modes of personal and professional formation. Previously, domestic students were challenged to reconsider their values and assumptions in the process of intentional formation but international students are perceived as lacking the emotional stability to respond positively to such challenges:

> It's very difficult because it has changed so much in the last year. Student formation … Um. What hinders it, I think, has been how do I say this, throwing students in at the deep end (laugh) um – previously in the first couple of years I was teaching here, students who were coming mostly had some maturity. They were in their late twenties at the earliest. But um they already had a sense of self we could work with. Now I think they are totally overwhelmed and that is – me as one lecturer cannot, I mean I can try to make the learning situation as non-threatening as possible, and try and explain things but cannot, I think they shut down

> The students we used to take had a firm base outside of college and so formation then; we could challenge them and crack them a little bit. But now they are so vulnerable outside of college um they are homesick they don't know where to get their food in the supermarket; they don't know the public transport system. One Nepalese girl said to me every time the

train went over a bumpy track she had a panic attack because she had post traumatic stress from the Nepalese earthquake.

…these students who for formation need to feel safe. So, this is a different focus from what I was able to do in the past. I could – people already came in feeling safe enough – even if that was, heavens, they come from broken relationships, not that they were perfectly secure in their lives but now I'm finding the fragility of students is a real hindrance to the formation I was talking about - Stephanie

14.7.4 Responses of Staff to the Challenge of Non-Christian, International Students

Some staff are confused or pessimistic about how they can live out the mission and vision of EC when they espouse a **systemic model** of Christian higher education and have taken up a teaching role at the college in light of the stated vision of the college. The shift in student composition is seen as a very significant issue because they sense that the mission of the College has changed implicitly (even if there is no explicit change in the stated vision and mission). Hence one staff member comments that a key impediment to the spiritual development of students is the influx of overseas students from non-Christian backgrounds, making it impossible to develop Christian leaders:

You see at the moment the whole thing is problematic. So, if I take my Masters students I have an 80% Hindu population, maybe 90% and the other 10% are Buddhist or Muslim. So now I have my first Muslim students. I mean, what the college maybe intends to do and what the college is actually doing are two absolutely diametrically opposed things. You can't make Christian leaders out of Hindus (laughs). I mean, they're lovely people, love working with them, but you can't make Christian leaders out of Hindus and you can't make Christian leaders out of Muslims or Buddhists. … So, um, if the college is on about Christian leadership or something like that – well it just can't be. It must be on about something else - Donald

Others are concerned, even angry, about the change and their perceived inability to carry out their desired role in light of the enrolment of significant numbers of international students. Some of these students express anger because they fail units due to academic and personal difficulties.

I'm used to going into a classroom with a lovely sense of connection and relaxed and it certainly wasn't there. That cohort that I had in the class yesterday who were obviously very, very disenfranchised and negative towards me, I'll be teaching in [another unit] in three weeks' time. I've been reflecting on that and how difficult that's going to be because as far as I'm concerned teaching [that other unit] is a very relational experience as well and so **relationship happens in the classroom and that's part of their formation** . So, I was thinking about that last night with some amount of angst about what that class is going to be like this year because more than half of them are angry with me. It's not a good way to start – Nancy

If you bring in a class full of Hindus and expose them to the gospel they are going to become Christians. That's the thinking that I have heard, and I find that really offensive. This is why I am in a massive moral struggle around the whole thing now. This is where I am struggling

at the base level and where I think what we are doing is just wrong. It does not fit well with who I am as a Christian - Jenny

Some staff who have joined the College with an expectation that they will work within a systemic model espouse social goals for developing integrated citizens who can contribute to society in line with secular models of social capital (e.g. education as contributing to community leadership and social goals—Aust. Gov, 2016). Hence Donald says:

So, what do I want them to be? I don't think I have a goal. I'm not trying to make them anything. I would just treat them with as much grace and compassion as I can muster at any particular point in time and hopefully they will go out and just be decent well-integrated citizens in the Australian community. That would do. I think that would do.

Finally, others are working out of an **umbrella model** and can articulate their goals and modes of student development accordingly. Stuart proposes an emphasis on dialogue:

I like to plead that Excelsia sees itself as a Christian based ethos institution that welcomes people of the Christian faith but also encourages dialogue with those who bring other faith perspectives into it.

A more radical stance within the umbrella model endorses the value of all faiths:

And for students (sigh) I don't know, because now it's not enough – and I don't mean this in a demeaning way – now it's not enough just to have a chapel. Where is our prayer room for Muslim students? You know, where is our altar for our Hindu students? It's not enough just to have a chapel anymore if we are serious about students' spiritual formation - Stephanie

On the other hand, such a radical perspective is countered by Donald:

I don't think Excelsia College thinks it is my role to encourage Hindu spirituality and I'm not sure how I'd do that anyway. Um I don't know. That's very difficult because clearly, I'm not meant to- I don't think I'm meant to - encourage their Hindu or Muslim or Buddhist spirituality and I wouldn't know how to do that even if Excelsia thought that was my role. Um, I don't know. I'm guessing that the College itself does nothing. Their spirituality will develop in whatever way it develops in the context of their own communities, not in the context of whatever they do around here.

Donald's comment is supported by US research findings that international students were more likely to perceive greater socio-emotional and instrumental support from other international people than from Americans (Chavajay, 2013 in Mesidor & Sly, 2016).

14.8 Conclusion

Staff at Excelsia College support a wholistic model of intentional student formation encompassing personal, professional, social and spiritual dimensions integrated within a systemic Christian perspective. This model well reflects the College's vision

and mission statement. However, the recent enrolment of large numbers of international students has resulted in some confusion around implementation of the existing mission statement. For some staff, this has led to concern and even anger as they strive to act in accordance with a seemingly obsolete official vision. For others it has meant a pragmatic retreat to more secular aims of the social capital and life-long learning approaches. For still others, it has led to articulation of a model that is consistent with an umbrella perspective of Christian higher education.

Young people are the leaders of the future and hence Christian academics should aim to equip them in such a way that they not only become competent in their profession, but also contribute constructively to the transformation of the societies in which they will find themselves. Christian Higher Education can impact lives by the inclusion of Christian spirituality and values in the educational endeavour.

How this wholistic development can be achieved by students of all faiths and cultural backgrounds is not yet known. Clearly, neither the assumed systemic model nor the related social imaginary model is completely relevant in pluralist contexts that call into question both the content and structure of formation. A model of pluralistic formation is needed. In a pluralistic model, students of all faiths and backgrounds can experience wholistic formation that is cognitive, performative and embodied under a sacred canopy of Christian higher education.

Future research could contribute to building a pluralistic model of formation by investigating how students of different faiths understand and practice their spirituality. In comparisons with Christian beliefs and practices commonalities and differences can be highlighted. Research could also consider the personal and moral formation of students in conjunction with the development of their spirituality. In particular, relationships between the cognitive, affective and performative aspects of spiritual development amongst students of varying faiths should be examined.

This study provides supporting evidence that students and staff are not cogs in an education business but persons enriched by each other, made in the image of God to act as stewards of God's created world (Stevens, 2012, p. 11–13). In a pithy summation, Steven Garber (2014, p. 55) proposes the great challenge to human beings is "Can we know and love the world at the very same time"? This is a call to learn, to know objectively and intimately, and in that knowledge to commit to loving.

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Chapter 15
Art Therapy and Prison Chaplaincy: A Review of Contemporary Practices Considering New Testament Teachings

Check for updates

Sarah Tucker and **Johannes M. Luetz**

Abstract The biblical books of Acts (12:1; 12:5), Matthew (11:12) and Romans (16:7) all speak of the apostles Peter, Paul and John interacting in prison disciple-ship with other followers of Christ. These references are the first documentation of New Testament prison chaplaincy, and the Gospel of Matthew (25:36) goes even further, admonishing Christians to be actively involved in assisting prisoners in the place of their incarceration. Thus, prison chaplaincy has a long history and remains a fundamental right of prisoners (UN-OHCHR 1977). The significance of prison chap-laincy is particularly noted in the context of growing incarceration trends in Australia, which have seen adult prisoner populations increase significantly in the last decade to a total of more than 43,000 inmates (ABS 2019). Meanwhile recidivism has remained steady at 40% over the last 5 years (QCS 2019). Importantly, budget restraints have occasioned cutbacks in therapeutic and rehabilitation programs, thus resulting in a situation that is leaving a growing number of inmates with fewer restorative and rehabilitative opportunities. Furthermore, illiteracy rates remain high within prisons and only a limited number of inmates can read. It is against this background that art therapy is highlighted as an effective communication tool and therapeutic practice in prison environments. Art is also prevalent in the Bible and visual communica-tion was used not only by Jesus but also by the early Church to communicate the biblical stories to different cultures. Through experiences both inside and out, the

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first author of this pilot study understands the implications and hurdles associated with rehabilitation whilst having convictions recorded. The analysis presented in this chapter synthesises lessons learned from developing and implementing the 'Change the Design of Your Life' art therapy program in Queensland prisons. Experiences and lessons gathered in this chapter will be useful for educators, policymakers, practitioners and chaplains serving the cause of social prison ministry in Australia and beyond.

Keywords Prison ministry · Art therapy · Recidivism · Reconciliation · Rehabilitation

15.1 Raising Awareness: Incarceration and Modern Prison Ministry

Prison ministries in Australia can differ significantly from state to state. Differences emerge in areas such as qualification requirements in theology and pastoral care, voluntary or unpaid positions with minimal qualifications at one day per week, to annual salaries and permanent positions and differential resource availabilities, and security access (SCB 2018; Prison Fellowship 2018; Anglicare 2019; NSW Department of Justice 2019; Tipton and Todd 2011; Webber 2014). Notwithstanding these differences, Christian perspectives are vital to an understanding of remorse and can promote reconciliation and redemption when ministered appropriately.

This chapter seeks to highlight alternate ways to align flexibly with recent law reform in a modernised format (Wonders 2016), so that church-engaged prison ministries can more effectively commune with prisoners in their own cultural paradigm and prevent future recidivism (Glossary). This holds biblical significance. Our society is currently facing a momentous catastrophe with imprisonment rates increasing not decreasing, and recent announcements of new prisons being built suggest that problems are mounting.

In June 2019, Deputy Premier and Finance Minister of Queensland, Jackie Trad, announced the allocation of more funding for expansive incarceration infrastructure:

- $618 million for a new 1000-bed men's prison to be built at Gatton, west of Brisbane, planned for completion in 2022–23;
- $27 million over three years for additional beds at the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre;
- $111 million over four years to make privately run prisons public again (Queensland Government Budget 2019).

If, as Christians and followers of the Gospel we do not engage with prisoners (Matthew 25:36), then we are not caring for the children of the future as directed by Jesus (Matthew 19:14). The children of prisoners inside suffer the most and exhibit the most residual effects (Burton et al. 2019). This impacts all of society, including childhood education, as school chaplains and teachers are often left to juggle many

side-effects of crime, some of which can be far-reaching and may even impact future generations (Barr 1991).

Historical documentation of prison chaplaincy and its holistic care, including from the vantage point of the Gospels, suggests that previous models of prison discipleship are still relevant for recidivism prevention today (Hattersley 2000; Dethles 2017; Tucker 2019). However, in a rapidly changing world, not only does the Church need to adapt, but so does prison ministry to those who are suffering. Engaging contemporary approaches, this research seeks to better understand prison ministries which are inclusive of ecumenical teachings, whilst using alternate methods to explore leading-edge rehabilitative practices. To this end, this chapter seeks to highlight the potential for Queensland Correctional Services (QCS; Glossary) and the State Chaplaincy Board (SCB; Glossary) to integrate art into biblical teaching methods by using basic prison-culturally aware practices in a creative and communicative manner.

15.1.1 *Personal Background*

This chapter will draw on the personal experiences of incarceration of this chapter's first author for background. Time spent as an inmate in a South Australian women's prison was unique, in that despite (at the time) not being of Christian faith, a close relationship with the Catholic chaplain was developed whilst 'inside'. This relationship remains intact to this day. A diverse spiritual upbringing and education had initially led to the exploration of many alternate spiritual practices. Therefore, when coming to Christian faith many years after imprisonment, there was a strong drive to become a prison chaplain. This vocational interest developed despite—or perhaps more accurately *because of*—the criminal record. After some scrutiny and final approval from the Attorney General, a journey began as a First Peoples Chaplain (FPC; Glossary) through ministry to indigenous inmates. Out of these first-hand experiences, numerous nuanced insights were gleaned into the QCS (Glossary). Having spent two decades outside of prison and working as a professional artist, and then stepping back into a prison as an FPC (Glossary), significantly heightened personal awareness in respect of systemic changes that were occurring within the correctional system.

Importantly, during the time spent inside Adelaide Women's Prison (AWP), staff identified this chapter's first author's skills in art and tattooing. Over time, these artistic skills led the way into fine art study, which prison staff agreed was a preferable alternative to the illegal activities of tattooing ('jail tats'; Glossary) that are rampant inside prisons. Encouraged by the prison chaplain and the education officer,[1] correctional services approved an application to study visual arts via correspondence through the University of New England (UNE). This solidified the direction and purpose upon release, which prevented a potential downward spiral, recidivism and

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[1]Both the prison chaplain and education officer were notably impressed with this author's completion of Year Twelve (despite living on the streets).

a possible return to prison. After twenty years of having worked as an artist 'outside', studying theology, becoming a prison chaplain, and being employed by correctional services as an art tutor in a maximum-security men's prison, it is these coinciding experiences that have given rise to this pilot research.

15.1.2 Prison Statistics, Social Problems and Consequences of Incarceration

Australian prisons are facing increasing rates of incarceration, in line with policy and law reform. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2019), the last ten years (2009–2019) have seen a steady rise in imprisonment (Fig. 15.1). As of 30 June 2019, more than 43,000 inmates in Australia are either incarcerated or are facing a Community Corrections Order (CCO; Glossary). Queensland currently has 225 prisoners per 100,000 people, which is equal to 8,771 inmates in total (ABS 2019). This is above the average national rate.

The housing of inmates within correctional facilities is costing taxpayers dearly due to a high rate of return prisoners, so-called 'recidivists' (Hamburger 2018; QPC 2019; Morgon 2018). In a similar trend to American Corrective Services (Hunter 2015; Moyle 1998; Schlosser 1998), this residual effect from law reform is initiated by social demand and political ambition, which consequentially results in heavy courtroom backlog, leaving many inmates in limbo awaiting legal procedures (Prison Fellowship 2018). The first author of this chapter has personally met inmates who have spent up to three years inside a prison without ever seeing a courtroom. Due to the impact and strain upon correctional centres, security measures have been increased and the prison ministry service, that was once readily available to inmates,
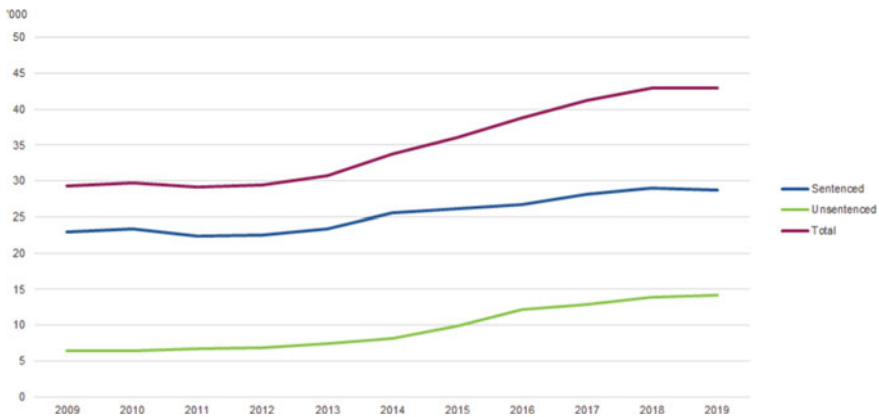

Fig. 15.1 Increasing rates of imprisonment in Australia from 30 June 2009 to 30 June 2019 (*Source* Australian Bureau of Statistics; ABS 2019)

has become progressively more restrictive (Prisoner Population 2018). While the biblical model saw ministry inside *and* out (Hattersley 2000; Dethles 2017), contemporary prison chaplaincy services have been reduced to 'inside' interaction only, namely the handing out of Bibles, daily devotionals, theological direction, pastoral care, spiritual direction and short monthly church services lasting approximately fifteen minutes (Blacklidge, G. personal communication, 26th May 2019). However, reading scripture can be problematic for countless inmates because of the pervasive illiteracy of prison populations (Australian Institute of Health 2018; Byrne et al. 2001).

A confronting and difficult task inmates face daily is communicating. Communication is an integral component to negotiating the correctional system, through request forms, documentations, legal paperwork, breaches, parole applications, housing approvals, etc. The contradictory issue with reliance upon reading and writing for communication within prisons is that "*2 in 3 (68%) have an education level of year 10 or lower*", and "*1 in 5 (21%) aged 15–74 have an education level of year 10 or lower in 2015*" (AIHW 2019). New communication methods that are contemporary and relevant to the sociocultural climates of prisons need exploration.

Prisons are stark environments void of emotional warmth. This is part of a psychological technique used to maintain authoritarian control over inmates (Banks et al. 1971). This psychological obscurity and overall bleakness, in combination with divisional uniforms and neutral colours, create subliminal regulation (Mella 1990), which may impact deeply on human identity. The strong feeling of isolation, abandonment and exclusion from society is overwhelming (Borzycki and Baldry 2003). This can leave a deep imprint on the brain and emotional state, which in turn may create distorted perceptions of reality (Goleman 1996). Prison chaplains are often the first external contact an inmate has with a human from the outside that is 'out of uniform' and shows no judgement and only acceptance (Dethles 2017; Tucker 2019; Clay 2003; Webber 2014; Tipton and Todd 2011).

Psychological studies have shown that trauma may be triggered by images, sounds, smells and or textures (Acharya et al. 2019; Goleman 1996). A woman or man who has suffered child abuse/neglect or violence, the loud acoustic sounds, the cold steel, the chemical smells, and abusive, raw language of prisons can reignite traumas experienced previously (Centres Against Sexual Assault 2019).

The long-term impact of incarceration does not only impact the convicted offender but also their immediate family and a myriad of social relationships. The institutional effect of being 'inside', 'controlled' and 'governed' can create another disorder, which prison culture identifies as 'gate fever' (Glossary). This syndrome has detrimental psychological effects and can drive an inmate to commit further crime upon release with the ambition of returning to prison, which is perceived as 'safety' from a world that has become incomprehensible and non-negotiable (Maruna 2000). This is similar to the phenomenon of 'Stockholm syndrome' (Wallace 2007), which became known in the wake of the Stockholm hostage crisis, in which the victim/s—for psychological reasons of survival tactics—begin/s to empathise with their captor and emotionally bond/s with the controlled environment, feeling vulnerable and insecure when the opportunity for freedom arises.

Some prisons have been likened to 'war zones' (Fellows 1997; Macneil 2006), and now Australian prisons are also increasingly filling up with immigrants and refugees due to international dislocation (Carrington et al. 2007). Confused and struggling with cultural displacement, these people may have suffered extreme violence and wars, and as this may spawn secondary behaviours, prisons are seemingly becoming more volatile (Coventry et al. 2014). The anxiety of expecting violence each day creates hypervigilance and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which forces stress hormones in the body to overreact and immobilise the individual through the 'fight or flight' response (Goleman 1996; Sapolski 2017). Endorphin changes within a highly charged prison environment may induce anhedonia[2]; apathy[3] and/or dissociation,[4] and the person may even become indifferent to events otherwise perceived as highly traumatic and violent (Rosal and Gussak 2016).

If inmates do not have the skills to decipher problems upon release or are suffering 'gate fever' (Glossary), immediate reactive behaviours can result in a swift return to prison and this can be counteractive to rehabilitation. This then results in further financial costs to society (Hamburger 2018; QPC 2019), in addition to the long-term generational impacts borne by concerned family members (Burton et al. 2019). These family members or children can, as a result, end up in foster care, homeless or in prison themselves, due to lack of parental or role model guidance (Marcianna et al. 2019; Rushforth and Willis 2003).

15.1.3   Rehabilitation: Opportunities and Limitations

Current models of incarceration geared at rehabilitation follow a management process which spans merely the time horizon from reception to discharge, i.e. from the time the prisoner is received at the prison from court via secure transport, until the completion of sentence or parole (Glossary) approval, which is a Community Corrections Order (CCO; Glossary). This is also referred to as end-to-end management (Maguire and Raynor 2016). This model's largest downfall is its management "from a distance" (Australian Law Reform 2018), and very little personalised or relational management is involved to meet the inmate's needs (Hunter 2015). Although inmates are afforded opportunities for education in literacy and numeracy at a general high school level, it is up to each inmate to request any further higher education. This holds important implications as many inmates are motivated towards furthering their education for early release on parole (Glossary) or CCO (Glossary) (Brosens et al. 2013). However, due to peer group pressure and prison culture, education can be perceived as not socially acceptable (Ahlin et al. 2017). Contemporary pressures

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[2]Anhedonia is a psychological term for the inability to feel pleasure in circumstances otherwise known for being pleasurable to humans.

[3]Apathy stands in opposition to empathy and is a lack of compassion for others.

[4]Dissociation is referred to as a separation of normally related mental processes, which can in turn lead to multiple personality disorder as a result of trauma experiences.

upon societal services for community safety and globalised law reforms (Wonders 2016) have created a problematic future for inmates caught up in a system they struggle to negotiate (Australian Law Reform Commission 2018). This overall situation provides unprecedented, unique and unrivalled opportunities for art therapy to promote effective rehabilitation, healing and reconciliation processes for both offenders and society.

15.2 Incarceration and Prison Ministry in the Bible

15.2.1 Prisons: Historical and Etymological Considerations

Traditionally prisons were located in houses or underground cellars (Archaeological Bible 2005). In 451 BC, the Tullianum in ancient Rome was built in such a manner, and was later known as Mamertime Prison (Newbold 1999; Sherman 1919). The etymological history of the term 'prison cell' originated during the twelfth century to denote a small monastery or refuge that afforded confined reflection time with God. During the 1300s, the Latin meaning evolved to refer to a small room in which to 'hide' or 'conceal'. During the medicinal discovery era of the 1400s yet another meaning emerged, this time to refer to areas of the brain as compartments, cells or blood cells.

Importantly, it was within compartments or 'cells' in Cappadocia that Byzantium monks practiced their skills in artistic endeavours such as calligraphy for the recordings of the scriptures (Sherrard 1971). During the era of European conquest and migration during the 1700s, the meaning progressed from the idea of a monastic room of prayer and solitude, to refer to the prison cell as a place of 'punitive measure' (Online Etymology Dictionary 2019). An early Quaker influence of design for segregation 'cells' (Dalrymple 2013) had only a small hole in the ceiling in which to allow the only light known as the 'eye of God' under which one could have time with God to reflect and reach penance, which then developed to become the original term for a housing block of cells or so-called 'penitentiary' (Denney 2017).

15.2.2 Prisons: Scriptural Considerations

For Christians, it is a duty of discipleship to minister to inmates. The original canons and scriptures are robust with references to assisting, discipling and showing mercy to the prisoners; however, many of these nuances have been lost in translation. The most prolific command in the New Testament comes from the Gospel of Matthew 25:36: "*I was in prison and you came to visit me*" (Holy Bible, NIV).

Similarly, the Book of Hebrews 13:3 admonishes: "… *remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering*." (Holy Bible, NIV).

The original Greek word for prison, keeping watch over, guarding is φυλακή; 'Fylakí'. In various translations this has been altered to bonds, captives, chains and even loins. According to the Old Testament, the covenant of God is upon His children, regardless of their crime, or judgement by others within society (Hudson 2015).

Psalm 69:33 "*For the Lord heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners*" (The Holy Bible. King James Version). Furthermore, the psalmist speaks of prison as a mode of correction and mercy from God: "*You brought us into prison*" (Psalm 66:11) and "*set us free from prison*" (Psalm 142:7). The context here suggests behavioural correction that culminates in rehabilitation and being awarded due freedom. In brief, God rehabilitates.

There are many references made in the New Testament to prisons or the experiences of imprisonment. For instance, the apostles endured imprisonment:

"*After arresting [Peter], [King Herod] put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.*" (Acts 12:4–5, NIV).

Similarly, John the Baptist endured imprisonment: "*When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?'* " (Matthew 11:2, NIV).

Moreover, the Apostle Paul extends greetings to "… *Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me.*" (Romans 16:7, NIV).

These scriptures describe the imprisonment of both leading biblical protagonists (Peter, Paul, and John) and the newer Christians they discipled (Andronicus and Junia). By extension, this teaches the Church to show mercy to people irrespective of their lifestyle choices, and that no human being is exempt from the possibility of imprisonment or forgiveness. Prisoners, as were slaves, were treated poorly, beaten, mistreated, abused and humiliated, and over the course of time this has not changed (UNODC 2010). What is evolving is society's opinions regarding crime, including perceived 'solutions' involving longer sentencing, more isolation and less community engagement, all of which potentially snowballs into dissociation disorders arising from social exclusion.

15.2.3   Prisons: Creative Processes and Rehabilitation

Teaching through a Christian paradigm within prison walls is advantageous to correctional services and privatised prison management, as prison guards, wardens and managers have been working in alignment and oversight from church bodies since the recording of scripture and human imprisonment (Scott 2013; Newbold 1999).

For sufferers of trauma, instilling a belief system inclusive of purpose, identity and meaning is an essential component for the limbic brain to emotionally relearn (Nelson 2012). Art has been a tool for documenting historical events and telling human stories since creation (Petrie 1974; Lehner 1950; Jung 1964). This is imperative and is proven to be a foundational ingredient for rehabilitation, emotional healing and regaining a sense of empathy (Goleman 1996). Art is proven to be "medium of the unconsciousness" (Goleman 1996, p. 209) and an effective tool in addressing trauma and its resulting behaviours. Unfortunately, financial pressures have seen the demise of many art programs previously held in high regard by both inmates and education officers working within correctional facilities.

It was out of darkness God created the universe, and then created humans to be creative (Genesis 1, NIV). Out of darkness inmates can recreate themselves (Sapolski 2017). Creative pursuits encompass all aspects of life, from birth, to memory, and learning through experience. Using art in combination with subtle biblical teachings, art can change and unhinge thought processes that formerly seeded criminal behaviours. By promoting art as a tool, repetitive patterns of human behaviour can be intercepted, and the brain can relearn and manage life situations differently (Luetz et al. 2020). This alternate avenue and ultimate solution to life's problems is self-exploratory in relieving the burden of trauma (Deiterich-Hartwell and Kaimal 2019; Goleman 1996).

In the case of this pilot study, by using a gentling process of retelling events (Goleman 1996; Cohen-Leibman and Gussak 2001) within a recognised calm environment, a sense of self-control was obtained, which enabled the brain to begin to heal. However, achieving this takes skill on the facilitator's part to remain calm within a volatile forensic environment. Furthermore, diffusing situations with guided spiritual awareness (Nelson 2012) requires solid understanding of prison culture (Casey et al. 2011).

15.3   Synthesis: Intended Research Contribution

15.3.1   Study Context, Rationale and Research Gap

Previous research in Australia has emphasised assessing and understanding Australian prison culture (Casey et al. 2011), and relevant observations have been documented regarding Australian prison chaplaincy services (Carey and Del-Medico 2013). Although Australian prison management is aware of the rewards generated by art programs (CCC 2018), there is no documented knowledge that links these three areas within the unique context of Australian prison culture (Ahlin et al. 2017).

Relatedly, Australia's diverse culture and young convict history seem to be rather accommodating of a kind of criminal 'ideal', whereby offences against the law may be conceived as both acceptable and genetic, arising chiefly from the nation's history of exile from its mother country, including the wars which ensued upon Australian soil

(Connors 2015). This brief and violent Australian history is documented throughout Australia's art society, and yet its cultural influence on Australian society remains overall underappreciated (Porter 1990).

In this context, there are important benefits to be reaped from the implementation of art therapy for both prison chaplains and empathetic support workers (Hass-Cohen and Carr 2008). Art therapy reduces the effect of vicarious trauma upon care workers (Brady et al. 2016). Vicarious trauma is the consequential impact that can occur within clinicians working directly with traumatised clients. This may manifest in unique emotional changes (Goleman 1996). Alternate terms for vicarious trauma are burnout, secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue (Downs 2019). Compassion fatigue is common within prison chaplaincy. These human experiences can have both positive and negative effects (Rosal and Gussak 2016). Using art therapy during discipleship can reduce the impact of vicarious trauma experiences and build up vicarious resilience (Downs 2019). This can strengthen the resolve of chaplaincy teams to be socially ready and engaged when attending to the suffering experienced by inmates, either inside or out (Goleman 1996).

15.3.2 *Study Purpose, Expected Benefits, Hypothesis, Research Questions, Aims*

Addressing the above-mentioned research context, this pilot study seeks to highlight the needs of prisoners' creative outlets, whilst reversing the long-term emotionally damaging effects of trauma using a Christian worldview in an apologetic format, which can instil confidence and self-identity within a broken world (Goleman 1996; Cohen-Leibman and Gussak 2001). Additionally, this research advocates for the reinstatement and mainstreaming of art and creative endeavours within prisons. Importantly, this chapter argues for appropriate art-based therapy programs to be officially recognised and supported by QCS (Glossary) as an ongoing, essential and indispensable ingredient to the rehabilitation, healing and reconciliation of both offenders and society. Expressed in simple language, art can communicate through its creation what neither written nor spoken words can convey (Charbaszcz 2011; Cohen-Leibman and Gussak 2001). Incidentally, the etymology of the word 'art' dates back to the thirteenth century, describing the practice of skill through learning and evolved from the root word '*arma*' as in a weapon or defence (OED 2019). As such, art may be used as a life skill for communication, thus enabling inmates to develop defensive resilience to protect themselves from life's adversities. Importantly, *everyone* can create, either in a skilled way or in a more naïve manner. Notwithstanding one's level of artistic skill, creativity typically enhances one's understanding of one's own place in the world (Rosal and Gussak 2016; Kapitan 2010). As documented in the biblical account, the role of 'creativity' seems to be both foundational and ubiquitous as its ripple effects reverberate back to the beginning of time (Genesis 1, NIV).

15.4   Pilot Study: 'Change the Design of Your Life' Program

The 'Change the Design of Your Life' program was initially created for youth detained at the Youth Detention Centre before the population incarceration crisis (UC 2018). It was facilitated once to a cohort of approximately 12 under eighteen-year-old offenders incarcerated at Brisbane Correctional Centre (BCC; Glossary) with a focus on music and cognitive role playing and was first called 'Change the Tune of Your Life'. This chapter's first author was subsequently engaged by Uniting Care (UC) to re-write the program for maximum-security centres based on her personal and reflective experiences. Hence the entire program was redeveloped whilst tutoring art at Woodford Correctional Centre (WCC), a super max men's prison which at the time was dealing with extensive overcrowding issues, gang-initiated violence and assaults. Relevant experiences and reflective processing enabled the qualitative identification of key areas of need for self-awareness of inmates, their immediate communities, prison culture and emotional trauma to be addressed through art while managing volatile personas (Rosal and Gussak 2016; Kapitan 2010). As the program developer was already known as a person of faith, a former chaplain and an ex-inmate, numerous opportunities arose for apologetically discussing faith and consequential life choices during processes of art tutoring. This proved beneficial for the environment of the prison. Furthermore, it also had another positive side-effect as it facilitated the creation of a small inner prison art-based community. Regrettably, shortly after developing the 'Change the Design of Your Life' program, correctional services cut funding for art due to pressures arising from overcrowding, and as a consequence of this the art rooms at Woodford Correctional Centre were closed. This had a detrimental effect on inmates at both Woodford prison and many other Queensland centres that followed suit. In consequence, the program developer then began piloting the 'Change the Design of Your Life' program in two other prisons: Borallon Correctional and Training Centre (BCTC) and Brisbane Women's Centre (BWC).

Due to the differential needs of men and women upon release, two alternate versions of the program were drafted to accommodate the different issues confronting men and women upon release. It is an unfortunate result of prison culture that women confront vastly alternate and complex issues with family and children upon release as opposed to men (Cobbina 2009; Rosal and Gussak 2016; Kapitan 2010). Relatedly, the two programs can also be adjusted to assist transgender inmates that confront yet another category of needs upon release.

During program development, both prisons were experiencing vast changes and population relocations to accommodate the increase in facility demand. This included the relocation of the almost two hundred percent capacity of BWC to the decommissioned South East Queensland private Serco (Glossary) men's prison to becoming a women's centre, to meet the demands of escalating rates of women in prison. Therefore, during these mass relocations of inmates, previous art students from Woodford who were transferred to BCTC were subsequently reconnected with the program developer to discuss qualitatively the impact that the discontinued art program had

left, and what it meant to no longer have access to any creative outlets apart from the 'Change the Design of Your Life' program.

As a result of this, pilot programs were implemented to suit the changing climate of these centres and the programs were adapted to suit inmates being relocated, and to continue unchanged in the face of regular lockdowns of centres (see Glossary). After this, Uniting Care needed to reassess and acquire more funding. Therefore, during this time, the program developer also worked for Re-Start employment services (Glossary) at Borallon Prison, as a casual supervisor overseeing the graphic design department which employs inmates at prison wages to produce graphic art for external companies. Once again, the program developer was able to gauge both the effects of inmates having no access to general art, and the lasting impact of the previously run 'Change the Design of Your Life' program. This included the request for the running of another iteration of 'Change the Design of Your Life', which commenced in February 2019 and ran at BWC for eight weeks. It was during the piloting of this latest iteration of the program that more qualitative research was observed that further enhanced understanding of the needs of inmates in today's society. Furthermore, this latest offering also resulted in 'tweaking' certain program aspects to become more beneficial to the psychological needs of inmates.

The eight-week 'Change the Design of Your Life' program is structured as depicted in the overview below (see Fig. 15.2).

The first session (Week 1) involves an introductory presentation. This is crucial to establishing trust and discerning personal information. Then through setting basic tasks, levels of ability are identified. It is during this process that one of three main project ideas can be identified and selected, which best suits the participant (elaborated below). This requires prison culture awareness and implies a broadly qualitative approach. By adapting and complementing elements of popular culture with psychologically based self-awareness exercises (Deiterich-Hartwell and Kaimal 2019), the program developer has created three projects that can be personalised with medium emotional labour[5]:

1. *Self-portrait/handprint* using images, words and/or collages
2. *Life map/road map* using timelines to identify key moments in one's life
3. *Album/book cover* using popular culture references to self-identify with the record of one's own life and value

The following three images show the progress of one participant's exploration of art and experimental use of colour, texture and alternate techniques (see Figs. 15.3, 15.4 and 15.5).

These three project ideas are personal identity tasks and can be intimidating for participants to undertake. Therefore, using elements of popular culture to initiate creative impulses and drive the projects can be helpful. Personal identity development is key to validating new behaviours and can alter social interaction from

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[5]Emotional labour within forensic environments can reproduce residual effects of trauma. A gentling process involves subtle distractions and allows the participant to explore their own emotional needs without force.

Week One. Introduction to program. Self introduction; my story. Trust establishment and what is art?

Week Two. Identity. Who are you? Where do you want to be? How does that look? Project introduction and art play.

Week Three. Reflective discussions. Perspectives. Brainstorming, background experiences and how to express them.

Week Four. Illustration techniques, understanding light and dark. How the darkness effects us spiritually. How to show that in art.

Week Five. Art theory. Understanding people. Facial expressions. Confidence building. How to show emotion in art using color.

Week Six. Motivation and assistance with projects. Group discussions, art theory. Directional and confidence building to get artworks moving towards end.

Week Seven. Group refelection. Art is in everything. Spiritual art. One-on-one assistance with projects. Motivational discussions regarding future.

Week Eight. Helping participants write their own art description for afternoon presentation and final tidy up of artwork. Setting up art exhibition and negotiation with correctional staff, followed by final award ceremony with GM, MOD, psychologists and Uniting Care. Emotional afternoon.

Fig. 15.2   Eight-week overview of the 'Change the Design of Your Life' program

Fig. 15.3 Participant has used objects and colour theory to experimentally express background emotion for final project (Artwork by Tammy White; identification and reproduction with permission)

Fig. 15.4 Same participant has used further exploration into emotional colour expression through facilitator discussion identifying dangerous areas in participant's life (Artwork by Tammy White; identification and reproduction with permission)

aggressive to communal (Rosal and Gussak 2016). Importantly, immersive conversations are engaged using a gentling process to extract vital and often unrecognised information for the creative input by participants. Continual interaction with inmates then allows for relational trust to be established. Further, discussions relating to understanding tonal qualities and contrasts in art can become an insightful recognition of the darker/unsafe areas of their own lives. This identification process can arise through subtle prompting and gradual art-based processes. Once identified, these 'darker' life areas, which can be habitual, emotional or criminal, can then be symbolically and subliminally (Jung 1964) pushed into the background and the more positive life choices become a main priority and focus within the artwork. Regardless of the inmate's skill set or cognitive abilities, this program is flexible to meet the needs of a broad range of inmate biographical experiences. As such, the only limitation remains the prison environment itself.

By simplifying basic art techniques, the underlying emphasis can be tweaked to assist in understanding the complex nature of prison culture (Johns 2014) and its symbolism (Symbolic Repetition Scale; Glossary). Illustration techniques using

Fig. 15.5 Final artwork by same participant as shown at exhibition in Week 8 of self-portrait entitled "Controlled Kaos". This participant, prior to involvement in this art program, had never produced any artwork, and through 'Change the Design of Your Life' program, successfully produced artwork using found resources and materials supplied by Uniting Care, while exploring own identity, and potentially dangerous life areas to avoid in future (Artwork by Tammy White; identification and reproduction with permission)

simple mark making with a biro are also beneficial for correctional services as it provides inmates with the skillset and knowledge to self-entertain during long and arduous cell lockdowns (Glossary) or while detained in Safety Units (SU; Glossary) or Detention Units (DU; Glossary). Such periods in solitary confinement can last up to 23 h per day, and up to fourteen days, or even up to 6 months in Maximum Security Units (MSU). These basic art skills have also been beneficial in reducing 'escapism' through a reduction in substance/drug abuse.

Further into the weeks and sessions, new elements into art practises are introduced. By presenting group interaction time with group art theory and historical, and/or popular culture discussions, a solid and respectful art theory knowledge base is initiated. By deflecting popular naïve art trends, further interest in the academia of art can be stimulated and thus become a deterrent for tattooing (Glossary), which is prevalent within correctional environments. This problem of 'jail tats' (Glossary) is significant for correctional services and spawns many consequential problems, which manifest both within the prisons, and also persist as lifelong problems for inmates upon release (Brown et al. 2018). The psychology behind prison tattooing lies within the reptilian aspect of the brain, which responds in primitive ways to punitive measures, as a means for the human to remain in control of situations which are, in fact, out of their control. By using art to engage the neocortex part of the brain, the compulsive/animalistic mindset can be overridden (Koch et al. 2011).

An observant eye for subtle mood changes within the room is needed and often participants need to be redirected. This can be achieved by using art-play, experimental art and simple ad hoc tutorials by the facilitator on how to achieve creative effects. Group discussions and reflection times are also beneficial for the entire group in their understanding of art from alternate perspectives. Among the most positive and influential tutorials is understanding light and dark. By using prison culture vocabulary ('vernacular') to explain the technicalities of how light creates shadows, participants can then not only create dimension, but also see darkness and where it comes from spiritually as well as physically. By using parables to tutor and explain art symbolically, participants are then enabled to use art to communicate creatively. In this way, art has served inmates:

- As an accountability awareness tool for promoting responsibility for their own actions;
- To communicate their needs personally and visually to external community corrections overseers (i.e. probation and parole) (Glossary);
- To disciple according to the gospel without judgement of alternate spiritual practices;
- To initiate reconciliation with victims of crime and the broader community through active engagement, as opposed to exclusion.

The program has therefore developed into a semi-structured format, which approaches self-development and positive life pursuits. This can be variable for both men and women, as their personal developmental needs may differ. The focus for men tends to be stronger on socialization and anger management, and for women it is often more focussed on trauma recovery, self-identity, and confidence building (Rosal and Gussak 2016). An overview of the eight-week program is offered in Fig. 15.2, albeit flexible adjustments to this schedule can sometimes be unavoidable.

15.5   Results and Key Findings

This section describes results and key findings from piloting the 'Change the Design of Your Life' program. Current programs offered by QCS (Glossary) use cognitive awareness within a discussion group context (Giles 2016). This can be very confronting for inmates who have had little life guidance from family members or emotional interaction with potential role models. A sad reality is a vast number of inmates (up to ninety-five percent) have also been victims of abuse (Centre Against Sexual Assault 2019). These traumas can be triggered and have been known to cause extreme and negative reactions for inmates. Psychological approaches for inmates who have suffered trauma from their own actions, or the actions of others, need to be at a medium level of "emotional labour" (Howells et al. 2004). This has important implications for the emotional engagement of inmates in programs. These limitations are reflected in research by Day et al. (2004). Accordingly, the most effective

programs run for 100–250 h (at medium emotional level) (Day et al. 2004; Heseltine et al. 2011).

Due to the erratic and changing nature of prisons, formal structure may require change with little advance notice. Although this basic program structure and outline (Fig. 15.2) has had positive results from feedback forms, participants of the 'Change the Design of Your Life' program have been additionally required to provide informed consent regarding this current research and documentation. Furthermore, participants have willingly given signed consent for their artworks to be included in this chapter. Likert scale feedback forms reflected overall positive results. Whilst being cautious to allow the participants their own opportunity and time to fill in the forms without any peer pressure or power interference, forensic environments always have limitations.

The results from changes in the art produced (from the beginning of the program to the end) are outstanding in its positive life reflection. An inmate's example of artwork (see Fig. 15.6) is exemplary because the participant wanted to quit the program after the first hour on the first day due to low self-esteem and self-doubt. However, the participant ultimately continued and then unknowingly used a tone referred to in psychological studies as Baker-Miller pink (Schauss 1985) (Glossary), which is known to have overall aggression and anxiety calming effects, and this was achieved through the participant reaching a heightened level of confidence and self-awareness following direction and communication by the program facilitator (Casey
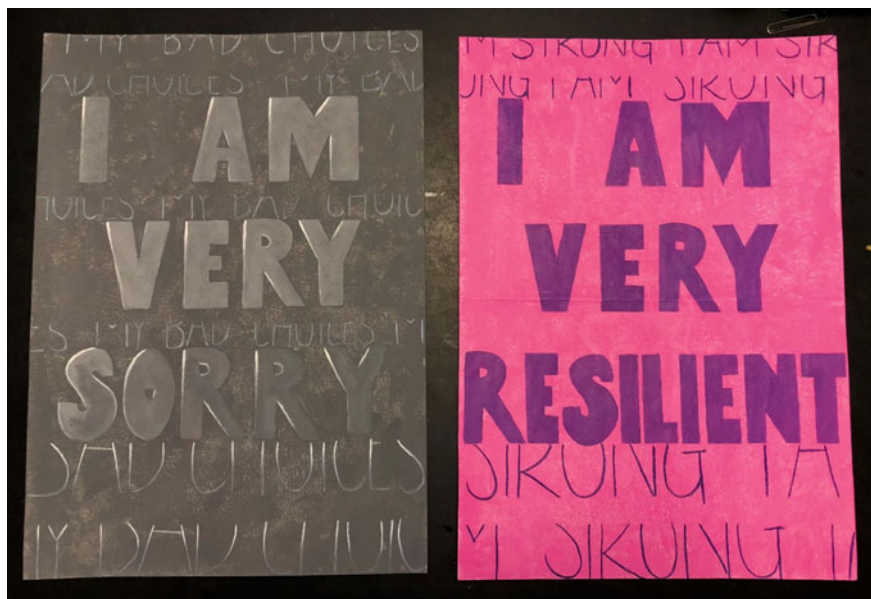

Fig. 15.6 Artwork produced by a participant at start of program (on left) using text to describe personal distress over current incarceration, in comparison to artwork produced at end of program (on right) describing personal affirmations in a positive light (Artwork by Jackie Nguyen; identification and reproduction with permission)

et al. 2011). The psychological effect of this particular colour on the suppression of human aggression is well researched and identified by psychological studies (Mella 1990).

There are discussions underway to include a second module for the art program, primarily to target participants who have successfully completed module one. This is to enable them to progress further into intensive illustration techniques. This module is geared at assisting inmates to complete a story board illustration detailing their needs for outside life stabilisers upon release for parole submissions. This would provide opportunistic moments for understanding and working through remorse. Furthermore, this would also open up opportunities for future research. Although research is limited by the prohibition to carry recording devices, journaling can offer rich qualitative verbatim feedback, as exemplified by the following thank-you note:

> Thank you so much Miss, I didn't feel like I was in Jail today … I can actually do this, and I feel more confident … That's awesome Miss, I can do art with my kids now (personal communication on file with first author, anon, 2018–2019).

15.6   Symbolic Repetition Scale

Previous methods for quantitative data analysis of art therapies have included: (1) the Formal Elements Art Therapy Scale (FEATS), commonly used in psychiatric art analysis; (2) the Person Picking an Apple from a Tree (PPAT) (Anderson and Gantt 2009; Rosal and Gussak 2016; Kapitan 2010); and (3) quantitative measures in colour emotion analysis (Cheng 2002). Although successful as data collation tools, due to differential prison environments, these forms of analysis are not specific enough for Australian prison culture. Hence the development of a different data analysis tool was required (Bryman 2012).

Prior to globalisation and cultural interfacing, art and symbolism were very specific to immediate cultures (Fellman 1986; Simmons 1986; Green 2003; Schiffmacher 1996). This holds particular relevance for prison contexts. Remaining strictly inside prison walls and being excluded and segregated from the broader society, the culture of each prison is unique (Wright 2005. Ahlin et al. 2017). Different cultures perceive and interpret symbolism and colours through diverse emotive lenses (Cheng 2002; Jung 1964; Klingenberg et al. 2020), and cultural symbolism for inmates in prison is a prolific tool for communication when all other forms of communication are scrutinised.

The Symbolic Repetition Scale (Fig. 15.7) has been developed in the course of the program initiator's diverse qualitative experiences with prison culture (cf. Lambert 2003). This scale is specific to prison culture (Casey et al. 2011) and its colour reference and usage is also specific to prison culture (cf. Schauss 1985). Specific tattoo designs can alter an inmate's life on the inside (Lambert 2003), just as correctional services use the psychological effects of colour to suppress certain levels of human aggression (Banks et al. 1971). Therefore, by identifying reoccurring themes prevalent in an inmate's life's and categorising them based upon historical

Delineations	Negative	Hostile	Indifferent	Progressive	Positive	Dark Colours	Greys and Crimson	Neutral / Random	Experimental	Greens/ Bright/Rainbows
Death										
Skulls										
Skulls and Bones										
Self-Image										
Gang Imagery										
Weapons										
Guns										
War / Violence										
Bricks / Walls										
Iron bars										
Nature										
Family										
Text / Font										
Coded Symbols										
Spiritual										
Heaven										
Hell										
Occult										
Anatomy										
Sexual										
Drug paraphernalia										
Popular culture										
Literal										
Heraldry / Historical identity										
Personal identity										
Names/Numbers										

Fig. 15.7   Symbolic Repetition Scale (SRS; Glossary)

significance to its symbolic cultural interfacing and meaning, recorded data can then show improvements in an inmate's psychological growth from negative attributions to positive life skill sets.

This scale is used initially to identify core themes within inmates' early artworks by categorising and scaling the symbolic information used, inclusive of text and descriptive art. Then a secondary scale is collated by categorising symbols used in final artworks as a comparison to show contrasting improvements identifiable in inmates' work over time. Further identification of the colours used in association with artwork (consistent with the art supplies offered within the prison systems) is used in data collation for recognising psychological improvements. Insights gained from the analysis of visual art and colour emotional response theories create a window into the inmate's perception and overall state of well-being.

15.7   Discussion: Project Evaluation

15.7.1   Critical Analysis

The 'Change the Design of Your Life' program has had recognised success through inmates' reflective engagement with art, thus supporting self-confidence and offering alternate ways to occupy time. Noticeable improvements in communication have resulted in the added benefit of inmates being able to create art to send to their children, and/or to meaningfully engage with their children while practicing art inside. This has proven exceptionally useful for the women inside and outside, including

their families. For the men, it holds the potential to initiate alternate ways to provide incomes for their families as opposed to returning to crime and illegal activities. Understanding the complexities of prison culture (Nelson 2012) is an essential component of administering a well-thought-out art program that not only meets the security needs of prisons (Cohen-Leibman and Gussak 2001) but also considers the financial pressures faced by management. Art can communicate across multiple levels (Sheller 2007; Sinapsius 2013), whilst within a prison environment art may give inmates a sense of self-control and freedom. Finally, art is engaging for offender responsivity (Byrne et al. 2001).

15.7.2   Opportunities for Further Research

Opportunities for future research in this area lie in the potential of further training of successful participants serving long-term sentences who may become program facilitators within the prison themselves. This would prove beneficial to corrections not only as employment activities for the inmates facilitating art while discipling other prisoners in a life-enriching format but would prove advantageous for long-term research into the benefits of forensic art therapies and residual effects (Cohen-Leibman and Gussak 2001). Previous models of art facilitation were geared at being time distractions rather than positive life reinforcement and/or rehabilitation (Pedley 2006). With economic pressure mounting to accommodate increasing prison populations of not only general or mainstream prisoners (Glossary) but more violent prisoners, art is no longer available as it previously was (Tucker 2019). Moreover, there are new security risks facing Corrections in larger precincts, and art supplies have come under growing scrutiny as potential weapons (Cohen-Leibman and Gussak 2001).

15.7.3   Research Limitations

Prisons, by nature of function, are restrictive areas, and security clearances and police checks must always be obtained. This means that access to facilities is only permissible by approval of prison General Managers. Some prisons/facilities have populations which management classify as highly dangerous, or the facility is geared at employment for inmates as opposed to therapies and therefore may not deem such research as beneficial to the facility or prison population. Maintaining an awareness of the prison environment and being respectful of the corrections ethos is essential. Lockdowns (Glossary) can occur and that can prevent facilitation and progress; however, this is consistent with the function of high-security facilities and with respect for staff this must be accepted, regardless of the project at hand. Relatedly, access limitations may impede or even prevent planning of program activities. Initially, the program developer's goals for artwork results were much greater than

what was ultimately obtainable, and this has been a learning experience throughout piloting the program. The sharpened focus now allows for further specifics to be conceptualised and investigated by future research.

15.8   Concluding Synthesis and Selected Recommendations

15.8.1   For Policymakers

As a result of piloting the 'Change the Design of Your Life' program, in May 2019 the program developer made a submission to the Queensland Productivity Commission into recidivism (Glossary) and imprisonment, drawing attention to the following points (Tucker 2019):

- Appropriate art programs should be reintroduced into all correctional facilities;
- Offender accountability needs to be addressed immediately post sentencing/guilty verdict;
- Family structure is integral to breaking cyclic behaviours;
- Holistic 24/7 supervised therapeutic community corrections are pivotal;
- Appropriate training for church groups should be inclusive of inmate culture and needs;
- Prison ministry (all denominations) needs ongoing and extensive support;

These areas need addressing within correctional facilities for the return prisoner/recidivist ratio to be decreased in the long term.

15.8.2   For Prison Chaplains

Within a globalised world of alternate cultural paradigms, conventional Bible teachings are typically viewed with scepticism. Art has an ability to engage multiple belongings and reach across multiple cultures and societies without strict adherence to ideologies (Brady et al. 2016, Acharya et al. 2019, Klingenberg et al. 2020). By using art and basic models of biblical morale, inmates may be engaged within a positive life program format ecumenically. Uniting Care recently requested research into the productivity, impacts and results from this art therapy-based program. Ongoing research is not only in response to this request but also meets the general need for better and more art-based therapies within institutional environs. During the apostle Peter's arrest, the church continued to support him and pray for him. John the Baptist, while in prison, was able to send a message to the Messiah outside, via disciples. This mode of communicating with the outside world remained consistent with chaplaincy practice during the twentieth century (Hattersley 2000; Hicks 2015; Dethles 2017), although this has more recently been subjected to severe restrictions (SCB

2018). In the Book of Romans and Philemon, Paul speaks of his commune with other church members encountered within the prison. This instilled a sense of connection to 'outside' reality. Connection is one of the attributes for pastoral care consistent within a community framework. Crime is not a surface issue. Rather, it is intrinsic within humanity since the conception of free will (Gen 4:7) and should be managed holistically and flexibly to adjust to changeable circumstances. As prisons change, expand and evolve, so should our care for prisoners. In this context, chaplaincy should become more inclusive (as opposed to remaining exclusive) in its outlook on biblical influence in order to guarantee making a lasting impact (Dethles 2017; Hicks 2015; Tucker 2019). God gave humans gifts and abilities, and communicating through art is an undeniable gift, as is communicating through music. There is much support in the literature for the idea that human happiness is attained by more than merely economic development, wherefore holistic wellbeing perspectives are essential (Quak and Luetz 2020). Alternate ministries need exploration and support so that ex-prisoners may feel the gift of God within their hearts, which they may then leverage and release to the world through art.

15.8.3   For General Managers and Correctional Services

General Managers face a challenge each day recognising inmates as humans that have failed to live up to society's expectations. For correctional services to bridge the gap between officers and inmates and to recognise that we are all 'human' with a different role can be a difficult task. If correctional staff and the general public can appreciate art as beneficial for the rehabilitative community (Rosal and Gussak 2016), there is the promise that art may be used and leveraged by skilful facilitators to reduce 'pressure cooker' conditions experienced in overpopulated correctional facilities today.

15.8.4   For Researchers

There are large knowledge gaps in research in the areas of forensic art therapies, which the American Art Therapy Association has drawn attention to (Rosal and Gussak 2016). Knowledge gaps include both long-term forensic rehabilitation and the long-term impacts of prison ministries upon inmates and their children (Rushforth and Willis 2003). Furthermore, there is a need to better understand the long-term trauma and generational impacts upon ex-prisoners as a result of incarceration. This calls for holistic rehabilitation methods and creative outlets for forensic evidence-based research (Cohen-Leibman and Gussak 2001). Moreover, there are opportunities to research the historical diversity of Australian culture upon its prison population. Finally, there is also a need for research in areas where teachers interact with children of prisoners.

15.8.5   For Inmates

The benefits of this research are hypothetically long reaching. If prisoner perspectives can be better understood through art, it opens up communication benefits for both correctional services and parole (Glossary) to recognise and identify the needs of prisoners before recidivist cyclicality sees them being returned to prison. There is a case in the literature to learn from unconventional teachers (Luetz et al. 2019), and consulting prisoners as hitherto unconsulted consultants resonates with the seemingly habitual "Divine preference for self-revelation and human betterment through the least expected voice" (p. 115). Expressed differently, the effect upon community and corrections orders could save a lifetime of trauma for both inmate and potential victims, with potential ripple effects extending to family members on both sides of the prison wall. By using art as a tool to disciple biblically, an inmate could then see the benefit of immersing themselves into a church community which can also increase chances of long-term rehabilitation success. If prisoners can be viewed as humans with abilities rather than disabilities, it may spawn long-term motivation towards community input and gainful employment.

15.8.6   Summary of Benefits of Christian Education Using Art Therapies

As Christians, we are created to create. This entails reimagining and creating churches that thrive, and schools that transform (Norsworthy et al. 2018). We would not have such a committed belief in the one true I AM if it was not for rich iconic art depicting Jesus and the prophets ministering to the Gentiles across diverse cultures. These time-less images are what we visualise in prayer, in reflection and in times of doubt and forgiveness. Art is the greatest form of worship—to recreate the image of Yahweh, Yeshua, Adonai, Elohim, the I AM—is to exalt Him through time and space (Wheeler 2003). As such, art can be arguably exposited as being similarly influential to prayer because it promotes change and communicates across cultures, time and space. Christians must adapt to a world that is visually inclined and liberally uses 'emojis'. Jesus spoke in a language of visual parables, and if we wish to emulate His ministry to fellow human beings, we must use similar communication tools. Let art be an educator, because it can reveal what is hidden on the inside.

15.9   Glossary

AWP: Adelaide Women's Prison.

Baker-Miller pink: A study by Alexander Schauss in 1985 on the The psychological effect of colour on the suppression of human aggression: Baker-Miller pink, found

that inmates held in an initial holding cell painted in this colour were subdued and that recorded assaults were drastically reduced.

BCC: Brisbane Correctional Centre. A remand centre designed for inmates awaiting court proceedings, was used to house juveniles age seventeen due to overcrowding and lack of placements for young offenders, due to the housing of MSU inmates this was amended.

Boneyard: Is the term prisoners use for protection (see protection) and is called this because once in there, you are deemed dead and can never return to mainstream (see mainstream).

BWC: Brisbane Women's Prison.

CCA: Corrections Corporation America. A joint venture with Wormald Security, John Holland Holdings, and was Australia's first privatised prison management at Borallon Correctional and training centre.

Community Corrections Order (CCO): An order upon which an inmate is placed to complete sentence on the outside, at a parole board approved address, with restrictions such as curfews, weekly checks, phone calls and GPS tracking ankle bands.

Contraband: Illegal substances within a prison including drugs, drug paraphernalia, weapons, mobile phones and or any other banned item.

Corrections: See QCS. An abbreviated term for Correctional Services.

DU: Detention Unit. Similar to SU, (see Safety Unit) but infringed upon higher instances of correctional breaches as opposed to personal or potential self-harm.

Dog: A term used by inmates to identify another inmate or officer or even volunteer as being an informant to either correctional services or police.

FPC: First Peoples Chaplain. A chaplain specific to the needs of indigenous inmates, and the social and spiritual differences from mainstream.

Gate Fever: A term used to describe the uncertainty, and anxiety about being released into society after becoming comfortable and institutionalised.

GEO: A private prison company that is currently being decommissioned as running Arthur Gorrie Remand Centre in Queensland. Historically begun as a small prisoner relocation business, Wackenhut Corrections Corporation (WCC) was formed as a division of the Wackenhut Corporation (now a subsidiary of G4S Secure Solutions) in 1984. In 2003, WCC management raised funds to repurchase all common stock held by G4S, changing its name to the GEO Group, Inc.

GM: General Manager.

Jail Tats: Naïve form of artwork tattooing done in the skin using unsanitary hand made equipment and hazardous materials which have a distinct look from professional tattoos.

Lockdown: Correctional centre has been locked down to accommodate either a security breach, assault including ambulance or hospital transfer, shortage of staff, cell searches or renovations.

Mainstream Prisoners: Is the general population of prisoners that are assessed as being capable of interaction within the general prison society.

MOD: Manager of Offender Development. Oversees programs, sentencing plans, rehabilitation results inside the prisons and reports back to key stakeholders.

Parole: A community corrections order oversighted by the parole board which monitors prisoners to complete low security sentences within the community, under strict regulations.

Protection: A secure area self-contained within correctional facilities and removed from mainstream. Generally known to house sexual offenders and paedophiles, but also houses inmates that sign over or 'dog' on another inmate.

Probation: An alternate form of parole, usually applicable for minor offences.

PTSD: Post-traumatic stress disorder.

QCS: Queensland Correctional Services are the Government funded body which oversees the running of Government prisons under the minister for police services also.

QPC: Queensland Productivity Commission. In 2018, commissioner Kim Wood led a commission into recidivism and imprisonment in Queensland regarding the high incarceration rates. This first author made a submission and spoke at the commission regarding chaplaincy and art programs.

Recidivism: The revolving door of prisons. Inmates who cannot break the cycle of offending are titled recidivists.

Re-Start: An external provider for correctional services that employs inmates while training them for outside work provision and utilising their skills to external contracts.

Serco: Founded in 1929 as RCA Services Limited, a United Kingdom division of the Radio Corporation of America, initially provided services to the cinema industry. Following the takeover of RCA by General Electric in late 1985, RCA Services Limited was bought out by its local management. It changed its name to Serco in 1987 and up until 2019 after the CCC, it managed Arthur Gorrie prison and South East Queensland during its decommissioning as a men's centre and recommissioning as a women's to accommodate overpopulation.

SCB: State Chaplaincy Board. A committee of representatives of the five denominations that create the vast numbers of chaplains across Queensland needed to visit the prisons, in conjunction with correctional services.

SRS: Symbolic Repetition Scale. A record of change made by prisoners through artwork produced during the "Change the Design of Your Life" art program.

SU: Safety Unit. Prisoners are placed in canvas gowns and stripped of all possessions or essentials. They are under strict guard, slowly decreased from 24-h observations to 10 min observations, to eventually being permitted basics, including underwear or a blanket.

Tattooing: Tattooing in prison is illegal, as it can alter one's appearance from their original identity when initially incarcerated, inmates can be breached, charged and serve additional time.

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Sarah Tucker (Bachelor of Visual Arts UNE; Candidate Master Social Science Leadership CHC) is a prison art therapy facilitator working in conjunction with Queensland Correctional Services (QCS) and Uniting Care (UC) prison ministry. In seeking to promote rehabilitation, healing, reconciliation and recidivism prevention for both offenders and society, Ms Tucker draws on her own personal experiences of incarceration for background and inspiration. After more than two decades outside of prison and then stepping back in as an art tutor and First Peoples Chaplain, she is well acquainted with both prison culture and the myriad systemic issues facing institutional incarceration today. Having developed and implemented the 'Change the Design of Your Life' art therapy program in two Queensland prisons (2018–2019), Ms Tucker has witnessed a high proportion of participants complete the 8-week program and then continue with their art, assimilating it

as an intervention and relapse prevention tool. After four rounds of piloting, notable results have been achieved: (1) inmates have grown in self-confidence through self-awareness and account-ability; (2) engagement with art has reduced involvement in violence and prison drug culture; (3) some inmates have discovered art as a tool they can share with their own family members and children, thus assisting them with re-connection; (4) art therapy has resulted in changing habitual behaviours and has strengthened cognition especially for inmates with lower levels of education. Given these positive preliminary results, artwork might be progressively acknowledged by Parole and Probation as a vital tool for communication. More recently, Ms Tucker has turned her expe-riences into a life-changing research project at Christian Heritage College (CHC) where she is systematically analysing the effectiveness of art therapy for prisoner rehabilitation. Having grown up in poverty and then completing high school while living in the streets, Ms Tucker is accus-tomed with having to overcome acute struggles, social exclusion and cultural hurdles for herself and others. She is accredited as a Uniting Church preacher and uses her theological knowledge to help prisoners change their perspectives through practising art. Uniquely, it is her extensive life in the arts and as a tattoo artist for 25 years that gives her such broad insight and perspective towards societies forgotten and underground, leading her into interesting and unexplored research territories and topics.

Dr. Johannes M. Luetz (BA/USA, MBA/Germany, Ph.D./Australia) is the Research Chair at Christian Heritage College (CHC), a faith-based private higher education provider in Brisbane. He has consulted extensively for World Vision International on research projects raising aware-ness of the growing effects of demographic, environmental and climate change on vulnerable communities in Asia, Africa and Latin America. He was raised in Sierra Leone and Switzerland; cares deeply about poverty reduction, holistic education, justice and equity; and has researched and published conceptually and empirically in these areas. He is a big picture thinker and has interdisciplinary research interests at the science–policy interface, including in areas of human behaviour change, social transformation, human resilience and the not-for-profit sector, among others. His Ph.D. research at UNSW Sydney has featured in national news and documentaries, and he has been a guest on ABC Radio National—The Science Show. His research has attracted grants, prizes, scholarships, awards and distinctions, including best thesis prize (2006), UNSW UIP Award (2009), UNSW ASPIRE Award (2012) and best paper awards (2017, 2018). He coor-dinates the Bachelor of Human Services at CHC and also heads the Master of Social Science Leadership program, which through its research and teaching activities on change leadership gave rise to this case study publication. Dr. Luetz is an Adjunct Fellow at the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) and Adjunct Senior Lecturer at the University of New South Wales (UNSW Sydney) and sits on the Editorial Board of Springer Nature journal Discover Sustainability.

Chapter 16
Cupbearers to the King: Humility, Hope and Hospitality for Formational Practice

Andrew Butcher and Beverley Norsworthy

Abstract In 2018 and 2019, Bethlehem Tertiary Institute (BTI), a private Christian education tertiary provider in New Zealand, used the books of Nehemiah, Ephesians and 1 Peter to frame a way of forming a community of staff to outwork its vision to be a faithful expression of the Kingdom of God on earth. Each of these biblical texts provides insights into godly leadership, team-building and ways of being one with another within the context of prayer and worship: "O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant" (Neh 1:11, NIV). Drawing from 1 Peter, three characteristics of humility, hope and hospitality were identified as formational (also see Eph 4:1–6). BTI uses the phrase "I work better because I work with you." analogous to the Maori proverb "Nātōrourou, nā takurourou ka ora ai te iwi—with your basket and my basket, the people will flourish." Establishing a flourishing community is pre-eminently a process of spiritual formation within the embracing of a shared vision. This chapter identifies these characteristics from these texts and illustrates how they seek to inform and shape practice at BTI. We recognize too that new forms of practice are at once seeking after righteousness within the contingencies of human frailty and are thus only achievable under the gracious hand of God (Neh. 2:8).

Keywords Nehemiah · Flourishing · Community · Leadership · Vision

16.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a case study of the intentional community building of development and worship practices at Bethlehem Tertiary Institute (BTI), a private Christian training institute in Tauranga, New Zealand under the auspices of the proprietary body the Christian Education Trust. Through this case study, this chapter attempts to offer significant learning to similar Christian Higher Education institutions and teacher education, humanities and social science programs elsewhere.

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BTI shares its campus with a large secondary school and several early childhood centers. Established 26 years ago as a teachers' training college for Christian schools, BTI now teaches across counseling, social work and teacher education for early childhood, primary and secondary teachers. It also has a postgraduate program in which professionals explore the potential in their vocation through the lens of the biblical metanarrative. It has approximately 400 students and 40 staff. In terms of life and work, alongside BTI's vision, its mission "to provide Christ-centered, biblically informed professional preparation, development and research for influential service" is shaped by a commitment and valuing of:

- A biblical Christian worldview as formational
- Personal and professional enquiry and integration
- A strengths-based learning and missional community
- Treaty-based relationships within Aotearoa New Zealand.

This chapter is a reflective case study on BTI's journey over the past 2 years in order to identify preferred ways of going forward as a Christ-following learning community. It is framed in terms of Thornton's (1998) "Formative Reflection" and her four steps of Describe, Discover, Deliberate and Decide. The model appeals to the authors for its commitment to integration of person, theology and ministry—in this case outworked as professional practice within a Christian Higher Education context. Unusually, for reflective practice, Thornton's focus is not on the practice itself—but rather on the person; specifically, that they may continue to "become… a person whose life and ministries more closely reflect the image of Christ as portrayed in Scripture" (1998, p. 117). This aligns well with BTI's understanding that our research, scholarship, teaching, leading and relating are autobiographical endeavors (Groundwater-Smith, Ewing, & Le Cornu, 2015; Hamilton, 2002; Kelchtermans, 2009; McDrury & Alteria, 2002; Palmer, 2008). Thornton defines Formative Reflection as "the process of collecting and connecting the various parts and element of our whole being for the purpose of becoming an authentic Christian leader who engages in authentic ministry" (1998, p. 116). For those involved at BTI, this "authentic ministry" is captured in its vision statement—"To be a Christ-following learning community committed to a faithful expression of the kingdom of God on earth." Using this framework, we seek to show how the scriptural texts were being interpreted by the community and how they were understood to be authoritative and formational.

There is no shortage of literature on organizational change, leadership, team-building and management. Whole industries and academic disciplines are built on the edifice of such writing and thought. While some of that literature has merit, and we draw on some of it here, we would suggest that what BTI is—and aspires to be—is different. Our work, our calling, our commission, is from God who reveals himself, among other ways, in Holy Scripture. That being so we seek to be open to the "presence of God who invades and interrupts all places" (Webster, 2019, p. 44). We recognize that we open—and are open to—Scripture, and theological ideas that derive from it, that both "bear and are borne along by cultural practices" (Webster, 2019, p. 44). In prioritizing the communal reading of texts, and as an academic institution

in which texts are the basis of what and how we teach, research and publish, we cultivate habits of reading. These formational habits lead to renewed enchantment "with the biblical canon and the traditions of paraphrase and commentary by which the culture of Christian faith has often been sustained" (Webster, 2019, p. 45). As this chapter illustrates, these also have a formational effect. As a Christian tertiary institute, we are, much more so—and perhaps even in striking contrast to—our secular equivalents, concerned with thinking the world and person together: renewal of the mind, motivating the heart and equipping the hands. We also recognize that:

> this is not some sort of unproblematic, passive socialization into a world of already achieved meanings and roles. It is above all a matter of interrogation by the gospel…. Such seeking is painful; as a form of conversion it involves the strange mixture of resistance and love which is near the heart of real dealings with the God who slays us in order to make us alive (Webster, 2019, p. 45)

What is both required and sought if wisdom is to be embodied, are "intellectual beliefs, deep passion of the heart and actions of both proclamation and presence" (Hollinger, 2005, p. 144). Biblical appeal for righteous living, inner piety, truthful thinking and authentic love for God and neighbor frequently bring together the mind, the inner self and the outer actions. Each needs to be nurtured but also needs to be viewed as integral to the expression of the other. Such outcomes require that connections are held "not in their methods but in their hearts—meaning *heart* in its ancient sense, as the place where intellect and emotion and spirit and will converge in the human self" (Palmer, 2008, p. 11).

16.2 Describe: Archeological Digging

The first step in Thornton's model is to describe one's initial understanding and insights into a particular topic or focus. She says that this requires more "than just a surface level of awareness"; work must be "archeological in nature" (Thornton, 1998, p. 119). By definition, this kind of work requires digging deep in the present to discover the past and allow that to speak into the future. The new Dean arrived at a challenging time for the institute: rapid, unexpected and sudden staff changes had left many staff reeling. It was also the 25th anniversary year of BTI and so there was a natural point to look back and look forward. Both of those contexts provided cause for 'archeological digging.' The book of Nehemiah, which is a text about rebuilding, provided the framework for such.

A key value for the BTI community is its commitment to the biblical worldview as formational and the recognition of Scripture as authoritative in this process. At the commencement of his Deanship, Andrew decided to use the existing Monday morning staff devotional time to explore his espoused principles of leadership and "ways of being together" through in-depth engagement with particular stories as captured in particular biblical books. This choice was an intentional strategy to develop a strong sense of "who we are and what we are about." The first book,

Nehemiah is the story of the journey of a leader (and his team) from cup-bearer to wall-builder; hence the title of this chapter. In a range of contexts (devotions, planning days, celebration moments, professional development experiences, prayer walks, one on one conversations), BTI staff have spent the last 2 years working through Nehemiah, Ephesians and 1 Peter as an intentional strategy to ground its vision and "way of being" to form a community of staff to outwork BTI's vision to be a faithful expression of the Kingdom of God on earth. The task of building for God's Kingdom can be explored through becoming "a character formed by God's promised future" (Wright, 2010, p. 163).

In Acts 17:28 (NIV), the writer Luke teaches that "in [Christ] we live and move and have our being." In other words, all that we have, are, do and be is in Christ. This is true of all things, people, organizations; of all created order. It has particular prescience for a community that confesses Christ was raised from the dead as Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36) and which envisions itself as a "relational, responsive and transformational Christ-following… community." This is illustrated well in the book of Nehemiah.

16.3   Discover: The Heart of Learning Is in Relationship

In terms of forming a community, one needs to know how the community is to be characterized as well how it might be formed. In this step, the attention moves to "what others have to say about the topic" (Thornton, 1998, p. 119). A discovery phase also is critical because it gives an opportunity for assumptions, which may have been unearthed as part of the "archeological digging," to be reshaped (Thornton, 1998, p. 119). In this process, Thornton (1998, pp. 119–120) suggests that one can access four sources of insight: Scripture, Tradition, Literature and Experience (culture and context). These interlink, as we shall see. The experience of reading Scripture (in this case, Nehemiah, 1 Peter, Ephesians) interacted with the 25 years of tradition of the institute, with other literature on Christian education (Plantinga, 2002) and the experience of those who had come into the institute at some point in that history, on one hand, and were engaging with these texts in the "present" on the other.

Also underpinning this "discover" phase is a belief that just as the heart of learning is found in relationship (Biesta, Priestley, & Robinson, 2015; Kitchen, 2005; Palmer, 2008), so is the development of community. According to Garber, "…for individuals to flourish they need to be part of a community of character, one which has a reason for being that can provide meaning and coherence between the personal and the public worlds" and within which each participating member is provided the opportunity to "discover who we are meant to be—face to face and side by side by others in work, love and learning" (1996, pp. 145–147). As Brueggemann (1982) identifies, communities are places of shared stories, shared beliefs and shared practices. A biblical approach includes exploration of what it means to be living in the community whose God is the Lord.

Desired characteristics of the Christ-following learning community committed to a faithful expression of the Kingdom of God on earth include being prayerful, being hospitable, being a place where all belong and their contribution is welcomed. Each of these is now addressed in turn.

16.3.1   Prayerful

Characteristic of a Christ-following community is that it is a place of prayer. We cannot follow Christ without first knowing him, without first seeking him. Following Bonhoeffer (1966) we might say that "Prayer is to be silent and cry out at the same time, before God in the presence of his Word." (pp. 27–28). Prayer is a response before it is a request. In the silence, it is the humble willingness, indeed desire, to let Jesus speak first, without our preconditions, interruptions and agendas. We see that Nehemiah's first acts were to pray in tears (Neh 1:4) and to pray again and again. In so praying, Nehemiah demonstrated "a tenderness toward God" (Swindoll, 2010, p. 24) (cf. 1 Pet 3:8). Nehemiah fasted (Neh 1:4), recognized God's awesomeness (Neh 1:5), confessed his own culpability (Neh 1:6–7) and boldly petitioned God to make him successful (Neh 1:11). Nehemiah prayed before he acted. He sought God before he sought success. He took his blurry broken vision of the calamity of Jerusalem (Neh 1:3–4) and, in praying, recalled Scripture that clarified his vision to be aligned with God's promises (Neh 1:8–9). These are not only characteristics of an effective leader—for the story of Nehemiah is not the story of one man alone in a corner with a brick—but are the characteristics of a community being formed under the gracious hand of God (Neh 2:18).

Prayer is an act of faith in God to do what He wants to do, as building a community of staff is likewise, to some extent, an act of faith in other people and their capacity to work together, grow and change. If we say we are Christ-following community then it is Christ who must lead and not us who dictates the terms. Yet our response is not in a vacuum; it takes place within the realities of people working one with another, in all its glory and all its shame. Our response reflects our particular circumstances and spiritual journeys, our backgrounds and biases, our hopes and despairs. It will always be inadequate to the task. Our expectations of God's work may be too modest, constrained by our imaginations and expectations, or fractured by our past experiences. We may not petition God boldly enough. We may not, as Nehemiah did, go so far as to say "grant success to your servant today!" (Neh 1:11). Faith in God and faith in others comes together and acts as a counterweight to naiveté about the human condition. Following Barth (cited by Webster),

> Faith is God's work *in us*. It takes place in us, to be sure; it is not some invisible metaphysical reality, independent of our recognition of God's mercy, enclosed in his holiness. But it takes place only as God's work, as the eternal moment hidden within the temporal moment; it is one with what occurs in us (2017, p. 48, our emphasis).

Knowing that "the human heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jer 17:9) can, without confession and humility, lead us to arrogance for ourselves and harsh judgment for others. Hence the importance of Nehemiah's example of confession to God: "we have offended you deeply" (Neh 1:7). Confessing thus leads us (or perhaps should lead us) to reflect on our own behavior as leaders and to create an environment where reflective practice is part of the fabric of a community.

In an academic institute, there are usually existing processes for improving practice, for example through listening to the student voice through their course evaluations in order to improve teaching (Brockx, Spooren, & Mortelmans, 2011; Eldridge, 2018; Fabry, 2012; Pinto & Mansfield, 2010; Rovai, Kohns, Kelly, & Rhea, 2007; Ryan, 2015). Similarly, we might suggest, using confessional prayer as the first (but not only) step in reflective practice about how we are is critical in forming a community that is Christ-following. Paul's letter to the Ephesians gives clear instruction about ways of being.

> So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours, for we are members of one another…. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love as Christ loved us, and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Eph. 4: 25; 31–Eph 5:1–2) (NRSV).

Of that text, and its wider context, Barth writes:

> A relationship with God makes a person attentive and vigilant. He knows that he has been given a sacred and indestructible trust. He regards the kingdom of God as the one thing needful. Step by step he receives new clarity and new freedoms that allow him to renounce the old ways, even though he knows that his own efforts will always be more piecework, merely provisional, rudimentary, and accompanied by constant struggle…. Under the influence of the Spirit, we are open to correction. We can be directed. The Spirit of freedom gives us freedom to change (2017, p. 145, our emphasis).

16.3.2   Humility, Hope and Hospitality

Humility is a disposition; hope a direction; and hospitality an action. As we read in 1 Peter 2:9 "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." "In order that" is the activator in that sentence. We are chosen, royal, holy, elect "in order that" we proclaim (speak, pronounce) in word and deed the mighty acts of God that generate hope (darkness to marvellous light). One way we proclaim the mighty acts of God is by doing "good conduct in Christ" (1 Pet 3:16), seeking peace and pursuing it (1 Pet 3:11), conducting ourselves honorably (1 Pet 2:12) and offering "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2:5). Peter is reiterating what Jesus taught and that is that the way of the world, i.e., "lording it over others" is not the way of Christ. It is in this sense that our way of being together is different. He is exhorting all to ensure that

their being and doing is not judgmental or self-promoting but a life of hope found in Christ, of humility where beauty is the fruit of the work of Christ and where hospitality abounds.

The biblical notion of hospitality is an important aspect of Christian formation and identity (Chinn, 2014; Pohl & Buck, 1999). Chinn suggests it is "largely about knowing and being known" (2014, p. 5). To this, we would add that developing a hospitable space is to develop a space where all flourish with a sense of belonging and where their identity as a member is not equated to sameness (Brandner, 2013; Nouwen, 1995; Plantinga, 2002; Volf, 1996, 2013). The development of such a space requires both personal and communal commitment; people need to want, and be willing, to share who they are with others—not as perfect humans but as broken, vulnerable and humble beings. This too is courageous behavior. As noted by Pohl and Buck (1999, loc 195), "Hospitality always includes risk and the possibility of failure."

Hospitality flourishes in an environment that supports it. It dies where it is not welcome. In referencing hospitality, Plantinga notes; "If… people encourage each other, pour out interest and goodwill upon each other, favour each other with blessings customized to fit the other person's need, what transpires is a lovely burst of shalom" (2002, p. 22).

16.3.3   Forming

Communities are formed through words, through the telling and retelling of stories, through paying attention to what is being said and what is being left out (Brueggemann, 1982; Chinn, 2014; Frisken, 2009; Hooks, 2003; Groome (1980); Sergiovanni, 2000) Stories are formational; that is, they create, form, bring into being ways of being, knowing and doing things, acts, behaviors. Sometimes these stories are explicit and well articulated: "this is who we are." Sometimes the stories are just traditions built up over years, habits that are created, sustained and passed on, sometimes with deliberate choice and sometimes without much reflective response at all. The three biblical books are chosen for their focus on ways of working or "building" together. Stories are characteristically experiential (Brueggemann, 1982; Postman, 1995). The stories in Nehemiah, Ephesians and 1 Peter are told by participants, by those who were "there" and they invite us to similarly understand who we are as participants in God's story; take up a particular identity.

Communities are formed by developing a shared vision for the work ahead. Vision casting is important for any leader (Proverbs 29:18; Fullan, 2001; Sergiovanni, 2000; Lencioni, 2012; Sinek, 2018). However, it is not enough to "know" of a vision. For it to be embodied, it needs to be "felt," to be embraced and owned to the point it influences everyday life, language and learning. We see this in the story of Nehemiah when he heard of the state of the wall of Jerusalem he "sat down and wept" (1:4). From that point on, he set out to ensure that his life, learning and language were such that they made a difference for others *so that* the wall would be built. In other words,

Nehemiah knew that for the wall to be built, others had to own the vision which motivated him. Similarly, Paul in Ephesians and Peter in his letters invite others to join them in living a story which is very different to the one that has captured those around them. This is the challenge for any Christ-following community.

A community as understood in the model of the Trinity exists when "each member is committed to the wellbeing, uplifting and supporting of one another" (Chinn, 2014, p. 3). It is not only the place where members learn and flourish but for humans, a community exists so that its members can flourish in order that others also may flourish. In Nehemiah, the wall was built because each did their part. In Ephesians, we see the clear message that we are better together. As the Māori whakatauki notes "Eharatakutoa, he takitahi, he toatakitini," In other words, success is not an individual effort. It only happens because we all contribute and work together.

16.4 Deliberate

In this step, the insights from the Describe and Discover steps are brought together in order that God's direction is central to the process. "Deliberate is about being informed and being formed" (Thornton, 1998, p. 120). Being "deliberate" requires "time to think, to reflect, to meditate… [To] listen to the way in which God speaks" (ibid). In this approach, echoing earlier comments, Scripture is normative and, once again, we recognize God speaking through Scripture.

Each of the chosen biblical books presents a particular type of envisioned community into which we are invited to live together: Nehemiah's story, and the call to "build the wall together"; Ephesians, of how to live "better together" as we live "in His name" and "to the praise of his glorious grace"; and 1 Peter, calls us to "live together" in counter-cultural ways to express our relational connectedness in humility, hope and hospitality. The challenge is to craft ways of being together which will build these desired ways of being as normal.

Common to the three books is the recognition that whatever we are doing that is of value is, *of* God, *for* God and *through* God and therefore, we are totally dependent on His equipping, provision, enabling and, in actuality, enacting. It means recognizing that it is both all God's plan and our responsibility to be faithful in that plan. We are created to be his coworkers. This is our identity. Similarly, in Peter's first letter, we are recognized as "the elect": our identity is not in what we have done or what we know but in how God sees us. We are beloved. Peter writes his letter to urge the readers to *be* what God had called them to be: humble, hope-filled and given to hospitality. We are determined to continue exploring ways in which the community develops a sense of identity which is owned by all and expressed in daily ways of being. Some examples of what we have done so far follow:

16.4.1 Celebrate Unexpected Expressions of Hospitality

We have learned that expressions of hospitality may come from unexpected and unplanned actions. A particular example illustrates this. In part to find somewhere to put spare furniture, we relocated tables from a meeting room that we had repurposed into an office and moved them into the staffroom. While there were already chairs and coffee tables this was the first time in the new staffroom that a table at which people could comfortably eat was available. What was a temporary solution (we had thought we might move those tables elsewhere) became permanent as it became clear that these tables were being used as a place of fellowship, hospitality, connection and team-building. It enabled one staff member who is wheel-chair bound to eat at the table comfortably; it created a focal point for food prepared to celebrate national days; it provided an opportunity for staff to sit next to those with whom they might not otherwise interact. In the simple act of providing a table, we also—it has to be said unintentionally—created a place where hospitality could flourish.

16.4.2 Communal Reading

To counteract a sense that only the teaching or academic staff were focused on the institution's vision, we wanted to find ways to develop a stronger sense of "us." One way we gave expression to this idea was through having all staff (and Board) read through Plantinga's *Engaging God's world: A Christian vision of faith, learning and living*. Small groups of three or so staff met regularly to discuss sections of the book. This enabled members from across all parts of the institute, academic and operational, to share their insight and revelation—and we all were enriched. We instituted all-staff professional development times where all staff from different faculties and service centers could participate and contribute to exploring how we lived our values.

16.4.3 Engage Metaphors—Connect Key Ideas to Physical Objects

Wherever possible physical objects were used to connect ideas to experience and thus create a portable visual image for that key idea, for example, after reading the book of Nehemiah staff received an invitational email from the Dean: "We want you to use the brick to think and pray about how that brick might be a metaphor for your contribution and place in the 'relational, responsive and transformational Christ-following tertiary learning community' we call BTI." Staff were invited, in response to their engagement with Nehemiah, to record answers to questions such as: "What would the impact be if I wasn't here? What is the distinct gift that this body needs that I bring? What am I personally committed to contribute that will build the

Body of Christ at BTI?" Each staff member brought their brick, shared their ideas and together the bricks were brought together to make a structure. There is a plan to have these bricks crafted into a memorial so that others may ask, "What are these bricks here for?" (e.g., Judges 4). In a follow up strategic planning session, staff recorded their discerned actions on bricks and these were (and continue to be) displayed in the staff room as reminders. Keywords or whakatauki have been printed, laminated and displayed as reminders of the shared learning which occurred. But—we cannot rest there. Over time, members of the community change. We are determined to find ongoing ways to continue this building of community, its shared vision and appreciating the diverse contributions of members; each one doing its part—building the wall, building the body, building the community.

Emails from the Dean and leadership team intentionally used metaphorical images from the chosen biblical books. For example, during the first winter, when staff were physically challenged, the subject line was "The strength of the people is failing." The body of the email quoted Nehemiah 4:10–14 and suggested, with links to Nehemiah, that in times when we feel sick, vulnerable, overwhelmed or afraid we can; look after ourselves, look after each other and we can pray. The email ended, "And in praying, we will also come to know as Nehemiah did, that "the Lord… is great and awesome." He will fight for us.

The introduction of 1 Peter as a framework for Semester One 2019 utilized a simple goal post, the letter H as a metaphor from the game of rugby. This simple metaphor, H, became a portable reminder of the goal to grow as an institution which was characterized by **h**umility, **h**ope and **h**ospitality. In terms of being determined going forward, what we think is important here is not the specific events, but the intentional provision of experiences and metaphors which capture the vision for community growth through visual and verbal reminders in the environment. This reminds us of another whakatauki*Toi tutekupu, toitute mana, toitute whenua* which highlights the importance of language, respect, spirit and land to Māori. Similarly, these are critical for being a Christ-following community who seek to be a faithful expression of the kingdom of God on earth.

In terms of being a community characterized by prayer, outside of scheduled prayer meetings, some staff meet during lunchtime to prayer-walk around the campus, to study Scripture, to pray one with another. Much, if not most, of this kind of activity is initiated by staff themselves, is not widely advertised or known, but reflects a commitment and a heart by those staff to Scripture and to prayer as part of their daily routine. For a Christian higher education provider, it might seem axiomatic that prayer is an integral part of community life, that being "attentive and vigilant" in our relationship with God is woven into the very fabric of who we are, how we are and what we do. But that is not necessarily so. In the busyness of teaching, administration, research; in the challenges of navigating internal politics, competing demands and external reporting requirements; in the push-and-pull of staff and student needs, family pressures and merely *functioning*, prayer can so easily be deprioritized in practice.

As each week began, during the teaching terms, with a devotional typically led by a member of staff and from Nehemiah, Ephesians and 1 Peter we are determined

that this might continue and to build our community—its way of being, knowing and doing.

It is these small acts of devotion that are the web that forms a Christ-following community. The scheduled gatherings of staff might be the anchors, might generate permission giving-space, and might be attended by some under obligation but remain critical even so. We can identify other inklings: Scripture verses on the walls, a staff member leading the team through an interactive prayer about how "our God is many things," times of musical praise and worship as a community. These small plants coexist and flourish among the still-existing demands noted above. The formation of a Christ-following community does not, regrettably, take away the flotsam and jetsam of organizational life. Our challenge is to work unceasingly together so that our organizational life is "a faithful expression of the kingdom of God on earth." This is at the frontline of organizational culture, of people working with one another, getting on or not getting on, dealing with conflict or exacerbating conflict, communicating and miscommunicating, where the very features of hope, humility and hospitality hold their greatest purchase and have greatest effect. It is at this ground level that the guidance in Ephesians makes most sense and takes what could be considered as mere moral instruction on virtuous living and turns it into practical parameters for a healthy Christian community.

Indeed, the negative attributes of falsehood, bitterness, wrath, anger, wrangling, slander and malice need to be put away, that is, removed, cast aside, "in order that" (1 Pet 2:9) the positive attributes of truth, kindness, tender-heartedness, forgiveness might flourish. Both these negative and positive attributes are features of any group of people, with the balance more often than not toward the negative and away from the positive. These negative attributes are cast aside by a disposition of humility (see Phil 1:2 "do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others better than yourselves"). Recognizing too that what we think influences how we act, we can refer to Philippians 4:8 where we are exhorted to think on that which is true, honorable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable, excellent and worthy of praise. In so redirecting our thinking, our actions will follow. The writer of Philippians and Ephesians exhorts us to think of these positive attributes because our human tendency is to do the very opposite.

16.5   Determine

Throughout the past 2 years, insights from these biblical books have helped to establish and ground our intentional practice to be a Christ-following community where a faithful expression of the kingdom of God may be developed. This is not for the faint hearted. We live and work in a fallen world. To establish a vision to "build together" requires courage, perseverance, intentional attention to the language we use and how that language communicates (or not) a shared story. For Nehemiah, building the whole wall was because "the people had a heart for the work" and when their enemies set to undermine the work, the Israelites "countered with prayer to our God and set

a round-the-clock guard against them" (4:6–9). In Ephesians 3, we see that God's work begins with issues of the inner person; that is, our motivations, strength and resilience. Paul's prayers seek a God-enabled, Spirit empowered, Christ-directed, other-centered "being" such that the knowing and the doing are congruent.

The gleanings from the scriptural study are not just intellectual but have expressions in the "way we are together" and the language we use. For example, early in his first year, Nehemiah's model of leadership instigated changes to nomenclature. Program coordinators became Program Leaders. Nehemiah appointed people to lead teams and those teams then did their part to rebuild the wall. Andrew's expectation was that "…our leaders lead and not just coordinate… and with that leadership comes responsibilities around budgets, people, decision making, around stepping up." Appraisal processes focused on KPIs became Professional Learning Development Goals. This was not just a change of language—but an expectation of change of process, of relationship, of ownership and contribution.

Through the process of describe, discover and deliberate one very clear insight emerges. Not only does the community need to know and own the vision, but each member of the community needs to know that they have a place in that community and that their contribution is needed and valued. For this reason, it was, and continues to be, important to find ways for staff to connect personally, deeply and corporately with the ideas being shared. It must be about us, all of us. A further key insight from our deliberation is that a community's commitment to prayer cannot be carried by a few but must, as it was for the Nehemiah, Paul and Peter be continually affirmed and encouraged. Going forward, we continue to seek alternate ways to enable and encourage sustained prayer—individual, small group, larger groups.

The insights from this reflective case study "strengthen our hands" as we continue in this endeavor to build a faithful community—to each other, perhaps, but preeminently faithful to the One who calls each of us into this community, sustains it and gives it life. In that, it is always a work in progress, always under the gracious hand of God, always an act of conversion and confession, saying "yes" to the good work and will of God and "no" to the endeavors and temptations that call us away from a prayerful submission, a humble disposition, a hospitable action in the pursuit of the hope of fulfilling BTI's vision.

16.6   Conclusion

This chapter describes how through a reflective case study, particular ways of being together are helping in the formation of a Christ-following community at BTI.

There is still much to do but, like Nehemiah who understood who he was as a cupbearer to the king, we continue to prioritize engagement with the stories embedded within Scripture that we might continue to grow their expression here at BTI where God has placed us. The vocation that sends us, and to which we respond; the ways we act one with another; the dependence on God that both these require of us, are all relational: to God and to one another. The holiness of the community of saints, that

is, all who confess Christ is Lord, derives entirely from the holiness of God. In our own natures, we are as far from holy as we can be. This community is being created (that is, *in the present*) in the ever-fresh work of God's divine grace (Webster, 2017, p. 56). The community of saints is holy "by virtue of its calling by God, its reception of the divine benefits, and its obedience of faith… *by virtue of its sheer contingency upon the mercy of God*" (Webster, 2017, p. 57). Moreover, it is among and by this community of saints that God's holiness is confessed and in so confessing we "live as children of the light" (Eph 5:8). Therefore, this chapter is not a story principally about the community at BTI; nor, indeed those of us who serve as cup-bearers to the King in that community. Rather, this chapter—and our task and calling generally in this good endeavor—is to walk in the light and so to glorify Him who calls us to this vocation. To conclude with Barth (cited by Webster):

> The apostolic vocation splits the person, so to speak. He is an apostle not on the basis of anything he is in and of himself but on the basis of what he is not. A demand of a very different order is made on him, and a demand of a very different order directs him to his fellow human creatures. There is something exceptional and impossible about him, but it is not his genius, his experience, his unmediated knowledge, or anything that can be accounted for psychologically as greatness of character. What makes him an apostle is his mission, his instructions, and the service he is to offer, which are not, from a psychological point of view, even his own matter but that matter that has him and sends him (2017, pp. 38–39, our emphasis).

As confession leads to humility so holiness leads to hope. To use the imagery of Ephesians, hope in God takes us from darkness to light (Eph 5:8–14). 1 Peter illuminates this further: "set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed… [B]e holy yourselves in all your conduct; for it is written, "You shall be holy as I am holy." (1 Pet 1:13b; 15–16). Hope and holiness go hand in hand here: "Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood" (1 Pet 2:4–5). As was Nehemiah, our determination is to tell the people "of the hand of my god which was good upon me, as also of the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for the good work (Nehemiah 2:18).

To a large extent, any case study is unique to a time, a place, a group of people. It is not reproducible or replicable. What may be true in one place may not necessarily in another. This case study has also been largely descriptive: "this is how it is." To some extent that is an effect of writing it while still within it; neither time nor distance are there to provide objectivity or a more critical eye. That said, in using Thornton's model, in drawing on Barth, Brueggemann and Bonhoffer, in privileging the biblical texts of Nehemiah, 1 Peter and Ephesians, in illustrating the lived experience of a particular community of faith, we have more than the makings of an analytical frame. We have a rich, varied, interconnecting set of resources which we continue to explore. However, there are some general themes which this case study provides and which, by way of tying the chapter together, we rehearse here.

First, intentionality is crucial. Intentionality is not just vision (though is clearly linked to vision); it is rather more deliberately setting out steps, on the basis of

describing, through "archeological digging" and discovering that learning happens best within relationships and then determining the way forward.

It is not just intentionality to a process (as just described) but also to the biblical canon. A Christian educational community is a confessing community: it confesses certain truths about God (theology), about humanity (anthropology), about learning (pedagogy) and about society (sociology). In so confessing, it is also formed and shaped by the One in whom these confessions rest. The community is formed as the persons within that community are formed as faith-filled persons. As Ivor Davidson expresses it "[t]he people of God are a society of creatures in time and space—summoned, sustained, and purposed by divine action, yes, but also called to exist in an actual history of knowing, hearing, following, and attesting in the world" (Davidson and McCray 2019, p. 37). As this case study illustrates, using biblical texts to frame experiences even, in the case of Nehemiah, as a kind of metaphor for a felt experience of rebuilding, locates personal formation and community building preeminently in God. Often team-building and organizational change endeavors, laudable as they are, stop at developing new skills to listen, engage and work with different people. Ephesians and 1 Peter do that too, but go further. They talk about putting off old habits (and in both senses of that word—of repeatable acts as well as of a kind of clothing) and putting on new habits and knowing that to do so requires constant submission to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, prayer is also crucial. Chapel services are a common feature in many Christian education providers. They provide an anchor and common place to come together as a faith community and through liturgy (whether explicitly or implicitly) participate in formational practice. While prayer is a feature of the rhythm of BTI, it has also been a prominent feature of the biblical texts used whether Nehemiah's plaintive prayers for God's favor or the prayers God's people are invited to participate in as part of rich human relationships in Ephesians and 1 Peter. Prayer has also been evident in smaller less discernible ways as people meet one with another, give comfort or encouragement, provide pastoral support for students or for their colleagues. These prayerful moments, which can so easily become rigidly applied, have maintained—for the most part—the mystery that comes when walking with the Lord.

A final feature that applies to BTI as to elsewhere is that all of this formational community building takes place in the real-world experiences of human interactions. There can be a naivety, perhaps, that somehow Christian communities are exempt from the full range of human behaviors that are so wonderfully and painfully present in the rest of the world. That of course is not so; our own experience bears that out. But it is a temptation even so to think of ourselves better than we ought, especially in an academic environment where so many other drivers promote self-advancement over service. At this point, we return to the framework we adopted when considering 1 Peter: of hope, humility and hospitality. As we continue the journey toward embodying BTI's vision, we hope in the best of people even when we experience their worst; in humility we have a right view of ourselves, not so low that it demeans God's good creation but not so high that it overly inflates our place in the world; we act hospitably, knowing that in acting toward another in this way is one manifestation of the very attributes Ephesians encourages us to have.

It is our ongoing prayer that for BTI and those who are part of its community that, following Thornton, they may continue to "become… a person whose life and ministries more closely reflect the image of Christ as portrayed in Scripture" (1998, p. 117).

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Chapter 17
The Imaginarium of Narrative in Christian Curriculum Design: A Case Study from Saint Kentigern College, Auckland

Hugh P. Kemp

Abstract Saint Kentigern College (SKC), a private Year 7–13 Presbyterian school in Auckland, New Zealand, is able to design its own Christian Education (CE) curriculum without the pressure of assessment from an external body. In light of this, this chapter seeks to do two things. First, it describes the dynamic process of review and innovative implementation of new content and relevant pedagogy. Second, this chapter explores a theoretical imaginarium of narrative. The curriculum is conceptualized by three intertwined narratives (the students', SKC's historical, and the biblical narrative): this is illustrated using three unique lessons from years 9, 11, and 12. The imaginarium is informed by Christopher Booker's seven archetypal plots, John Stott's four markers of biblical history, the use of Christian drama (the Stations of the Cross and walking a Labyrinth), and the 'plundering of the Egyptians', that is, sourcing teaching material from the secular world. This imaginarium is deliberately eclectic, but the overall learning experience for the Saint Kentigern College student is of an integrated whole precisely because of the priority of narrative.

Keywords Curriculum · Imaginarium · Narrative · Education · Case study · Christian

17.1 Saint Kentigern College: The Context

Saint Kentigern College (SKC) is a private Year 7–13 Presbyterian school, founded in 1953 by Scottish visionaries in the Auckland suburb of Pakuranga. 2,140 students are spread across Middle College (years 7–10) and Senior College (years 11–13). SKC offers the National Certificate of Education Achievement (NCEA) and the International Baccalaureate (IB) awards. The Christian Education (CE) programme is outside the two awards SKC offers, bar one Year 10 NCEA assessment. All students attend CE at each year level. In years 7–11, CE classes are scheduled twice in a 7-day cycle, while in years 12 and 13, classes meet once in a cycle. Contact periods are

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50 min, and a typical year has 16–18 7-day cycles. Along with CE, all students attend chapel weekly and a House Chapel once a term. The CE department has 10 teachers, 3 of which are full time and 7 are shared with other departments. The department has four classrooms and the College has a chapel that seats around 300.

There is a religion question on the college's application form. In May 2019, 33% of the roll had responded within Christian categories (706 students). Because the question does not offer prescriptive categories, applicants write a variety of responses. This reveals more about the self-perception of the parent who filled out the application than it does of the student. Anecdotally, CE staff agree that no more than 10% of any class has Christian students who are willing to be known as such. In other words, for a class of 20 students, two may identify explicitly as Christian (Ping 2019).

It is difficult to locate SKC on a spectrum of religious schools. It is not a 'Church School', although it carries the Presbyterian name. SKC is not a school that champions an overarching Christian worldview across all areas of school culture. When asked, I usually say SKC is 'confessional' inasmuch as the CE staff are Christians (of an orthodox/Evangelical type), the heads of the two colleges are Christians, and the Trust Board promotes a Christian ethos and guards its culture. Some meetings are opened in prayer. The College motto is *Fides Servanda Est* ('The Faith must be Kept') and the Mission Statement is: 'to provide education which inspires students to strive for excellence in all areas of life for the glory of God and the service of others' (Saint Kentigern 2019).

Moreover, the college is 'confessional' inasmuch as the CE curriculum opens with these words: 'The CE Department's ministry is one of "telling the Gospel story" in the hope that CE graduates will 1/know the Christian story well and therefore know that God loves and cares for them, 2/have an awareness of the uniqueness of the Christian story and within that, the Presbyterian story, 3/have been invited into the Christian story, and 4/have an explicit understanding of how the Christian story might guide them beyond SKC' (Curriculum Overview Document 2017). The Middle College is 'to provide an environment in which students feel the freedom to learn and explore the Judeo-Christian story'; likewise the Senior College should 'provide an environment in which students feel the freedom to express their ideas and viewpoints on a variety of issues and key questions of life and faith'. Our pedagogy seeks 'to provide a relevant and rigorous curriculum that caters for a diversity of learning styles, abilities and worldviews', and secondly 'to present the Christian story in a rich, relevant and engaging manner'.

These aspirations mean that the curriculum is more than a Religious Studies programme, or one in which students merely learn about Christianity. On the contrary, the statements position the curriculum with the expectation that the student will experience something of God's character, will be able to appreciate the uniqueness of the Christian faith, will have opportunity to align their own lives with it, and be resourced for life beyond their school years. In short, the programme's tone is apologetic and confessional: the curriculum anticipates that students engage Christian faith and practice rationally and affectively. If, in any CE classroom, 90% of the students are not Christian, then the CE project at SKC is an invitational one.

17.2   Curriculum Design

Apart from one unit in Year 10, the CE programme has no formal external assessment. It is designed and moderated internally by review process and it is accountable ultimately to the Trust Board. This gives the CE programme extraordinary flexibility in content and pedagogy. Not that any one teacher is autonomous. Rather, it invites a collaborative 'double listening' (Stott 1992): to the culture around us, and at the same time to the Bible afresh, with all the hermeneutical challenges that imply. All CE teachers comply with SKC's continuous professional development (PD) using Inter-LEAD Appraisal Connector (Interlead 2008): in this, there is a formal mechanism for naming general curriculum areas for discussion and setting goals for personal improvement in pedagogy related specifically to named curriculum engagement.

More formally, the Trust Board reviewed the curriculum in 2017 and reported back in early 2018. The summative introduction reads:

> The review team has been very impressed by the curriculum. It has been fine-tuned over a number of years and is strong in its coverage of the Bible and of the Christian faith. The Review Panel has no concerns about the curriculum's integrity and breadth of coverage and is confident that theologically its content can be described as 'generously orthodox'. The Board can be confident that the CE curriculum is fit for purpose.

> The Review Panel is aware that developing and delivering a curriculum is a great challenge. The vast majority of students come from an unchurched background and are completely unfamiliar with the Christian faith when they arrive at the College. To have written a curriculum that gives both good coverage of the Christian faith and sustains the interest and attention of students is a great achievement (Christian Education Department Report 2018, p. 1).

In addition, the CE teachers themselves continuously review the programme informally. When a teacher experiences dissonance or identifies a potential innovation, the teacher talks about this with colleagues. The CE department chatters informally about 'double listening' issues: Friday lunches together inevitably end up discussing the interface of things in the news, theology and pedagogy. We then design—and keep tinkering with—a curriculum out of this double listening. These conversations then come to a departmental meeting: agreed changes are minuted and introduced into the next year's syllabi. In my 4 years at SKC, I have witnessed five significant changes across 4-year groups. CE staff have similar theology and speak honestly and professionally. Three have had theological training at degree level.

As noted above the CE department's ministry is to 'tell the Gospel story' in the hope that graduates will know the Christian story well, be aware of its uniqueness, have the opportunity to respond to an invitation into the story themselves, and to consider the story as a guide into their future. It is to this aspiration of curriculum-as-story that we now turn.

17.3 Why Story?

The CE department conceptualizes 'story' as both an interpretive lens and as glue that holds the curriculum together. It is simply stated in the documentation, but why is this so? Why do we prioritize 'story', and is this the best charter? How do we convert this priority into actual pedagogy in the classroom? Is 'story' useful and compelling? From 4 years of anecdotal conversations and specifically focused dialogue throughout June and early July 2019, we affirm that 'story', or 'narrative', is more than lens or glue: it is indeed a meaningful and useful *tikanga*. I use the Maori word *tikanga* here to locate SKC's story in its New Zealand context, for the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi/TeTiriti O Waitangi (1840) invite a partnership of ideas and practice (Treaty 2019). *Tikanga* has the idea of lore, method, values and practices that have developed over time (Tikanga 2003–2019)—a culture, in other words, that is moving like a stream: we understand 'story' to be a unifying hermeneutic that is never static, always moving.

A story's plot by nature moves: it starts, it 'goes somewhere', then finishes. Everyone likes stories. Storytelling is a universal human activity. Stories are accessible, recognizable, and explore human universals. They contain archetypal characters, plots, emotions, and experiences (Booker 2004 p.12). Stories unlock our inner selves and also feed our souls. We recognize ourselves, others, our contexts. Stories shape meaning for us. In their telling—their very plot movement—we are invited to journey: the meaning is as much in the telling as in the ending.

Stories have been validated by postmodernity. Storytelling is a snub to proposition and ideology: story is a rebel against dogma. Stories are levellers, inviting all to swim in the same stream. They are inherently democratic, offering something to everyone. Even though post-modernism claims to reject metanarratives, culturally embedded stories refuse to shake off the very metanarratives that give them context. While *Shrek* (2001) intentionally and explicitly deconstructs fairy tales—indeed mocks them—it itself conforms to the fairy tale genre, and the film has proven to be exceptionally popular.

Most other popular films are not new stories either, but re-workings of old stories, indeed archetypal stories. The *Star Wars* compendium and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy are two examples. Moreover, storytelling is not limited to today's film industry. Printed books and e-readers are both media for stories: reading stories is as popular as ever (Nuwer 2016). Social media reveals a universe of personal stories. It allows the self to be the hero in a story at the same time as that hero writes their own story. Author and protagonist are the same person: agency is two-fold. In fact, students, as users of social media, are all story tellers. However, most seem unaware that there may be a bigger story that calls to them.

The CE curriculum offers the Bible as that bigger story. The Bible has proven to be the world's best-selling book, most years (Best Selling Book of Non-Fiction 2019). There are many reasons for this, but one must surely be that it contains many stories. We read these stories to our children, we publish them, and we enact them in plays, musicals, movies and other media. Many of the biblical stories are culturally

iconic (David and Goliath, The Good Samaritan). Not only does the Bible contain stories, it is one unified, and unifying story. From *Genesis* to *Revelation*, one can trace themes that tie the whole 66 books together in one overarching plot: covenant, Messianic expectation, atonement, faith, the imminence of God, the people of God, hope, creation, *Missio Dei,* the Kingdom of God, and others. The Bible itself has linearity: it starts in creation, the plot develops through rebellion, the arrival of a saviour, and the final culmination of all things because of the saviour, Jesus Christ. Within this overarching plot are the various shorter stories we have all come to love and re-tell.

We endorse 'story' for our *tikanga* for three compelling reasons: the students themselves love stories; stories contain human universals with which students can identify; the Bible is a story (and contains stories) that students should consider, not only because they may recognize elements in them but because it is an alternative story. If story was not our *tikanga*, then what other strategies might there be? Our curriculum could be propositional, promoting dogma. We could engage in a comparative strategy, calling on other ideologies and religions to be a mirror to us. We could structure the curriculum around social issues. We could put forward denominational theology, distinctives and history. We could be explicitly evangelistic, or we could have a values-based curriculum.

Committing to 'story' or 'narrative' invites a pedagogical commitment from teachers. First, teachers should listen well to the stories being told in the broader culture, and how students perceive themselves in or against those stories. The rise of student protests against climate change throughout 2018 and 2019 is a good example. Some SKC students have joined that movement. Second, teachers should commit to ongoing engagement with the Bible, and model this to students. The Bible is offered as relevant, and applicable, but teachers themselves have to understand the hermeneutical bridge—a huge one to cross—and must be equipped to do so. I remind students of the 'outrageous claim' that Jesus Christ actually rose from the dead in time and place, and then we examine the claim using the tools of science and history. Third, teachers need to be able to 'join the dots up', to spontaneously and intuitively interpret 'what's going on right now' in the classroom, vis a vis the curriculum, today's lesson and the implicit questions underneath the lesson. One strategy is a simple hermeneutic of B. I. B: what's 'behind' this question, text, or conversation; what's 'inside' it; and what's 'beyond' it. In other words, what is the context, then content and then commitment? Fourth, teachers need to avoid the simplistic and the dogmatic, and allow, even celebrate complexity and paradox without feeling affronted. Two questions students periodically raise in my classes are 'is causation actually a thing?' (prayer? God's will? Evolution? evil? fate?) and theodicy: 'if God is good, then why do bad things happen'? Students are often amazed that these are not particularly original, and humanity has wrestled with these since time immemorial. Indeed, this is the whole point: stories deal to the very deepest questions that the students are in fact asking. These very questions keep coming up in the overarching story of humanity. And teachers need not be fazed by this.

I turn now to offer four examples from the SKC curriculum. I seek to locate each lesson within a theoretical context, and then gather them into an imaginarium, a conceptual resource that admits a certain eclecticism yet celebrates imagination.

17.4 Case Study 1: Hero or Zero (Year 9)

Year 9 students spend much of the year studying the Old Testament. For the Hero or Zero assessment, students research one OT character, and produce a wall chart. Hence favourites adorn our classroom walls: Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samson, Daniel, Jonah, Ruth, Deborah, Esther and others. Teachers guide students in their choice. Apart from the overall quality of their wall chart, they are assessed on the accuracy of five key characteristics that they can identify about the person, demonstrating they have read the relevant biblical text. Second, they are to explain how their person is either a 'hero' or a 'zero'. Third, they are expected to make at least one life application for themselves.

So that they can discuss the Hero/Zero component, we implicitly call on Christopher Booker's theorizing about the archetypal nature of the seven basic plots that he proposes are common across all the world's stories. We explicitly teach the Hero's Journey and Return plot, supplemented by a short video. Where needed we give a nod towards Rebirth and Quest plots (Booker 2004, pp. 87, 193, 69). We then offer this as a template on which students are to recognize the various components in the story of the biblical character they have selected. This strategy gives the Year 9 student an interpretive tool to make sense of a text with which they are unfamiliar. It focuses the student to think of plot (what is the sequence of events? why do they happen? and which are the most important and why?), and character development (how is God involved? how do people behave and develop and in what ways?). In their personal application they ask: is there someone to emulate? Is there a danger to avoid? Is there a new way of thinking/being that I need to embrace? Does this God who acted then, expect to act in a similar fashion in my life today? and the likes.

From informal feedback from students and the critical discussion among teaching staff, the assignment continues to be fit for purpose. It requires students to read the biblical text. It teaches that God is a God of history and relates to real people in real places, time and contexts. In other words, a God who speaks and communicates through story. It demonstrates that the Bible is not only God's story but also a human story. It gives opportunity for students to learn one of the stories and locate it in the bigger 66-book story. Significantly, it demonstrates that women's stories are honoured by the God of stories. It also demonstrates that other genres in the Bible (Psalms, Law, Prophetic speech, Wisdom) supplement, enrich and interpret the story.

However, there are some risks with this assignment. Not all OT stories fit neatly within Booker's archetypal plots. Hence the teacher needs to intuit interpretive strategies throughout the whole project or encourage students to engage imaginative thought experiments to add texture. Perhaps, with the big sweeping story of the Bible, we should expect an eclectic representation of all seven of Booker's plots, and

it is up to the teacher to be able to interpret any one of the stories a student chooses. But CE is not an English class, and we do not have the luxury of indulging in too much literary theory. A further risk is that Booker's seven plots flatten the varied and rich text of the Bible into anachronisms and contrived categories. In this, it risks relegating any of the biblical stories to 'mere story' that has lost its authority because it is now one of many stories. That students struggle to apply the story to their lives may be due to this. 'Why should I listen to, much less follow, any perceived lessons that there might be in this story?' they may ask.

An additional risk is slipping into a 'Great Men of History' approach, allowing students to entertain the notion that the biblical story is driven by epoch defining charismatic personalities (Is There Still Value in 'Great Man History'? 2019). This however is mitigated against by the very nature of the story strategy we propose, namely that the Bible is quick to note—even dwells on—the very flaws of those personalities who push the biblical story along. A Christian definition of 'hero' must be attended to: in God's upside-down Kingdom, God's choice is usually the least and most unlikely. All heroes start as zeros—and remain vulnerable throughout their lives—and this may be the most significant teaching point!

17.5   Case Study 2: The Four Chairs (Year 11)

Towards the end of the Year 11 syllabus, there is what has been a rather amorphous unit called 'Me and God'. Being the last topic, it often gets lost among end of year pressures. Each year the CE department gets anxious that what is arguably the most important part of the syllabus is compromised. To address this we have developed a topic now known as 'The Four Chairs'.

The Four Chairs originate from John Stott's proposal that the Bible divides human history into epochs, which are not marked by the rise and fall of empires but by four major events: the Creation, the Fall, Redemption and the final Consummation (Stott 1999, p. 39). Paul Windsor, director of Langham Preaching, has developed Stott's "four major epochs" into a didactic tool using four chairs and student engagement to teach the overarching story of the Bible. We have picked up Paul Windsor's version, and turned it into 4–6 lessons (Windsor 2017).

In the first lesson, I align four chairs across the front of the room, and one by one invite a student to sit in each. Chair 1 is 'Creation', Chair 2 is 'the Fall', Chair 3 is 'Redemption', and Chair 4 is 'Consummation'. I then emphasize the linear sequence of the chairs, go over new vocabulary, then reduce these to four simple words: Good, Bad, New, Perfect. In other words, the Bible's story is reduced to 'God created good. It goes bad. Jesus makes it new. It's all heading for perfection', which essentially is Booker's plot of the Quest (Booker 2004, p. 69). Shortened further: 'God is into making everything new'. Year 11 appreciates this mantra-like brevity. We then play with the chairs, removing one at a time, stacking them, reordering them, to see what other stories might look like, and where different combinations might diverge from the biblical story.

Four lessons follow, one assigned to each chair. For each chair, we read together an appropriate Bible passage (Genesis 1, then Genesis 3, something from Jesus or Paul, and also from Revelation 21 or 22). I invite students to write on sticky-notes any one question they wish about that chair and stick the note onto the chair. Students' self-select questions and we spend the period talking about whatever they've chosen. I post their sticky-notes on the board to create a 'question narrative' of the class and photograph the sticky notes for a class archive. The sixth lesson is usually summative.

This unit is embedding well into the Year 11 syllabus. It is simple and clear, and students appreciate the full sensory involvement. They own the learning—it is their friends in the chairs, and their own questions stuck to the chairs. Not all elicited questions are 'Christian': students may well seek to weave in creation stories (for example) from other cultures, particularly the Maori creation stories. Discussion around genre follows. The students are personally invested in the outcomes of the discussion around each of their questions: they are attentive, looking for relevance and application. It again teaches that God is a God of story, who speaks and acts in history. The unit offers opportunity for teachers to challenge students to embrace this story themselves. I use The Four Chairs to tell my own story of embrace which now makes sense to them. The whole story becomes a hermeneutic for making meaning in their own lives and the world. Each 'chair' becomes a metaphor for things bigger than simply good, bad, new or perfect. The strength of these lessons is in the teacher's ability to improvise and extrapolate, emphasising the chairs' sequence—that is, the biblical story—as applicable to global issues, politics, economics, relationships, their future, their psyche: it explains theodicy; it gives opportunity for discussion of the mundane and the profound; it is both universal and personal.

Nevertheless, there are some risks. The Four Chairs is hugely reductionist. Can the whole of the Bible, history, life and meaning be reduced simply to 'good, bad, new, perfect?' In 2019, a student voiced concern over the word 'perfect', and the class concluded that 'whole' or 'just' might work better. There is possibility to make it six chairs (injecting Israel and the Church into the mix), although this risks over-complexity. New language and concepts can overwhelm students, so pace is crucial. Teachers need to be trained in the use of the unit, as well as in the skills of managing tangents well: teachers have to have some fluency in the biblical narrative itself. Who gets to sit on which chair can be problematic. Do we really want the class clown to be Jesus sitting in Chair 3? Is it wise to have a very sensitive student representing 'evil' in Chair 2?

If these risks and timetable can be managed well, The Four Chairs is proving a meaningful way to finish Year 11and offers an applied worldview tool that students can use to make sense of the Christian story and make their own meaning from it.

17.6 Case Study 3: Stations of the Cross and Walking a Labyrinth (Two Pilgrimage Lessons in Year 12)

Where the Year 11 Four Chairs explicitly articulates the biblical story for students, the Year 12 syllabus invites students to participate in and embody story in a Total Physical Response (TPR). I have borrowed this term from Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) because it invites the whole person to participate so as to explore meaning of and in action—a learning by drama. We offer two lessons: students walk the Stations of the Cross as their last class before Easter; in the penultimate (and sometimes final) lesson of the year, they walk a Labyrinth. I have brought these two lessons together, not only because they both require a TPR approach but because they can also be conceptualized by the practice of pilgrimage.

Indeed, to conceptualize these two lessons as TPR—with the verbs/actions that that implies—and to theoretically locate them as 'pilgrimage' is in fact new for the curriculum. These two lessons, at least from my experience, have tended to float as 'good ideas', but we have not really known what to do with them. Both are easily compromised due to timetabling pressures, and yet their location in the year is crucial to maximizing their storytelling potential and thus potential meaning-making for Year 12 students.

For the Stations of the Cross, 12 activities are set up around the chapel with various short meditations at each, prompted by common symbols. It is a progressive meditation activity, and the first intentional Christian meditation they participate in during their whole CE experience at SKC. We have designed these ourselves, rather than defaulting to the standardized events of Easter week found in the ecclesiastical calendar. A whole period is dedicated to this lesson: students slowly move through the stations and pause for a meditation task at each. In the penultimate station, students write a confessional prayer on a piece of paper, and staple-gun it to a large wooden cross. In the final station, they light a Tea-Light candle and pray a set prayer that the resurrected Jesus would now light their way. By the end of Easter week, the whole Year 12 cohort's prayers—around 350 students'—cover the whole cross. The idea is that by stapling their sins/problems/hurts to the cross, students 'see' that Jesus' death has 'taken' these and dealt to them. At Easter, the Head of Department then burns all the prayers, and the cross is returned to display in the CE department for students to see it empty—all their burdens have gone. By this TPR strategy, students are in effect uniting their personal life story with the life story of Jesus, particularly his Passion and Resurrection.

In a similar fashion, students use a TPR strategy to walk a labyrinth. The SKC gardeners very graciously cut a simple labyrinth in October each year on level lawn in front of the chapel. While not exactly Chartres cathedral, the labyrinth is nevertheless large enough to be challenging, but small enough to be manageable. To work well, students are briefed in the prior lesson on the meditative power of labyrinths in the Christian tradition. There is a full lesson assigned for walking the labyrinth and a debrief on site at the labyrinth. The lesson is more than just walking it. The lesson is in continuity with the film *The Ultimate Gift* (2006), in which an obstreperous

rich young man is tested by his deceased grandfather via pre-recorded video, by having to undertake twelve tasks, which, we discover, are actually 'gifts' that shape his character. It is in fact the archetypal Voyage and Return story (Booker 2004, p. 87). These 'gifts' are work, money, friends, learning, problems, family, laughter, dreams, giving, gratitude, a day, and lastly, the ultimate gift of love. The department has 12 large tiles with these words on them, and they are placed at equal distance as 'stations' on the labyrinth at which students are expected to pause and reflect again on these 'gifts'. At the centre of the labyrinth is the tile of the ultimate gift of God's *agape* love in Christ. The whole exercise is reflective yet celebratory, moving yet still. As one goes all the way into the centre of the labyrinth, turns, and returns to the outer world again, the student undertakes their own 'voyage and return'.

These two lessons can be conceptualized theoretically as pilgrimage. In doing so, I locate each as Christian ritual, both inspired by rich historical tradition. Drawing on Tatjana Schnell and Sarah Pali's research on pilgrims on the Camino de la Compostela (northern Spain), both SKC's TPR pilgrimages are 'personal ritual'. In the triad of implicit religiosity, ritual is a religious structure, along with myth (that is, story), and the experience of transcendence. For Schnell and Pali, their category of 'personal ritual' is defined as 'formalised patterns of action, pointing beyond the actual event to a particular meaning imbued by the actor' (Schnell and Pali 2013). Curiously, during debriefings at the end of the labyrinth, most students experience both or either of the two pilgrimages as offering some 'vertical transcendence' (to use Schnell's word): they experience something spiritually; some say they 'connected with God', or something similar. None articulate that either pilgrimage was done because of religious 'conviction' or as 'quest', that is, a 'search for clarification' of some angst that has arisen in their lives. These two short pilgrimages are 'personal', that is, they are done as individuals, and the meditative thoughts are each student's private ones, accessible to no other. In addition, the pilgrimages are 'ritual'—they are actions constrained by prescribed order that invite expansive interpretation through the imagination. In other words, these two short pilgrimages offer loci where ritual, story and spiritual experience potentially unite. If this is achieved for the students, then these two pilgrimages fulfil every aim in the CE's Senior College curriculum.

The success of these two pilgrimages prompts the CE department to consider more TPR lessons, particularly pilgrimage, because pilgrimage is story. Nevertheless, timetabling challenges and management of resources is problematic. For the labyrinth, the path can sometimes get crowded, and changeable Spring weather can literally dampen good intentions.

17.7   Case Study 4: The Use of Film in Middle and Senior Colleges

Just as the labyrinth lesson crowns the study of the film *The Ultimate Gift* (2006), the CE curriculum draws on many films to enhance the teaching and learning. An eclectic selection of Christian themed films—factual, metaphorical and satirical—supplements the biblical texts, or amplifies Christian themes: these include *King*

David (1985), *The Bible* (mini-series, 2013), *Son of God* (2014), *End of the Spear* (2005), *The Passion of the Christ* (2004), *Life of Brian* (1979), *The Butterfly Circus* (2009), *The Shack* (2017), *Bruce Almighty* (2003), *Prince of Egypt* (1998), and *Risen* (2016). Some we use in their entirety, but most only in short snippets. We also use scenes from more generic films, calling on at least another 23. In addition, we undertake full movie studies of *Avatar* (2009), *Tuesdays with Morrie* (1999), *Finding Nemo* (2003), *Pay it Forward* (2000), *Forrest Gump* (1994), *Patch Adams* (1998), and the short film *Most* (*'The Bridge'*) (2003).

This is certainly an eclectic array of films. The CE department has 'plundered the Egyptians' (Exodus 12:36), taking what the world has to offer and using it for the benefit of the curriculum. We choose films primarily for their narrative potential. A new film clip can be introduced easily, as long as it is discussed collegially and signed off by the Head of the Department. One teacher experimented with *The Shack* in 2018, and we have consequently decided to integrate a four-lesson unit into the Year 11 syllabus; I introduced *The Butterfly Circus* to the department in 2016, and it is now integrated in the Year 13 syllabus.

Because of our *tikanga* of story, and our commitment to story as a lens and glue for the curriculum, we rarely use teaching films per se, nor do we use any biblical documentary films. This is by tacit agreement, and possibly due to a collegial cringe at cultural inappropriateness of these two genres for the New Zealand context. By 'plundering the Egyptians', we control the culture and tone of the overall curriculum. The teacher is the interpreter of the film, and 'uses' it for that particular class' learning. Because the teacher can scaffold their own lesson, the teacher can be more responsive to learners' needs, rather than simply accepting teaching from another context uncritically. In 2019, I had five Year 11 classes, and therefore viewed *Forrest Gump* five times. The learning, and particularly the exploration of Christian themes is nuanced differently for each cohort, in response to their questions, and the pastoral relationship I have with them, broadly within the guidelines of the syllabus' learning outcomes.

There are both advantages and disadvantages in 'plundering the Egyptians' for film. In a visual age, students identify with film. A film will invite focus from a class, because they know and love the medium. A film in CE lightens students' intense engagement with core examinable subjects, and students look forward to attending class. As each year passes, less students are familiar with the selection we use, and so the films broaden their horizons. The teacher retains agency, and indeed has to 'keep up' with what this generation is watching. All four dedicated CE classrooms have a few sofas in them, giving a theatre experience. Nevertheless, there is the risk that because of films, CE is not taken seriously. Some students get annoyed when a teacher 'ruins' a film by pausing it periodically to make some teaching point or invite discussion. Some students experience CE as a loose collection of unrelated films and resist a teacher's integration. Some teachers themselves are ambivalent about the use of film: students become passive, even catatonic. Some films 'work' better with different teachers: to introduce *Finding Nemo* and drop *Tuesdays with Morrie* and *Pay it Forward* has not been without dissenters in the department.

17.8   Making Meaning by Imagination

I have offered these four examples to illustrate how the priority of story plays out at in the SKC CE curriculum. We are trying to integrate three strands; first, the student's story. At the beginning of every year, there is an exercise for each student to identify where their own life story is up to. This invites reflection on their inner self and emerging identity and locates their commitment (or lack of it) to Faith development. The second strand is the story of the College. A unique two class history lesson is given in Year 9 on the Christian foundations of the school and interpretation of the motto and College prayer. This is supplemented throughout their years at College by chapel and assembly. Because the Chaplain teaches in the CE curriculum, and because all staff go to chapels, integration moments are frequent. Third, the biblical narrative is a unifying interpretive and meaning-shaping strand. We seek to braid these three strands so that students can find integrated meaning for themselves. 'Conversion' language is then more about inviting students in their SKC context to align their own personal life narrative with the ultimate narrative that is the biblical one, with Jesus Christ as the 'hero' in that narrative.

The first three case studies demonstrate the potential for intentional student engagement and mitigate against the risk of passivity that film-watching might induce. Additionally, there is both an inductive and deductive interplay happening within the curriculum. There are still declarative and propositional parts to the curriculum: we make fact claims and we declare truths. We call on film in a deductive sense to illustrate how those propositions might play out. An example of this is *Saving a Wild Boy* (2006) that is the personal story—a documentary—to illustrate that the life of Sunji, a boy raised by chickens, can be redeemed by the power of love offered by a Christian woman, Elizabeth Clayton. However, propositional claims are resisted by students, even when illustrated by life stories. From my experience, students respond much better to an inductive approach.

By 'inductive' learning, I give a nod to Socrates, and start the lesson with a film clip, an exercise, a problem, an experience—shaped in the genre of story. Through open-ended questions, I then guide students' discussions as they themselves tease out the key issues as they perceive them. The self-selection of questions in The Four Chairs, and the debriefing of the experiences of walking the Stations or the Labyrinth illustrate this. Sometimes I write the stories myself. Meaning is created by themselves and for themselves, in dialogue with each other and guided by the teacher.

In his novel *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, Salman Rushdie has the protagonist Haroun ask the question 'what is the use of stories if they aren't even true'? (Rushdie 1990, p. 20). In a similar vein, should we be using stories 'that aren't even true'? Should we be plundering the Egyptians for their film? Should we be celebrating the archetypal nature of stories, at the same time as risking the reduction of the biblical stories/story to merely one option amongst many? Do we risk too much by requiring the teacher to be able to pull together such an eclectic collection of stories in a meaningful, even Christian sort of way? Might the core truths of the Christian faith

get smothered by plot and presumption, such that we offer a diluted sort of cheap grace to students devoid of the redemptive priorities in Christian doctrine?

The first three case studies all illustrate that this is not necessarily so. The strength of this approach is that it calls on the imagination as a way of knowing. The strategy is certainly eclectic, but that does not necessarily reduce the curriculum to incoherency. To be eclectic is to be imaginative: to use the imagination is to be expansive, inviting, coherent, grace-full, and to bring into being new possibilities. In *The Butterfly Circus* the Circus Master Mendez searches out the marginalized and the misfits of society, forms them into a new community and so gives them meaning. Mendez—a Jesus type—declares: 'all the world needs is a little more wonder'.

17.9   The Eclectic Imaginarium

The SKC CE department is creating an imaginarium of stories. I use the word 'imaginarium' as a portmanteau, a combination of the word 'aquarium' and 'imagination'. An aquarium is a container: it has transparent sides, and it holds things (usually water and fish!). By 'imagination', I mean the human capacity to be loosed from the physical world of sense perception into a sea of possibilities both in the present and the future: imagination happens when unfettered by the constraints of here and now. Imagination creates, and it recombines. Imagination sparks questions in the gap between what is and what could be: imagination prompts questions, and we grow in the direction of our questions. An 'imaginarium' then is a place where we hold our imaginings, and these imaginings are constrained (they are not fantasies), visible and therefore purposeful.

This imaginarium, this collection of stories (including our pilgrimages), is a repository of possibilities. The students can see and use these stories to create meaning for themselves and their contexts. Each student can fill their own imaginarium with meaningful and meaning-shaping stories. Like Rushdie's "sea of stories" from which Rashid the storyteller draws his many stories, each student sources from their own imaginarium the archetypal stories with which they align. CE teachers gift the stories to students' imaginariums, and they are the guides to interpret those stories. Students struggle to find significance in facts and dogma, but they recall plots, characters, places, highlights, foibles and successes of heroes and heroines. These prompt their own imagination to see beyond now into what they themselves can become.

Is the CE department imaginarium working? Will this *tikanga* last the distance? Yes and no. Teachers feel safer with tried and true proposition, and it requires intuition and skill to become an imaginative storyteller and to interpret the stories for each unique cohort of students. It pushes teachers to become pastoral guides, because stories are multifarious and polyvalent, sometimes ambiguous, upsetting or puzzling. There is a risk of grazing over a vast array of stories without pausing to dine. There is both freedom and risk in not having an external assessment body that monitors how we manage our imaginarium. But there is potential to enrich this imaginarium by inviting new people into the classroom to share their Christian stories. There is an invitation

for the teacher to put more of his/her own life story into the classroom experience, to weave in a fourth strand of meaning making. Ultimately, there is invitation to strengthen the biblical story across all year groups by bringing stronger emphasis to the actual text of the Bible, offering it to students in creative and innovative ways. The imaginarium legitimizes prioritizing the Bible because it is full of stories and yet is one story.

The imaginarium of stories is student centred and affirming, legitimizing the student's questions. Stories give notice that others have asked those same questions and that there are in fact pathways to answers. Stories reveal the many different types of questions for which protagonists seek answers. The imaginarium is also pastoral: stories comfort because others too have experienced this trial and that failure, even if, despite Haroun's alarm, 'the stories are not true'. Heroes are guides, and saviours find ultimate solutions to the deepest angst of the self. If there is anything in Booker's seven archetypal plots, then there is 'nothing new under the sun' (to quote the Preacher in *Ecclesiastes*), and this is comforting. The imaginarium is both conservative and innovative: it demonstrates that old stories count for something (for they are archetypal and conservative). At the same time stories celebrate innovation: plot twist, inversion, unpredicted good, new life, all stimulate the imagination as to possibilities, and so to hope. It is in this very story telling that students can be guided to see that the biblical story is both conservative and innovative, human and divine, public and personal, material and spiritual, historical and timeless. Stories provoke introspection: if Dante can start *The Divine Comedy* noting that midway through the journey of this life he finds himself in a wilderness where the way is lost (Alighiere 2002, p. 3), then Robert Frost can "choose the road less travelled" which really does make the ultimate difference (Frost 2019). In this imaginarium of stories, the biblical story offers the ultimate path to meaning where "all things come together in Christ" (Colossians 1), and it is into this Gospel story that we invite the Saint Kentigern College students.

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Chapter 18
Training Requirements for Entry-Level Ministry-Ready Pentecostal Leaders

Christine J. Chapman

Abstract Over the past decade, even though leadership studies have escalated in an attempt to adapt to technological, economic, and social changes, numerous leaders across the western world united in disappointment with the inadequacy of leadership training in higher education. Consequently, its practical integration in the ministry space also suffered. Research attempts to personify a quality leader, both in the secular and Christian context, were also inadequate. Even though statistical evidence from 2017, provided by Halloran and Friday (2018), acknowledged Australia as a global leader and success story in higher education, it was seen to be disjointed from personal formation and transformative results (pp. 1–2, 5, 11, 14, 28–30). This need for more competent ministry leaders with good character was confirmed by several Pentecostal leaders from the east coast of Australia. As the requirements of ministry practice have also evolved over the last decade without adequate corresponding training, the intended contribution of this study was to primarily identify gaps in ministry leadership training, primarily explored through the International Network of Churches (INC). This research investigated the observations and experiences of 17 active and seasoned ministry leaders to explore the key characteristics and competencies of a leader, a model for training, content in training, and approach to training. The findings revealed seven key characteristics and competencies, and five skills that were deemed essential in ministry leadership training. Adequate training is expected to produce a post-secondary graduate who is prepared and equipped in character and competency to commence the work of ministry leadership, and one who will be henceforth known as an 'entry-level, ministry-ready Pentecostal leader'. The purpose of this study was to explore the type of leadership training required to produce an 'entry-level, ministry-ready Pentecostal leader' in the context of an Australian Pentecostal INC movement. Through qualitative interview elements were revealed; however, future research is necessary to ascertain the feasibility of its implementation. Future quantitative research is also necessary to propose practical solutions using the Christian higher education landscape to address these gaps in ministry leadership training.

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18.1 Introduction

Statistical evidence from 2017, provided by Halloran and Friday (2018), acknowledged Australia as a global leader and success story in higher education; however, it is disjointed from personal formation and transformative results (pp. 1–2, 5, 11, 14, 28–30). This demonstrated that there was, as a direct result of incomplete leadership training, a shortage of quality leaders who display godly character and competence. Literature showed that the failure to produce effective ministry leaders stemmed from deficient and dissociated curriculum (CEO Institute 2018, p. 2; Lamey 2014; Ott 2001; p. 77), ineffective fast-tracking and lack of understanding (Molinaro 2013, p. 32), and impediments to convert knowledge into action (Kouzes and Posner 2016, p. 50; Zigarelli n.d.). In the Australian context, Halloran and Friday (2018) posed a timely question, 'What should universities consider, today, to be ready to deliver truly transformative outcomes?' that prepare leaders for effective vocational ministry (p. 2).

The purpose of this study was to explore the type of leadership training required to produce an 'entry-level ministry-ready Pentecostal leader' in the context of an Australian Pentecostal INC[1] movement. Research questions were divided into four categories to explore key characteristics and competencies, a model for training, content in training, and teaching and delivery modes of training. An exploratory approach utilising interviews was directed to a convenience sampling of 17 current Pentecostal ministry leaders, who completed theological training within the last 30 years.

This study was informed by a bible-based, Christ-centred worldview, which places Jesus Christ as the firm foundational for training (Is. 28:16–17; 1 Pet. 2:6 [NKJV][2]), and His word to sustain all things in practice (Heb. 1:3). A Hebraic form of experiential learning was revealed as learner-centric and relationship-driven to practically master skills and shape character (Schoeman 1997, pp. 409–410), rather than solely relying on curriculum and instruction, as seen through the Greek approach of some theological seminaries, divinity schools, and bible colleges (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary 2016). It is advised, however, higher education courses that aim to prepare students in theological education, ministry skills, and ministry practice, may need further research to ascertain if the four research categories can be adapted to meet the demand for graduates, who are prepared and equipped in character and competence, to commence the work of ministry leadership in their specific contexts.

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[1] International Network of Churches Australia.

[2] All scripture quotations are from the *Holy Bible, New King James Version [NKJV]* (1982) unless otherwise stated.

18.2   Literature Review—Research Background

As Barton (2018) questioned, 'there has to be more to life in leadership than many of us are experiencing' (p. 14). Hence, the aim of exploring a range of variables was to identify relevant ingredients that could be used to train emerging leaders in the Australian Pentecostal Church.

18.2.1   Opportunity to Commit to a Higher Standard

Over the past decade, increasing criticism was given to the inadequacy of leadership training across the Western world and Christian context. Despite the escalation of leadership studies in a broad range of programs that promised to equip students in knowledge and core competencies, it was not producing the quality of leaders as expected, particularly through the higher education sector. Munroe (2018), Beer, Finnström, and Schrader (2016) and Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, and McKee (2014) were among the consensus regarding the decline in the standard and quality of leadership training, which highlighted a problem in the curriculum space (CEO Institute 2018, 2; Molinaro 2013; Myatt 2012). Kouzes and Posner (2016) reasoned it was an inability for leaders to master what they had learned (p. 5), or even understand what it meant to be a leader (Kellerman 2012), whereas, Molinaro (2013, p. 32) and Kellerman (2012) rebuked the program providers for dumbing down leadership training, thus making it too quick and easy. As a consequence, Molinaro (2013) suggested that education providers did not make it easy for students to action their leadership potential (p. 31). Grimes and Bennett (2017) questioned the skill of putting a Christ-centred leadership model into practice (p. 30), which highlighted a problem in the ministry space. Amongst the array of literature, there was a lack of consensus in the requirements needed for training and preparing leaders. Munroe (2018, p. 21) and Pfeffer (2015, preface) proposed it was time to commit to a higher standard of leadership training, because evidently there was a breakdown in the preparation of good leaders, and hence dissatisfied ministry settings.

18.2.2   Key Characteristics and Competencies of a Leader

Kellerman (2012) asserted that leadership development was not simple, static, or an individualistic paradigm. According to Myatt (2012), training is not one-dimensional indoctrination of best practices. Davis (2010) and Ancona et al. (2007) supported that 'onesize fits all' leadership packages do not exist. Hellawell (2012) argued that there is no such thing as a perfect leader, and Bowerman and Van Wart (2015) pointed out there are varied traits that can fit a leadership profile (p. 5).

Some of the traits considered vital were integrity, trust, and character. Integrity as a vital contributor to character formation and competence had the unwavering support of Day et al (2014, p. 64), Trull and Creech (2017, p. ix), Hyatt (2016), Covey (2015, pp. v–vi), Gandz et al. (2013), Jagelman (2013), Hybels (2009, p. 81). As a prerequisite to spiritual and ministry formation, the trust factor was reinforced as a tangible quality by Zak (2017), Petriglieri (2012), Hoehl (2011), and Elder (2008). Character was unequivocally established as a non-negotiable quality by Brown (2017), Elkington, Meekins, Breen, and Martin (2015), Rhoden (2013), and Beebe (2011). According to Johnson (2007), character was a biblical qualification. As Finzel (2017) affirmed, the multitude of traits makes it impossible to contain in one package, or at the very least, complicated (loc. 163). Bowerman and Van Wart (2015, p. 5), Scott (2015, p. 1), and Maxwell (2014, p. 117) recommended wading through these options with the right environment and context to support and impact the quality of learning for relativity.

Within these elements, the literature revealed that the authentic marks of a leader included godly character (Brown 2017), emotional intelligence (Blanchard and Broadwell 2018), teachability (Stowell 2014), integrity (Hyatt 2016), and resilience (Burns et al. 2013). The essential practices of a leader are based on relationship (Kouzes and Posner 2013) and include competence and capacity (Kouzes and Posner 2016), initiative (Hyatt 2016), lifelong learning (Maimon 2018), communication (Finzel 2017), and partnership (Munroe 2018).

18.2.3   Model for Training—Type of Education Qualification

There were similarities and differences between courses offered by bible colleges, theological seminaries, and divinity schools in the western world, including entry requirements, focus, affiliation, curriculum, and content (Davidson College 2017; Dickerson 2017; Gordon-Conwell 2016). With the multitude of courses and training models on offer, it reinforced that one-size does not fit all, thus contextualisation is imperative to explore the type of training model that could house the much-sought-after elements in the context of INC.

In our determination to rectify the preparation problem, Cochrane (2015) pointed out, that we should not condense our leadership training packages into inflexible formulas. Zigarelli emphasised that an exclusive reliance on online courses was definitely not the answer either (n.d.). Albertyn and Erasmus (2014) proposed this leadership training concern provided an opportunity for higher education institutions to partner with external practitioners to integrate teaching and learning that facilitated a reciprocal, collaborative, and generative sharing of principles and practices (pp. 21–22). According to Shellnut (2017), this is built on a biblical model of relational partnership that reflects the fullness of humankind.

Maimon (2018), Munroe (2018), Roberts (2016) and Wright (2009) supported this relational partnership, but coupled it with formal theological education to transfer skills and produce competent leaders with good character. According to Kouzes and

Posner (2017), Larsen (2016), Hyatt (2016), Stowell (2014, pp. 87, 109), Myatt (2012), and Smith (2009, p. 25), modelling and mentoring were significant contributors to informal and non-formal learning spaces. As an example, Hoehl (2011) skilfully unpacked the mentor relationship exemplified by the Apostle Paul with his protégé Timothy (p. 34).

Considering our future, Halloran and Friday (2018) proposed a re-imaging of programs that were integrated with partnerships for lifelong learning (pp. 11, 30). Hence, focused attention is needed to explore training essentials that can more effectively meet the contextualised requirements for emerging ministry leaders.

18.2.4   Content in Training—Knowledge and Skills

Halloran and Friday (2018, p. 14) echoed Ball's (2012) argument that Australian undergraduate theological education was compartmentalised in its curriculum with little time for reflection (p. 20). Clinton (2012) identified an implementation gap, thus highlighting a need to deliver content that cultivates skills in relationship building, organisational awareness, and biblical interpretation and application (p. 122). Ball (2012) highly recommended that this learning journey must start with the student experience (learner-centric), but be coupled with appropriate supervision (pp. 14, 16, 20, 158). Savvides (Ridley Report 2016) recommended that the creation of space and time was necessary to develop talent and leadership potential. Chambers and Ulbrick (2016) pressed beyond this attentiveness to build genuine connections. From the abundance of suggested knowledge and skills, seven categories came to the forefront.

18.2.4.1   Emotional Intelligence

Burns et al. (2013) gave priority to emotional intelligence that fosters self-awareness, self-control, self-leadership, and others-awareness (p. 23), which were authentic marks of a leader (Blanchard and Broadwell, 2018). These were considered primary ingredients for stability, longevity, and resilience (Finzel 2017).

18.2.4.2   Business Acumen and Operational Awareness

Burns at al. (2013) were disappointed by the lack of coverage of business responsibilities in theological education. Learning basic business skills and fostering operational awareness in real time were essential practices for general maturity (Burns et al. 2013, pp. 27–28), realism, relevance, and responsiveness to shrewd stewardship (Lk. 16:1–8).

18.2.4.3 Biblical Literacy

Scott (2015) deemed biblical literacy an essential foundation to apply God's word (2 Tim. 2:15) and shape the fullness of humankind (Rom. 12:1). Majkowksi (2017) extended a bible-based, Christ-centric worldview cultivated lifelong habits, and led to spiritual maturity that is dependent on God and partnered with the Holy Spirit. This ingredient sets the standard for effectiveness and transformation (Stetzer 2015).

18.2.4.4 Vision and Execution

Kouzes and Posner (2017) posited that exemplary practices of a leader were taking initiative to execute vision through actionable steps, modelling the way, fostering collaboration, and facilitating relationships (pp. 45, 93, 145, 195). According to Maxwell (2018), these are in-common competencies to inspire and expand the human heart and mind. Affirmed by Barna (2001), '[i]t is a commitment to that vision, and our capacity to bring it to fruition, that dictates the shape of the church and the depth of influence that the church has on the world' (p. 39).

18.2.4.5 Communication Skills

The essential practice of communication creates reality (Johnson and Hackman 2018, pp. 2, 6; Finzel 2017), transfers vision, teaches others, translates the Bible into real-life contexts, creates genuine connections, and builds immediate currency in varied contexts (Russell 2017, pp. 12, 21–22). This skill, coupled with a theological underpinning, is vital for the development of relational and emotional intelligence (Russell 2017, pp. 12, 21–22).

18.2.4.6 Leadership Skills

A Christ-formed character leverages flexibility and teachability and contributes to spiritual formation and effective leadership (Stowell 2014, p. 24; Kouzes and Posner 2017, p. 25). The Apostle Paul was not a stranger to loneliness, false accusations, or mistreatment in leadership, yet he retained a level of teachability (Phil. 3:12–14), emotional maturity (1 Thess. 2:7–8), and resilience (2 Cor. 4:7–11). These authentic marks are seen as the heart of influence and connection (Harris 2018), fostered through supportive, lifelong learning, demonstrated leadership competency, and intellectual and experiential knowledge (Conner in Newton 2013, p. 25; Baron 2016, pp. 297–298; Blanchard and Broadwell 2018; Maimon 2018).

18.2.4.7   Accountability Relationships

Relationship building as an indispensable quality of a leader (Crawford 2018, pp. 124–125; Maxwell 2007) is essential for hands-on experience (Livermore 2018). In the Old Testament, through a strong mentor relationship, Naomi counselled her daughter-in-law Ruth. Accountability relationships are an authentic mark of leadership but, as Baron (2016) warned, they are also dependent on the level of personal skills of the mentor (p. 296), to shape character and competence (Dockery 2016, p. 118; Jenkins 2011; Baron 2016, p. 300; Enlow 2013; Ball in Bain and Hussey 2018, p. 20).

18.2.5   Approaches to Training—Teaching Style, Delivery Mode, and Time Frame

Ladyshewsky and Taplin (2014, pp. 216, 218) agreed with the Hanover Research Council (2009, p. 24), which rejected courses that were solely limited to an online delivery mode, due to a lack of human interactivity. Hockridge (2014) even suggested the exclusive use of this delivery mode missed the key factor of continuous relational engagement for spiritual and ministerial formation (pp. 213, 215). Daimler (2016) and Perkins (2018) proposed an internship approach, pairing formal theological education with evolving contextual learning, which has the potential to foster character growth and competency. According to Baron (2016), interweaving experiential 'learning loops' with theological education fosters a behavioural change that promotes spiritual and ministry formation (p. 299). Cho and Egan (2009 cited in Baron 2016) claimed that 'action without learning is unlikely to return fruitful results and learning without action does not facilitate change' (p. 298).

Conner (2013, pp. 24–25), Clinton and Leavenworth (2012, p. 7), and Kouzes and Posner (2016, pp. 47, 169) maintained that this continual and contextualised learning posture was necessary to build a connection between knowledge, character, and competence. Stückelberger et al (2016) described this as a blended training approach (pp. 17, 22–23). As an apprenticeship style, Jesus trained his disciples for 3 years, with 'a mixture of informal dialogue, experience, and reflection' (Conner 2013, p. 17; Daimler 2016; Perkins 2018). The Apostle Paul, Moses, and Elijah employed this apprenticeship model, to empower Timothy, Joshua, and Elisha to master technical skills, and develop general and spiritual maturity (Csinos 2010, pp. 45–62; Kelley in Ransbottom-Stallons 2017, p. 68; Davis 2010; Elder 2008, 1–2; Hockridge 2014, pp. 213, 215).

Hence, an integrative connection between online, offsite learning hubs, hybrid, and face-to-face modes were essential to negotiate versatile and enhanced lifelong learning habits (Middleton 2018, pp. 48, 156; Ladyshewsky and Taplin 2014, p. 273; Smith et al. 2006, p. 71). It is clear that being positioned in collaborative structures

is important to build a solid core of spiritual disciplines, theological knowledge, and practical skills for effective ministry leadership.

18.2.6   Intended Contribution

The first contribution of this research was to capture theoretical and biblical insights from pertinent leadership models that advocate key ingredients for the equipping of emerging leaders in character and competency to commence the work of ministry leadership; however, contextualised application was lacking, and the Australian Pentecostal Church was not exempt from its disconnection between training and reality. Hence, this exploration was paramount to discover the elements needed to meet the leadership training requirements, specifically within INC. The second contribution was to provide a catalyst for broader investigation into a re-imagined higher education leadership training package.

18.3   Research Design, Methodology, and Data Collection and Analysis

18.3.1   Research Study Design

A qualitative method was used for an exploratory study, to investigate contextualised insight into the effectiveness of leadership training. Structured interviews were the most appropriate tool to explore knowledge, perceptions, and individual experiences (Castillo-Montoya 2016, p. 811). A thematic analysis was used for inductive coding and theme development, which was time-consuming, but an essential process for extracting commonalities (Wilson 2014, p. 284).

18.3.2   Recruitment and Sampling

The participants were a subset of the Australian Pentecostal leadership population. The majority of participants was recruited through personal connection, and initial contact of others was made via the CMC[3] Dean's network of contacts. A convenience sample of participants was used due to their availability, accessibility, and willingness to participate in the study, which saved time and money (Onwuegbuzie and Collins 2007, p. 286). Participants were chosen purposively and were eligible if they:

– lived in Australia;

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[3] Citipointe Ministry College (The School of Ministries for Christian Heritage College).

– had some form of theological training over the last 30 years;
– were active in a Pentecostal ministry leadership position;
– gave informed consent.

Most commonly associated with the 'qualitative paradigm', a non-random purposeful sampling scheme obtained insights from experience and 'information rich' individuals, even though it adversely affects the generalisation of findings (Onwuegbuzie and Collins 2007, pp. 282–283, 287).

18.3.3   Data Collection Method

To understand the training requirements needed, Zenger and Folkman (2018) implied that interviews are a valuable tool to bring awareness of the opportunities, strengths and work areas in the leadership space. Participants were invited to participate, and fully informed via email regarding the nature, method, purpose, and risks of the research. No remuneration was paid. Nine face-to-face and six telephone interviews were audio recorded, with either written or verbal permission. Two interviews took place via email, giving a total of 17 participants. Combining these three types of interviews allowed for the generation of a larger sample size that included remote participants (Wilson 2014, p. 157).

18.3.4   Data Collection Instrument

The development of the interview questions was a collaborative process with colleagues, where feedback led to several adjustments before conducting the interviews. A structured interview schedule was formulated comprising open-ended questions that related to:

– demographic information;
– key characteristics and competencies;
– model for training (i.e. education qualification and type of teaching);
– content in training (i.e. knowledge and skills);
– approaches to training (i.e. teaching, delivery, and time frame).

As an exploratory study, structured interviews facilitated the use of a prepared standardised questionnaire as 'a precursor for more open-ended discussions' to probe for clarification if needed (Gray 2017, p. 399).

18.3.5   Measuring Instrument Validity

Questions on the effectiveness of theological education mirrored the work of Bain and Hussey (2018). Other questions were checked by colleagues and peer reviewed for content validity. Peers were non-participants in the study who possessed background information and were familiar with the subject, to help augment the quality and validity of the questions (Zohrabri 2013, pp. 258–259).

18.3.6   Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the National Statement, the CHC Research Code of Conduct, and the recommendations of the CHC Expedited Ethics Review Panel. As human subjects were involved in the study, ethical approval was necessary 'to protect the rights and welfare of participants' and the researcher, and to minimise potential negligence claims against the researcher and the college (Wilson 2014, p. 104).

18.3.7   Data Analysis Method

Data were analysed using an Excel spreadsheet, which enabled cells to be highlighted with different colours to help visualise and track commonalities. The use of constant comparison moved beyond a description of facts to identify emerging themes, search for meaning beyond what the participants said, and extract key quotes that could be used for quick understanding (Jones, Torres and Arminio 2014, pp. 2036–2037).

18.3.8   Respondents

Twenty-four participants were approached, of which 17 completed the interviews. The sample comprised 12 males and 5 females who lived in the Australian states of Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria, were born between 1957 and 1994, and were active in ministry leadership from 4 to 28 years. Each ordained minister held a leadership position that ranged from department head to national executive. All participants were Pentecostal with theological education ranging from vocational certificate to doctorate over the last 30 years. Fourteen participants were current leaders within INC, and three were leaders from other Pentecostal denominations.

18.4   Results and Key Findings

My research was initiated by a cry for more leaders within INC. While exploring the literature, the research question unfolded and also provided a catalyst for future investigation to design a curriculum-based solution. This study was undertaken with the assumption that CHC is a Christian educational institution and resolves problems with training programs bedded in a biblical-based, Christ-centred worldview.

Even though the literature offered a wide range of leadership characteristics and competencies, the many possibilities were unreasonable in one person, thus making it unachievable. If it were possible to identify the traits required in the Australian Pentecostal Church, then exploring a model to frame the training of these characteristics and competencies would also be beneficial. The content within the model, and the approach to training, would ascertain what topics should be taught, and how they should be taught, to achieve the desired learning outcomes.

Hence, the discussion of findings is presented in four categories related to key ministry leadership training: (1) Key Characteristics and Competencies, (2) Model, (3) Content, and (4) Approaches. Through thematic coding and analysis of the responses from participants, sub-themes were gradually developed to explore the primary research question:

- *What training characteristics, model, content, and approaches are required to produce entry-level ministry-ready Pentecostal leaders?*

The respondents shared comparable opinions in the key characteristics and competencies of a leader, model for training, content in training, and approaches to training. Emerging from this study, an entry-level ministry-ready Pentecostal leader was formulated as one who is God-dependent, Holy Spirit partnered, and generally and spiritually mature. The description includes one who is biblically literate, people oriented, business minded, intentionally mentored, and contextually trained.

The authentic marks include godly character, emotional intelligence, teachability, integrity, and resilience. The essential relational practices include competency and capacity, initiative, lifelong learning, biblical and business literacy, and leadership and communication skills. As a Hebraic relational approach, these aspects for training revolve around the learner as the starting point for a value-based education journey (Chazan 2016, p. 7). The model, content, and approach however serve the development of personal characteristics and competencies, and interpersonal connections that are coordinated with vision and practice (Chazan 2016, pp. 8, 10).

18.4.1 Key Characteristics and Competencies of a Leader

18.4.1.1 Training in Seven (7) Key Characteristics and Competencies Augment Ministry Leadership Effectiveness

(1) *Emotional intelligence (EQ)*: Coupled with theological education, this competency promotes emotional stability. Jesus clearly taught that dealing with one's blind spots gives the capability for helping others (Matt. 7:5 [TPT]). As an authentic mark, self-awareness, self-control, and self-leadership (Goleman et al. 2013, p. 30), impact intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships, facilitate the learning experience, and foster integrity, longevity, and resilience (Ritchie 2016, p. 95; Goleman et al. 2013, p. 250; Russell 2017, pp. 12, 21–22; Burns et al. 2013, p. 23; Blanchard and Broadwell 2018; Meyer 2018; Heen 2018).

> High levels of emotional intelligence…that's a really key competence…

(2) *Business acumen and operational awareness*: The respondents referred to basic small business knowledge and operational awareness to understand the strategic and day-to-day operations of the ministry organisation. This vital competency in accuracy, relevancy, realism, insight, and responsiveness can be facilitated through a blend of formal training and contextual experience, for 'vocational integrity' (Brown 2017, p. 169). However, in the literature sought, business acumen in ministry leadership training was lacking (Burns et al. 2013, pp. 26–28). From the parable of Jesus, we must learn to be shrewd stewards with business affairs and material resources, to prepare for the future, further the kingdom of God, and grow in spiritual acumen or maturity (Lk. 16:1–13 [AMP]).

> Business acumen…is underestimated in ministry schools and ministry education.

(3) *Biblical literacy*: Respondents unanimously echoed that biblical literacy mattered, as illiteracy robs maturity. Clearly, Christian higher education needs to reinforce this expectation, as effective leaders demonstrate an appreciation for God and Scripture, and the application of biblical principles in the life of leadership (2 Tim. 2:15) (Scott 2015; Majkowki 2017, p. 1).

> Definitely a solid scriptural knowledge, and understanding, gives us a better measuring rod… to… measure ideas and people's new theologies.

(4) *Vision and execution*: While literature identified vision in the form of call (Zigarelli 2006), insight (Hyatt 2016), and influence (Kouzes and Posner 2017), this study identified the execution of vision as equally necessary. 'Executional excellence' was explained as a demonstration of initiative, strategy, and implementation to get the job done well (Kouzes and Posner 2017, pp. 45, 93, 145, 195). Vision without execution is insufficient, thus having vision and the ability to execute that vision is what it really takes to be an effective leader. However, the literature does not adequately explain the steps of execution in a ministry leadership context.

> The ability to translate… vision, culture, everything like that into actions… That… is probably the biggest disconnect. Everyone has a vision, but it's very difficult to put legs to it.

(5) *Communication skills*: Clear communication incorporates honesty, integrity, and listening, in a variety of contexts and pathways (Irving 2011, p. 126) (1 Tim. 3:2). This ability requires self-awareness, translates into real-life contexts, and is an indispensable quality (Maxwell 2007) for relational value and connection (Johnson and Hackman 2018, pp. 2, 6; Finzel 2017; Russell 2017, pp. 12, 21–22;). To also cultivate emotional intelligence, this skill should be coupled with theological underpinning (McKay et al. 2018, p. 1).

> …if you listen intently to what people say, not only are you more informed, but then when you do… speak you hope that the same sort of courtesy is delivered to you, so that when you do speak it actually has real value.

(6) *Leadership skills*: The authentic marks of people skills, relational connections (Crawford 2018, pp. 124–125), teachability (Stowell 2014, p. 24; Kouzes and Posner 2017, p. 25) (Phil. 3:12–14), capacity, flexibility, and resilience (2 Cor. 4:7–11), are dominant competencies that foster longevity. Groeschel extended that teachability inspires others, sets the tone, and follows through (Conner 2013, p. 25; Baron 2016, pp. 297–298; Blanchard and Broadwell 2018; Maimon 2018). Bain and Hussey (2018) decided these skills were a key in vocational ministry effectiveness (pp. 141, 143–144). Even though the respondents agreed with Irving (2011, p. 125), and Burns et al. (2013, p. 7) that this resilience was paramount, a literature deficit exists in how to train in this area.

> …everything revolves around the competency of the leadership capacity…

> If you want to have effectiveness in ministry, you have to be able to identify with people.

(7) *Accountability relationships*: Mentoring and coaching were deemed essential for general and spiritual maturity, as 'authentic leaders… must model what matters and be willing to "practice what they preach"' (Irving 2011, p. 122). Employing strategies modelled by the Apostle Paul with Timothy adds value to help prepare leaders to handle ever-changing dynamics and challenges in ministry (Hoehl 2011, p. 46). This authentic mark of leadership contributes to ongoing learning to shape character and competence (Dockery 2016, p. 118; Jenkins 2011; Kouzes and Posner 2016, p. 48; Baron 2016, p. 300; Enlow 2013; Ball in Bain and Hussey 2018, p. 20).

> Relentlessly pursue mentors, coaches and relationships with other pastors. If you show no initiation in this area and expect others to connect with you then you will run a high risk of being lonely and even growing bitter or weird or both.

18.4.1.2   Development of Characteristics and Competencies Through Blended Learning

Blended learning was the clear disposition, with a balance of formal training, work-integrated learning, real-life exposure, on-the-job training, mentoring and coaching, and skills-based teaching. Skills and competencies belonged to more than one category, which indicated a blended approach was paramount and highly valued in developing entry-level ministry-ready Pentecostal leaders. Bain and Hussey (2018) also

recognised that leadership and people and relational skills were developed in the local church in conjunction with formal training (p. 144). The Apostle Paul's committed example of contextual first-hand exposure in a connected team environment saw a sustainable effect on training leaders (Conner 2013, pp. 22–24).

> There are a number of avenues to do it… formal training…the knowledge and the primary foundations in all these areas can get laid there, but… for ongoing development… on-the-job training and coaching and mentoring are probably… what I notice are amongst the most effective.

18.4.1.3   Description of an Entry-Level Ministry-Ready Pentecostal Leader

The respondents portrayed an entry-level ministry-ready Pentecostal leader as ***God-dependent and Holy Spirit partnered**, with **spiritual and general maturity***, which is supported by Huizing (2011, p. 58). Moses' dependence on God at the Tent of Meeting adds significance to on-the-job training with Joshua, his mentee (Ex. 33:11). Partnership with the Holy Spirit was demonstrated by the Apostles in Antioch who set apart Barnabas and Saul (Paul) (Acts 13:2). Halloran and Friday (2018) directed these essential practices of a leader built upon knowledge and skills (pp. 11, 20) to foster longevity and resilience.

> The ability to have been witnessed to have an intimate relationship with God.
>
> …for the Pentecostal side of things is… co-partnering with the Spirit in our work.
>
> …the number one competency is… teachability… You need to constantly develop your leadership skills, your own personal discipleship… you also need to have a demonstration… of executional excellence… demonstrated initiative, … demonstrated strategy and implementation of tactics; it means you know how to get the job done… but it also needs to be done well.

18.4.2   Model for Training—Type of Education Qualification

The training framed by the respondents follows a Hebraic model that is learner-centric, relationship-driven, and contextually-relevant (Chazan 2016, p. 7), as seen through the teaching experiences of Jesus. The traditional Greek method is not sufficient for an entry-level ministry-ready Pentecostal leader, as it is largely curriculum based to emphasise knowledge, content, and cognitive input (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary 2016). The Apostle Paul was formally trained through Greek philosophy and learned in biblical interpretation, however his letters used a relational and modelling language (1 Cor. 11:1, Phil. 4:9), signifying the need to blend both formal and informal training that leads to imitation and maturation through a relational education approach.

The respondents recommended a Diploma as a minimum qualification, provided it was partnered with practical experience and contextualised training; however, preference leaned towards a 2-year journey similar to an Associate Diploma. The apprenticeship model of Jesus blended teaching, modelling, mentoring, and observation, to develop godly character, people skills, leadership competence, and general and spiritual maturity.

> Diploma, if done with practical elements… it is almost based on person-to-person… I would like to see every minister… have studied something at a high tertiary level.

> …a higher qualification might just encourage everyone and make people confident in their leadership as they move forward… Every individual is different.

18.4.3   Content in Training—Knowledge and Skills

The respondents expected five key areas an entry-level ministry-ready Pentecostal leader should be trained in. (People and communication skills have been linked together.)

18.4.3.1   Business Acumen and Operational Awareness

The respondents agreed a gap needs to be filled with the day-to-day business aspects of the Church, undergirded with bible-based Christ-centred shrewd stewardship (Lk. 16:1–13). Babbes and Zigarelli (2006) directed us to the lesson of Jesus in the Epistle of Luke (14:28–33) to 'count the cost before embarking on a quest… In business language, Jesus calls us to be strategic thinkers' (p. 18). While research applicable to the ministry context is limited, delivering a basic understanding in these areas was deemed essential:

- operational normalities of church life,
- organisational health and understanding,
- systems thinking,
- resource management,
- database (people) management,
- political and moral responsibility,
- personal and professional financial management,
- the legal environment, and
- workplace compliance.

> If you are…going to run a church, you actually need all the business side of things as well… You've got to run church life like a small business, so you…understand income and expenditure, balance sheets and projected income, and all the aspects of legislation, insurance, privacy statements, council regulations, permits, and safety, fire safety.

18.4.3.2   People Skills and Communication Skills

The respondents identified these relational skills in partnership with the Holy Spirit included discernment, prophecy, spiritual warfare, preparing and conveying a clear message, corporate prayer, intercession, presentations, public speaking, preaching, teaching, counselling, and contemporary issues. Jesus set an example when He encountered people spiritually, emotionally, and physically (Jn. 13:15). The ability to communicate is a vital training area (Lamey 2014) for an authentic mark and essential practice of a leader (Hyatt 2016).

> People skills. The ability to work in team cohesively, whether you really enjoy that person's company a lot or not.

> Public speaking, whether it be preaching, teaching…more like the ability to take people on a journey through all different mediums.

18.4.3.3   Strategic and Basic Leadership Skills

Combining strategic and operational skills were deemed fundamental for foresight and vision execution. The respondents identified training in day-to-day ministry situations were also essential (i.e. baptism, weddings, funerals, hospital visits, suicide and depression, and prevention of burn out and vocation fatigue).

> Definitely the leadership competencies and I probably emphasise that more because I feel its probably been neglected…like setting goals/strategies, gathering resources, building teams, pursuing outcomes…organisational understanding.

18.4.3.4   Biblical Literacy

Confidence in rightly handling the word of truth is imperative to obtain and synthesise knowledge and implement understanding in real-life stories (2 Tim. 2:15), which was affirmed by Bain and Hussey (2018, p. 142). A general understanding of Church history and Pentecostal doctrine was identified as a cofactor to provide context and background for informed communication. King Solomon emphasised there is nothing new under the sun (Eccl. 1:9), therefore remembering the former things are important to not repeat the mistakes of the past (Eccl. 1:11).

> Absolutely a level of confidence in the Scripture is essential.

Irrespective of the content, respondents placed importance on course design to ensure the simultaneous transference of theoretical knowledge to on-the-job contextual ministry experience, to develop practical skills in a range of areas. Bain and Hussey (2018) confirmed that students should have well-developed transferable skills (pp. 141, 145). Noteworthy was the need for training in basic business acumen and operational awareness, however, the literature sought showed a disconnection from ministry leadership training.

18.4.4   Approaches to Training—Teaching Style, Delivery Mode, and Time Frame

The teaching style, delivery mode, and expected time frame are important variables in a learner-centred approach.

18.4.4.1   Teaching Style

Daimler (2016) and Perkins (2018) suggested an internship approach, however respondents strongly advocated for a real-time apprenticeship model of Jesus for teaching of content, on-the-job training, contextual opportunities, field experience, observation of specialists, and integrative pathways. This 'show, do, watch' approach of Jesus, nurtures character and talents, models a servant heart, mentors for accountability, and facilitates growth through observation.

> Definitely…a bit like Jesus where He showed them, then He did it with them, then He watched them do it… where possible.

> I would have wished that it somehow taught me… how messy it actually is, how challenging it can sometimes be, and practical ways to actually deal with that.

18.4.4.2   Delivery Modes

Respondents emphasised that exposure to a range of delivery modes provided flexibility to cater for contextual variables, such as work-integrated learning, in-class lecture format, offsite learning hub, and an online interactive approach, which fostered human interactivity. Halliday-Wynes and Beddie (2009) confirmed that lifelong learning was effective through the combination of modes to synthesise knowledge (p. 2) and transfer skills, which Bain and Hussey (2018) reverberated (p. 142). Whilst this is a preferred approach, De George-Walker and Keeffe (2010) found successful blended learning is not simple, as there are endless combinations to facilitate quality-learning experiences with realistic expectations (p. 22). The respondents agreed it was dependent upon student locality, context, and work responsibilities.

I think we should always try to expose them to the lot"… Layers of everything.

…we need to be able to educate them adequately in the formal side of things, but then have the on-the-job training in the local church so they can develop in that culture.

18.4.4.3   Time Frame

The entry requirement for Theological Seminaries and Divinity Schools at Post-graduate level signify 3 years of prior training as an undergraduate.[4] The Monash Institute and CQ University designated up to 2 years duration with online delivery at VET level, whilst Alphacrucis College provided an on-campus and online experience for 1-year full time at higher education level.[5] Although, it is calculated that Jesus gave His disciples 3 years of intensive training, and Paul received training though revelation for 3 years before commencing his ministry (Gal. 1:12, 18). The respondents, however, deemed a minimum of 1 year, preferably 2 years, was appropriate for an entry-level ministry-ready Pentecostal leader, provided the student was committed, and theological education was partnered with practice, mentoring, and accountability.

> The time frame to equip new leaders would depend on the person, but suggest two years at least, with ongoing mentoring and accountability from senior leadership for a period of time. Learning on the job is our greatest teacher!

18.4.5   Biblical Perspective

18.4.5.1   Jesus' Apprenticeship Model

Jesus Christ as the model for ministry leadership (Jn. 5:18–19; Acts 10:37–38) supports data that described an entry-level ministry-ready Pentecostal leader as one who is God-dependent and Holy Spirit partnered. The attitude of Jesus laid a foundation that demonstrated contextualised practicality (Mk. 10:45; Mk. 3:14; Jn. 20:21–22), which cultivated godly character and competency. Through His apprentice leadership style, Jesus combined:

- truth through relationship and stories,
- awareness through knowledge, and
- experience through reality (Matt. 24).

Emotional intelligence described the inward call of an entry-level ministry-ready Pentecostal leader, that was demonstrated through the Apostle Paul (Mk. 3:13–14, Acts 13:2, Eph. 3:7, Rom. 1:1), showing formal learning a crucial requirement. Spiritual maturity was a basic qualification for ministry leadership (1 Tim. 3:1–7, Titus 1:6–9), which Paul reinforced by directing Timothy to not put immature and

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[4] Harvard Divinity School, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Duke Divinity School, Theological Seminary content sourced from Moody Theological Seminary, Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, Fuller Theological Seminary.

[5] Monash Institute and CQ University—'Diploma of Leadership and Management'; Alphacrucis College—'Diploma of Leadership HE'.

unproven leaders in position (1 Tim. 3:6). This supports a descriptor of an entry-level ministry-ready Pentecostal leader as one who is witnessed as generally and spiritually mature before their ordination into ministry leadership.

Just like the Prophet Elijah, who lost his purpose and ability to keep going (1 Kings 18–19), a ministry leader can become 'reduced to useless, ineffective rubble, emotionally exhausted, and deeply fearful' (Hart in Millikin 2018, p. 4). This indicates that practical techniques in self-care (Millikin 2018, p. 16) would be a priority for longevity. Emotional, intellectual, and relational maturity, and 'physical and spiritual fitness is encouraged for anyone preparing to serve in ministry' (Millikin 2018, pp. 26–27; Matt. 22:37–40; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 6:10–18; Phil. 4:13; Gal. 5:22; Prov. 15:28).

18.5   Conclusion

The findings revealed seven (7) key characteristics and competencies, including emotional intelligence, basic business acumen and operational awareness, biblical literacy, vision and execution, communication skills, leadership skills, and accountability relationships. An entry-level ministry-ready Pentecostal leader was defined as a post-secondary graduate who is prepared and equipped in character and competency to commence the work of ministry leadership. This type of leader was described as one who is God-dependent and Holy Spirit partnered, and had a basic level of general and spiritual maturity. These could be developed through a blended learning approach with a minimum requirement of an undergraduate Diploma, conditional upon paralleling with real-world opportunities and day-to-day Church operations, preferably over a 2-year period to cement learning. The expected knowledge and skills to be attained included biblical literacy, business acumen and operational awareness, people skills, communication skills, and strategic leadership skills. Practical and simultaneous partnership with real-life ministry situations was an unconditional necessity. A broad range of teaching styles and a blended delivery mode were considered most effective to integrate theological education with experiential learning in partnered relationships and real-life stories. In short, adequate training would produce an entry-level ministry-ready Pentecostal leader who was biblically literate, people oriented, business minded, intentionally mentored, and contextually trained.

18.6   Limitations

The limitations surrounding this project were:

- This is a relatively small to medium qualitative study limited to a specific group of Australian Pentecostal ministry leaders and can only describe the experience that takes place predominantly within this frame.

- It was identified that business acumen and operational awareness are underestimated and is a different set of skills to leadership. The many contributing factors were not explored in depth and further research is required.

18.7 Implications for Theory

The intended contribution of this research was to explore the current theoretical and biblical landscape, identify training gaps, and provide a catalyst for broader investigation. Its aim was to pinpoint training requirements for an entry-level ministry-ready Pentecostal leader, specifically within the Australian Pentecostal Church. However, it was discovered that there were many overwhelming variables to wade through, thus it is necessary to have a contextualised understanding for effectiveness. Future quantitative research will be undertaken to investigate the feasibility of designing curriculum for contextualised ministry leadership training.

18.8 Implications for Practice

This study defined an entry-level ministry-ready Pentecostal leader as one who is God-dependent, Holy Spirit partnered, and displays general and spiritual maturity. For sustainability, the expected elements would be fostered through formal learning and skills-based teaching, intentional partnerships with mentors, and a parallel with specialist observation, on-the-job practical experiences, and real-life exposure. This discovery could be used as a mirror to reflect on current ministry practices that do not foster emotional intelligence, enhance lifelong learning, and align with the visionary expectations. This research can also be used to highlight possible gaps in informal learning spaces. This study draws our attention back to the practical hands-on model of Jesus to demonstrate a relational approach is paramount for effective training of emerging leaders. It allows for a contextualised perspective of learning that will bring a real-time connection to ministry.

18.9 Recommendations for Future Research

The data collected were practically relevant to highlight the contextual factors associated with effective training. However, the literature sought was limited in the implementation of a specific model that could address this need in Australia. While a qualitative method for data collection was largely effective to identify leadership training gaps, it was limited to Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria. Thus, quantitative research, that includes input from all INC Churches in Australia, would provide a more comprehensive data set to evaluate current training practices against

training needs. This would also investigate delivery modes that would respond with these findings and assess the benefits of a variety of training approaches, including those suggested by the respondents in this study, to facilitate a continued contribution. The aim of further research would be to assess the feasibility of developing and implementing a contextualised higher education leadership training model.

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Part III
Practice: Research that Reflects on Contemporary Practice Contexts and Showcases Opportunities for Future Christian Education Inquiry

Chapter 19
Faith, Facts, and Feelings: Christian Persuasion in Our Post-secular Age

Check for updates

Daniel J. Paterson

Abstract The case for God has never been stronger while at the same time belief in God is waning among Australian youth. What this highlights is not so much a problem with the Christian story but with its communicators, who are struggling to navigate the questions and challenges introduced by our unique cultural moment. When it comes to making significant decisions, the social science literature bears out a complex relationship between facts and feelings as to how people form resilient faith. Effective Christian education needs to take this research into account, inasmuch as it reveals a thoroughly biblical anthropology. This chapter explores the relationship between the attractive *what* of the Christian story and the compelling *why* in giving reasons for our hope. Essentially, the art of Christian persuasion is learning how to tell the better story of the Scriptures such that it connects with the felt questions of our time, and such that it connects to reality in the myriad ways in which God has given strong testimony to the truth of our message.

Keywords Facts · Faith · Feelings · Secular · Post-secular · Anthropology · Relevance · Reason · Persuasion · Questions

19.1 Introduction

What is the place of Christian persuasion in our post-secular age?

Academically speaking, the case for Christianity has never been stronger, and yet at the same time belief in God is waning among Australian youth. What this highlights is not so much a problem with the Christian story but with its communicators, who are struggling to navigate the questions and challenges introduced by our unique cultural moment. We stand at a critical juncture in the history of Christianity, and the culture of the West continues to change rapidly. New technologies are adapting how we relate to each other and the world, and new secular philosophies are causing tremendous shifts in our moral landscapes. The pace of change is so great that reflection on the

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impact of this phenomenon is almost made obsolete by the time you have sufficient markers from any body of research.

Here in Australia, the Faith and Belief report from the McCrindle research firm shows that there is a rapidly growing percentage of our younger population who are walking away from traditional religious affiliation (McCrindle 2017). This shift follows similar trends observed in other Western nations like USA and Canada (Pew 2015). Sociologists refer to this phenomenon as the rise of the nones, and beyond the sheer collapse of mainline protestant denominations and the death of cultural or nominal expressions of faith, there are various reasons for their departure from the fold. Christianity is considered by many to be intellectually vacuous and morally dubious. McCrindle and NCLS continue to illuminate the current barriers, census after census, study after study (McCrindle 2017; Pepper 2018). Whether the Church's doctrine, like beliefs around sexual ethics and Hell, or the behaviour of Christians, like hypocrisy and sexual abuse, Christianity is seen to belong to a bygone era. Skyscrapers now dominate the cityscapes as symbols of the success of secular modernity, and old Church buildings serve as nostalgic symbols of our former religious selves, or as Nietzsche described it in his *Parable of the Madman*, as sepulchres for the decaying corpse of a murdered deity (Nietzsche 1882). Drawing together the various lines of data it seems appropriate to diagnose Australia as thoroughly post-Christian in attitude, where religion has largely been ticked off our national bucket-list.

But in jettisoning belief in God and the Christian story, Australians have had to fill the void with new answers to the deepest questions of our human existence. The objective has been to pursue the good life on secular shores, where you can make sense of life without reference to God. But is it working? And how can Christian educators do their part in responding to these phenomena and the challenges of belief in our cultural moment? These questions warrant further exploration and are the subject of this chapter.

The state of our culture does not dictate whether the gospel is *good news,* nor whether it is *true news*. So even if the Church is scrambling, or has gone silent, and even if some future-casters are predicting the death of denominations in a generation, this moment is also pregnant with opportunity. If only Christians have the eyes to see the opening, and the courage to find our unique voice and message again. And if only we incline our ear to the Holy Spirit in search of faithful and fruitful methods that flow from what our study of God's word and our study of His world.

19.2   Sifting Through the Sands of Secularism

As something of a diagnostic metaphor for making sense of these turbulent times, take these closing words of Jesus from the famed Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's gospel:

[24] Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. [25] The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on

the rock. [26] But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. [27] The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.

Jesus' metaphors are always shallow enough for children to play and deep enough for scholars to plumb. Jesus here summarises in a few sentences the rise and fall of civilisations, as well as the triumph and tragedy of countless personal lives. His argument is simple. Storms are inevitable. But whether or not the fury of the elements wreaks havoc upon our structures depends entirely upon what we have chosen to build our lives. Do we build upon the foundation of God's sacred story, of which Jesus is the centre, or do we search for some new philosophical grounds?

Western civilisation has become a prodigal culture. Roughly, a dozen books in the last two decades alone have argued that what we love most about the West has little to do with the Enlightenment or even the Industrial Revolution, but has everything to do with our Judaeo-Christian roots. This is a recognition that can be traced by natives of the West as well as observers from the East, and spans various philosophical lines of thought, from Christian and secular quarters (D'Souza 2007; Dickson 2011; Hannam 2011; Hill 2005; Holland 2016; Johnstone 2017; Mengalwadi 2011; Schmidt 2004; Sheridan 2018; Stark 2006). The best of the West, they argue, is an *inheritance*. Concepts like universal human dignity and human rights trace back the language of Genesis and the *Imago Dei*. Education and healthcare for all follow a similar lineage. Historically unique virtues like humility have no strong ancient foundation outside their elevation in the New Testament. Social welfare and individual charity are founded upon the Judaeo-Christian ethics of justice and generosity. Even the scientific revolution is wrapped up with religious underpinnings, as the catalysts of those movements, the progenitors of their fields, were driven by the logic and language of Genesis to believe that God had endowed this universe with intelligible laws as a divine lawgiver, and that they were commanded to study God's world in order rule over and cultivate it. These gifts that have been bequeathed to Western civilisation all flow out of the legacy of the Christian story.

Enlightenment style thinkers brashly claim this inheritance, confident they can keep the riches of their Judaeo-Christian heritage, even as they uproot from the Christian story in search of adventure in new philosophical lands. The Enlightenment was seen to usher in a sort of *Secular Exodus* from the West's slavery to religious captivity.

So what has become of the secular project?

Defining secularism is fraught with difficulty, which is why most intellectual historians speak of secularisms in the plural. Charles Taylor's genealogy of secularism offers a useful working definition, however, for a secular state, secular person, and secular age (Taylor 2007). A secular state is one where no religious doctrine is privileged in the public sphere. Sadly this is often interpreted to mean that a separation of Church and State equates to a bifurcation between private and public life, so that the only explanations allowed in the public space are those that do not appeal to religious language.

Secular thinkers have done remarkably well over the past two centuries filling in the theoretical gaps to parse out such explanations. Drawing from the fields of cosmology, biology, and evolutionary psychology, the secular story now offers a reasonably coherent set of answers to the classic questions every worldview needs to answer—origins, meaning, morality, and destiny (Zacharias 1998, 219). With a viable secular alternative to God's sacred story, the confident belief that permeated the academy in the 1960s and 1970s became known as the secularisation thesis: that the more educated people became, the less religion would play a role in society. Even Christian sociologists like Peter Berger argued in the late 1970s that secularisation would completely colonise Western civilisation, and from there the rest of the world (Berger 1979).

However, as the decades rolled on the *Secular Exodus* has become the *Secular Wanderings*. Just like God's nation Israel, wandering in the desert, there are grumblings. For after the initial excitement of throwing off religion in what Oxford philosopher, Isaiah Berlin, called negative liberty (Berlin 1969), the absence of all constraint, or an unbridled autonomy, it seems secular people have awakened to deeper and unsatisfied thirsts. Only now, with a disenchanted universe, no miracle water can come from a rock.

Australian journalist Greg Sheridan has a powerful line that captures the link between our broader culture and our social imaginaries: 'Humans beings are formed in a culture, and a culture without God will form different human beings' (Sheridan 2018). And when you parse out the secular story with purely scientific answers to the deepest questions, secularism gives birth to a culture without a soul. Everything that we consider to make up the thick aspects of who we are as humans, everything we love the most—what Francis Schaeffer called the 'mannishness of man' (Schaeffer 1972)—cannot be explained on secularism, or rather is explained away (Mohler 2015). Love, not the supreme ethic, merely a neurochemical reaction serving evolutionary survival. Justice, not an objective hope, merely a relative social standard from person to person, culture to culture, and era to era. Freedom, not a real agency, merely an illusion of choice from an illusory consciousness. Rationality, not following the evidence through to a warranted conclusion, but merely a neural pathway preprogrammed by biological determinism (Keller 2016).

A secular view of the world tends to deny the deepest things of who we are, setting the mind's beliefs at war with the deepest experiences, intuitions, and longings of the human heart. It drives a wedge between facts and feelings, creating a terrible dissonance for seculars to either ignore or embrace. We are told that we have no purpose, even though we are obsessed with searching for one. We are told that there is no meaning to life, even though we cannot live without one.

Victor Frankl, the Jewish psychiatrist who endured Auschwitz, observed that without a sure *why* for our existence, we cannot survive the suffering and hopelessness of the *how* (Frankl 1959). But that is where a thoroughgoing secular story leaves you: without an enduring *why*. And the psychological effects on the emerging generations have been devastating. Young people right across the first world, experiencing the best living conditions of any generation in the history of human civilisation, are exhibiting skyrocketing rates of anxiety and depression (Lawrence et al. 2015). The

most connected generation has become the most lonely generation (Cigna 2018). Even though there are obvious technological and sociological factors associated with these outcomes, when compared with the well-being of those with intrinsic religiosity, it seems disbelief has had communal repercussions (Spencer et al. 2016). Just as Jesus predicted with his metaphor, people have become more fragile.

Cue the meteoric rise of Canadian professor and psychiatrist Jordan Peterson, who in coopting God's story, but reading it through a psychological and therapeutic lens, has animated a generation of young seculars by restoring to them a *why* in the face of the inevitable nihilism of the secular story. To a generation raised on moral relativism—indoctrinated to believe there are no binaries, no boundaries, no fixedness, and no givens—Peterson serves as something of a secular sage or wisdom teacher, pointing out there is a moral grain to our universe. You can make your own choices, but you cannot choose the consequences of those choices. There are benefits of choosing to go with the moral grain of the universe, and there are all manner of psycho-social splinters if you choose to go against it. As something of a commentary on the irony of our cultural moment, is it not fascinating that those who once sought unbridled freedom from all constraints are the very same ones who have catapulted Peterson's book to the New York Times bestselling list. Its title? *12 Rules for Life.* A rehashing of the 10 commandments, only with 20% interest.

It seems humans cannot escape the other half of Isaiah Berlin's freedom equation, *positive liberty* (Berlin 1969), which means not the absence of all constraints, but like a fish to water, or a train to its tracks, the embrace of the right constraints that lead to human flourishing (Berlin 1969).

Jesus' calculus seems inescapable.

A life with God: *the rock*. A life without God: *shifting sands*.

And even if our secular neighbours deny God's existence, they still have to live in God's world (Schaeffer 1968). That means everything in creation conspires against any secular tendencies to explain all of life only through a scientific lens. The world is charged with what Peter Berger calls 'signals of transcendence' (Berger 1970), or what Taylor calls 'solicitations of the spiritual' (Taylor 2007). These are ways God is breaking into people's otherwise immanent and materialistic outlook, like rays of sunlight piercing the dark clouds. And so beauty and mathematics, love and rationality, justice and freedom; these are just some of the reasons why the secularisation thesis has failed, as the secular story has been unable to eclipse the religious dimension of human experience. It has failed Taylor's challenge to explain these phenomena without impoverishment (Taylor 2007).

The world is not becoming less religious as once predicted by sociologists half a century ago. Rather the opposite is true. Globally speaking, the same sociologists now trace how religion has undergone a resurgence (Berger 1999). Which is why—excepting Western universities which remain the strongest ongoing staging ground for secularisation—Western cultures are being forced to engage with religious perspectives and dimensions of life (Thomas 2005).

This unexpected enduring coexistence of secular and religious perspectives, of competing stories, has led to a new phenomenon: what Taylor describes as the sense of everything being cross-pressured (Taylor 2007). That those who believe in God

are constantly plagued by doubts, and those whose currency is religious scepticism are constantly haunted by the spectre of God. Why? Because, there are alternative stories, secular and religious, means everyone now can imagine the world through the lens of the other. With meaningful explanations from both sides, a brazen confidence is impossible to maintain for those with even the slightest inkling towards intellectual integrity. Everyone is haunted by a view of the world they reject, and in a culture that is post everything—post-modern, post-truth, post-Christian—this conflict is the zeitgeist of the new post-secular world (Habermas 2008; Graham 2017; Taylor 2007).

Let me offer something of a case study with the recent Notre Dame fire in Paris. There we were, at the beginning of Holy Week, with the entire world arrested in their tracks to watch the spire ablaze. Why? Is this not just an old building, and one connected to an institution that is hated amongst so many in the secular West for its hypocrisy and opulence, and for a litany of sacred crimes scattered throughout Church history? The demise of this cultural icon should be cause for celebration, especially in a thoroughly secular nation like France. And yet the world mourned. There were Parisian seculars singing hymns in the streets (Clement 2019). Why? Because the fire stirred in our collective memory this abiding sense of something lost in the West: the ghost of our human soulishness. The fall of that sacred spire serves as a global metaphor of the West's now diminished view of what it means to be human, as we have amputated the divine image that once animated us.

Nowhere is this captured better than in the opening words of Julian Barnes' memoir, *Nothing to be Frightened Of:* ' I don't believe in God, but I miss him' (Barnes 2008).

The borrowed inheritance of this prodigal culture is running low. We face unprecedented challenges to the future of our civilisations and cultures in the West, and sifting through the secular sands, it seems their thinkers are bankrupt when it comes to the spiritual, philosophical, and moral resources required to build a stable foundation. As confidence for the good life apart from God crumbles, what does Jesus offer this post-secular age? What does our gospel have to offer? And how do we reach our post-secular age?

19.3   The Lost Art of Persuasion

Enter the lost art of Christian persuasion.

Travel back to the book of Acts and consider the verbs used to describe how Jesus' first followers went about spreading Christianity. What were they doing? Reasoning. Arguing. Debating. Disputing. Convincing. Proving. Preaching. Proclaiming. Of the myriad verbs used to describe the spread of Christianity, over three quarters carry strong notions of persuasion (Dulles 2005). The spoken faith of our apostolic forefathers was not dispassionate discourse in the public sphere; it was logic on fire, driven by a compassion as deep as the Mariana Trench.

Apologetics is the theological sub-discipline of commending and defending Christ in a manner that is itself distinctly Christian, or on its own terms (Stackhouse 2006,

161). Drawn from the world of jurisprudence, the Greek term *apologia* meant to give an answer; to make your case; to offer your defence before the magistrate.[1]

After the Lord's ascension the early church over the first few centuries began to use two symbols in speaking about Christian advocacy: *the closed and open fist* (Ashford 2017, 448). The closed fist represented *dissuasoria*, the negative side of apologetics focused on defending against objections. The open fist represented *persuasoria*, the positive side of apologetics that uses intellectual, aesthetic, and relational creativity in commending the gospel to those who at first cannot receive it as good or true news (Guinness 2015, 253).

Now, sadly, this discipline has often been left to a few intellectual champions of the faith. The *fidei defensors* or codename apologists: Justin Martyr, Ireneus, Augustine, Aquinas, and Anselm. But it is worth noting that apologist is not an office or label in the New Testament. It was not something that someone was, so much as something that all Christians had to do. As much as perhaps it worked in previous generations for the Christian masses to cheer on from the stands as their intellectual gladiators fought in the arena of ideas, we need to revive this lost art of Christian persuasion for our post-secular age as the task of all Christians (Guinness 2015, 37). Together we must take up the Apostle Peter's injunction for public Christianity: 'to always be prepared to give an answer to anyone who asks you to give the reasons for the hope that you have, but to do this gentleness and respect' (1 Peter 3:15). In the language of J. Warner Wallace, a convert to Christianity through a forensic investigation of the gospels, 'We don't need one more million dollar apologist; we need one million one dollar apologists' (Wallace 2017, 203).

Therefore, in terms of our training as educators, and the educational spaces we map out, serious questions need to be asked. How are we preparing teachers to be theologically nimble enough to give an answer to any student who asks? And how are we creating learning spaces that invite questions, doubt, and serious investigation? And when it comes to ethical Christian persuasion, of what do we need to be mindful?

The theme of this research conference is *Reason and Relevance*.[2] Why should you take Christianity seriously as a live option for belief (reason), and why should you want Christianity to be a live option (relevance)? I would be hard pressed to suggest a better summary for charting a way forward in Christian persuasion for our post-secular age, except to suggest that we have to flip the script to lead with relevance. Why? Because of what we have learned about how people form beliefs and make decisions.

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[1]1 Peter 3:15–16, '*But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to **give an answer** (apologia) to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander*'. Cf. Paul's five formal *apologias* (Acts 21:40–22:29; 23:1–11; 24:1–9; 25:1–12; 26:1–32).

[2]For background information on the conference CHRISTIAN EDUCATION—REASON AND RELEVANCE, where a version of this chapter was presented as a keynote address, see Luetz and Green (2021; this volume).

19.4   The Anatomy of Making Decisions

Ben Shapiro, the Jewish conservative political commentator in the USA, has become famous among young men the world over for his slogan, 'Facts don't care about your feelings' (Shapiro 2014).Contextually speaking, Shapiro is critiquing a certain brand of persuasion that is based upon emotive reasoning without any anchor in scientific or philosophical reality, seeking to correct an imbalance in political discourse where emotive assertion is a substitute for substantive argument. But as self-evidently true as his slogan may be (since facts are incapable of empathy), when it comes to humans forming their deepest beliefs, it seems faith has something to do with both facts and feelings.

Across the millennia of moral philosophy, there have been numerous models suggested for how the passions (or our heart and intuitions) relate to reason when it comes to making moral judgements. In his masterpiece, *The Republic*, Plato argues that the right order of morality happens when reason rules over the lower passions; a sort of proto-rationalist approach to moral calculation (Plato 2011). David Hume flipped Plato's script, arguing that reason only serves at the whim of the passions (Hume 2003). As a contested third option, Thomas Jefferson seemed to argue in one of his letters that nature endowed humans with the mind and the heart to serve different ends; reason for answering scientific questions, and the heart for the everyday pursuits sparked by moral questions (Jefferson 2019). They are, in essence, non-overlapping magisteria. So which of these three models is correct? To which faculty must we primarily aim our *persuasoria*?

In his research on moral thinking, the secular Jewish psychologist, Jonathan Haidt, sought to empirically test these models, exploring whether feelings or facts play a greater role in shaping belief (Haidt 2012). His findings are unambiguous, with Hume's model vindicated as the victor (though Haidt softens the slave language to say reason is more of a dignified servant to the passions). He summarises the research in his now famous metaphor of the rider and the elephant.

As it turns out, when it comes to making moral judgments, *intuition comes first and strategic reasoning second*. The elephant, representing our subconscious and intuitive processes, sets the direction, and the rider, representing our conscious reasoning, tends to go along for the ride. Or to put it another way, if you are placed in a situation that calls for you to make a decision, you will almost immediately and intuitively react, and only after having come to the judgement will you call upon your conscious reasoning, which acts as a sort of presidential press secretary whose job it is to publicly justify your emotive tweets.

Now this is a huge and controversial observation. Our reasons are rarely the reason we arrive at a moral judgement. But because we have moved through the intellectual epochs of the enlightenment, rationalism, and empiricism, our commitment to thinking we are primarily cerebral is a hard belief to dispel. Haidt calls it the rationalist delusion: the persisting false belief that we are super-rational creatures simply following the evidence where it leads (Haidt 2012). The moral science data suggests otherwise.

Without knowing it, though, Haidt is profoundly Anglican for a Jewish agnostic. Why? Because Scripture never reduces humans to logical calculators, or simply brains on legs. Rather we are embodied creatures, with various parts to our humanity: heart, soul, mind, and strength (Matthew 22:37). And when it comes to our moral beliefs and actions, the heart seems to steer the ship. At a time in the ancient world where Plato's reason ruled the philosophical scene, Jesus said: '*For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander…' (* Matthew 15:19). Furthermore, the Apostle Paul wrote in the first chapter of Romans that we suffer from a worship problem. Our hearts are oriented away from our Creator and toward created things, or idols, which leads to a darkening of our hearts, and a suppression of the truth, and a curving inwards of our love from God and neighbour to ourselves (Romans 1:19–27).

The biblical data on these ideas are vast and were powerfully expressed in the anthropology of Augustine of Hippo on the will and the affections; a thought carried forward by the great thinkers of the Church. Listen to how Dr. Ashley Hull, an expert on Thomas Cranmer, the English Protestant reformer, summarises his anthropology: '*What the heart loves, the will chooses, and the mind justifies'* (Hull 2002).

Sadly, for a long time in large pockets of the evangelical church, we have lost sight of this biblical anthropology. Our faith formation has been stunted by the cold rationalism of the Enlightenment, where we think all we need to do to get people to change their beliefs or moral direction is to give them clear theology and good reasons. Now theology and thinking are part of the problem, but it's not enough to just lead with arguments and ideas. Because we are primarily worshippers and lovers first, some theologians are leading a revival of a more embodied discipleship that takes this fallen anthropology seriously, employing liturgy, spiritual disciplines, and community in a bid to train our visceral elephants to respond differently in the first place (Smith 2016). Haidt's research drives home this need.

Which is also why we need to imbue our Christian persuasion with a tailored approach. If we want to reach people with the gospel, then we cannot simply line up apologetic arguments against secular ones to see which barrage wins the intellectual duel. Because we possess what Haidt calls *motivated reasoning*, we apply different metrics in evaluating evidence (Haidt 2012). If we want something to be true, we ask the question: *can I believe it?* If we do not want something to be true, we ask the question: *must I believe it?* Depending on whether we *want* to accept something or not, we unconsciously change the bar for evidence. So we need to be aware that there are deeper forces, moral and spiritual, that play a significant role in a person hearing the gospel as good and true news.

Now, interestingly, this is where Jesus comes to the fore with an antidote. Across the interactions recorded in the four canonical gospels, Jesus asks hundreds of piercing questions that force people to come face to face with their motivated reasoning. And ostensibly, from the text, it often has a kind of percussive effect, leaving a person disorientated but perhaps more open to consider what they believe from a new footing. So in addition to helping expose our motivated reasoning by well-placed questions, let me share practically three elements we need to get right

to engage in ethical Christian persuasion for our post-secular age: the *relevance*, *reasonableness*, and *accent* of the Christian story.

19.5   The Relevance of the Christian Story

First, the relevance of the Christian story.

Given that the secular story offers a way for people to make sense of life without reference to God, the biggest challenge we face is the apathy produced when secular Australians find God wholly irrelevant to everyday life (Starke 2017). Moreover, the New Atheists of the previous decade have an enduring echo in public sentiment towards religion as a whole. Although they added nothing to the atheist war-chest of arguments against God's existence, what the New Atheists successfully accomplished was a shift in ideological tactic. Rather than simply argue that there were no good reasons to believe in God, as did the classical (or old) atheists, the New Atheists argued that the existence of *belief in God* was a net loss to society, and that the crimes of the Church were the product of a defunct belief system that fosters dangerous intellectual behaviours. What this amounts to in Australian culture, when one considers the concept of motivated reasoners, is a malaise of negativity towards Christianity in which young generations have been formed, which means to try and launch with reasons why you should believe the gospel is to try and persuade people of a reality they conceive of as irrelevant and bad news.

Since humans are inherently storytelling creatures, the most urgent task of Christian persuasion is to retell the Christian story afresh in such a way that its goodness becomes evident to all as it speaks to our felt needs. Consider the greatest questions of our time. Freedom: what does it mean to be free? Identity: who are we really? Meaning: what makes life worth living? Satisfaction: how can I be truly happy? Hope: where do we look to fix what is wrong? Sexuality: how do I make sense of my desires? These are not sub-themes of the Christian story. They are central to the storyline from Genesis to Revelation. And because the subtraction stories—the tales of de-conversion—are framed by the language of courage and growing up beyond fairy tales, a counter-narrative is not an optional extra (Taylor 2007, 29). Christians possess in the Scriptures a *better story* than our secular neighbours when it comes to answering life's ultimate questions in such a way that leads to human flourishing, so we must learn to tell it. For in speaking to people's questions through the lens of the Bible we get to tear down their false stereotypes, and in their place whet an appetite for the God who is there. To show that Christianity is a house to which you want to come home, with a Heavenly Father to whom you can run to be enveloped by grace. Good theology should always provoke the imagination to worship.

To commend Christ, rather than aim at evidence first, instead we should take aim at the imagination, and steal past what C. S. Lewis described as the watchful dragons of our motivated reasoning (Lewis 2000, 118). Where the secular story sets the heart and mind at war, the Christian story makes peace, shedding light on all the deep

things about who we are as though the sun was dawning to light up the landscape of reality (Lewis 2013, 140).

Nowhere is this light more desperately needed than when it comes to the hard questions from which Christians tend to run from in the public sphere, or tend to speak only with a political voice rather than a pastoral and persuasive one. Jesus is *good news* for every aspect of human life. So when it comes to questions of gender identity, sex, and suffering, the Christian story carries good news that connects with best social science data we have.

All of this is why the seventeenth century philosopher and scientist, Blaise Pascal, stressed the need for such a shift in persuasive tactic in commanding Christianity: 'We must make it loveable, to make good men hop it is true; finally, we must prove it is true' (Pascal 2003, 52).

Of course this assumes that we know *why* the gospel is good news; that we are familiar with our own Christian story. In terms of faith formation in Christian education, we have an urgent task to stress the centrality of the memorisation and rehearsing of our own story, especially amongst a biblically illiterate (although due to the advent podcasts and celebrity pastors a theologically committed) generation. This practice will embed young people in their own story, giving them the interpretive resources for making their way in the world as wise actors, as they learn to ask their hard questions not just of the story, but within the story. This seems to me to be indispensable to surviving the cross-pressure of our post-secular age as a cognitive minority (Harrison 2017, 72).

For years I have been working with Dr. David Benson on a 5 scene framework for understanding the Bible's big story: *Created for Good, Damaged by Evil, Restored for Better, Sent Together to Heal, and Set Everything Right*.[3] Perhaps this is a helpful curriculum tool to start with in developing within your students a sense of how the Bible makes sense, at different points in the story, of their everyday experience.

By leaning into the relevance question, by showing that God is good and that Christianity is good news for every area of life, we will do a lot to dispel the horrendous caricatures of God and the gospel that keep people from wanting to believe, and open them up to genuinely investigate: *Can I believe this?*

So we need to lead with the relevance of the Christian story.

19.6 The Reasonableness of the Christian Story

Second, the reasonableness of the Christian story.

Social media and internet forums are inundated with the false impression that Christianity is more hoax than history. That to believe in God is akin to believing in Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy. You may want it to be true, but it's just a psychological crutch for the weak. Nothing more than a delusion. The famed atheist intellectual, Bertrand Russell, was once asked in an interview, hypothetically, what would you

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[3]https://bit.ly/BibleBigStory.

say to God if it turns out He does exist and you stand before Him on judgment day? Russell's answer was quintessentially British: "*Sir, why did you not give me better evidence?*" (Russell 1974, 26).

As something of a counter-perspective to Russell half a century later, Os Guinness declares that we 'stand at the dawn of the grand age of apologetics' (Guinness 2015, 15). Why? Because, academically speaking, never in history has the case for the existence of God and the truth of the Christian story been stronger than it stands right now.

Take Russell's own field with the hallowed halls of philosophers. A little over a century ago Nietzsche announced that God is dead in philosophy. Secular universities around the world were filled with naturalistic philosophers, and the case for God was thought to be abandoned. But in a relatively recent paper, the award winning atheist philosopher, Quentin Smith, bemoans the revolution in analytic philosophy sparked by Christians like Alvin Plantinga and Richard Swinburne (Plantinga 2019; Swinburne 2010). Since the late 1960s he traces the explosion of theistic philosophers in secular philosophy departments around the world, and admits their rigour of argumentation, as they revive old arguments and develop new ones, is the reason the case for God is on the rise. Smith concludes that God is not dead in academia, but is alive and well in the academic stronghold of philosophy (Smith 2001).

Or take the realm of scientific discovery. A century ago it was popularly believed that our universe was eternal, existing in a sort of steady state model. Bertrand Russell considered this simply as a brute fact (Russell 1964). One reason why a cosmic beginning was so strongly resisted by secular intellectuals like the British astrophysicist Fred Hoyle was, because, to admit that the universe had an absolute beginning allowed a divine foot in the door (Curtis 2012). It sounds too much like the claim of the ancient Hebrews, who went against every other major religious and cosmological account, when they wrote, 'In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth' (Genesis 1:1). But subsequent predictions, models and discoveries, from Einstein to Lemaitre to Hubble, eventually led to a scientific revolution around the middle of the last century. A new consensus began to emerge, arguing that our universe—time, space, matter, and energy—came into existence out of nothing at a finite point in the past. And this effect of the virgin birth of our universe, this contingency, requires an explanation (Craig 2008, 96–156). So too did the subsequent discovery of the highly improbable and exquisite fine-tuning of the original conditions of our universe to allow for intelligent life (Barnes 2008; Craig 2008, 157–204). This data is what leads many agnostic and atheistic scientists to at least tip the hat and admit that the universe 'appears' designed, or that our existence may even be a complex simulation (Moskowitz 2016). That we really are in the matrix, so to speak.

Or take what we know of our own nature through the social sciences. Meta studies of the past few decades of research show a strong correlation between intrinsic religiosity (what we might call religious devotion) and the various markers that measure wellbeing, especially in places where Christianity is culturally dominant (Spencer et al. 2016). In discussing this data on Sam Harris' podcast, the atheist economist, philosopher, and physicist, Robin Hanson, said, '*Religious people are*

just better off on pretty much all our standard metrics. They live longer, they earn more, their marriages stay longer, they have less crime. They're healthier. Everything goes better for religious people on average. That's a real puzzle if you think they're just all making a big mistake' (Hanson2018). The Christian story, it seems, along with Christian community and disciplines, just fit the contours of our soulishness in a way that leads to human flourishing. Given the climate for seeing Christianity through a negative social lens, then, and the particularly weightiness of the social sciences in people's decision making, case making from the social sciences in general has never been of higher importance to the task of Christian persuasion (Harrison 2017, 173).

Or take, finally, the gospels in the New Testament. A century ago the German school of liberal theology owned the New Testament field, and it was popularly believed that the gospel sources were largely legendary material, and not reliable. That thesis is now significantly weaker, due to a mountain of new data from the relevant fields supporting the eyewitness status of much of the testimony on the gospels (Bauckham 2006; McGrew 2017; Williams 2018). The people who told these stories had to have been there to know the fleshy details that permeate the accounts. And these witnesses appear to be of sound mind and honest character, and had a lot to lose by every meaningful measure if they falsely reported what they saw. Their willingness to suffer for their testimony, with no historical hint of anyone recanting, at the very least substantiates their genuine belief about what they saw. And the alternative hypotheses to explain things like the resurrection of Jesus just can't account for all of the reliably established historical facts (Licona 2010; Wright 2003).

Now these observations do not amount to proofs. None of the Christian evidences is of a kind that *proves* God's existence undeniably to every observer. God's chosen hiddenness, and our human finitude and fallenness, means that Christians should be the first the foster intellectual humility, and be somewhat comfortable with the epistemic fog of uncertainty. But what these evidences do achieve is to serve as serious clues, or pointers, that invite someone beyond mere nature and open them up to believe in something beyond (McGrath 2012, 93). The goal of Christian persuasion here is not to argue someone into belief, but to show the intellectual adequacy of the Christian story to explain all the available evidence, and the inadequacy of the secular alternatives to do the same (Packer 1958, 34).

Secular cartographers essentially annex our deepest intuitions and experiences (Smith 2014, 2), which means the more as educators we can help students reflect on them, the more we create space for God's solicitations. Because this is God's world, and reality is on our side, Christian educators should invite and create space for students' legitimate questions and doubts about the crazy things in the Christian story (Kimball 2016). We should even steel-man their objections, and name Christianity's fiercest opponents and the best arguments against what we believe. Why? Because in the face of intellectual doubts, the biblical prescription is investigation of the sources. Faith is not built on this air but facts. And so to foster a generation of genuine truth

seekers is to the do the work, albeit subversively, of Christian discipleship, as those on the side of truth ultimately listen to Jesus (John 18:37).

So we need to follow *relevance* with the *reasonableness* of the Christian story.

19.7   The Accent of the Christian Story

Third, and finally, Christian persuasion has to be done with the distinct accent of the Christian story. Since the medium is the message, there should be a beautiful marriage and harmony between the gospel and the one who bears it. Pragmatically, this is especially needed in Australia since McCrindle's research highlighted how Christian behaviour was the biggest barrier keeping Australians from seriously investigating Christianity (McCrindle 2018). How sad when one reflects upon how Jesus' intention would be that our love, and our Christian ethos of community and hospitality, would be the very thing that draws people towards Christ (John 13:35). Various lines of research have shown how when it comes to deciding what to believe, plausibility structures function communally (Chan 2018, 41–44). If you become part of a community that you aspire to be like, their beliefs are far more believable. And if some of the greatest symptoms of the secular wanderings are psycho-social in nature, what would it mean for secular refugees to find refuge in Christian community, where they can be loved through their depression, helped to overcome sources of anxiety, and set in a web of rich relationships to mitigate their loneliness? If tribalistic tendencies are tearing down our social and political discourse, what would it mean for people of the cross to model intellectual humility and conversation? It seems Christian institutions are uniquely placed with the social and spiritual resources endowed by God to meet the need of our cultural moment, if we live out in our educational spaces the kind of "one-another-ing" that the New Testament consistently commands.[4]

But beyond utility, the apostolic era treated tone as theological. Peter says we are to persuade with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15). Paul says that the right recipe for any answer is for it to be seasoned with the distinctively Christian flavour: *grace* (Colossians 4:6). How we speak is as much a reflection of our gospel as what we say, so if we are to frame God right in our fractured world, Christian truth must always be spoken with a Christian accent.

19.8   Conclusion

Confidence in the secular story's ability to deliver a promised land is waining. The inheritance of this prodigal culture, the soulishness of who we are, is ebbing away.

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[4]Cf. John 13:35; Romans 12:10, 16; 14:13; 15:5, 7, 14; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 4:2, 32; 5:19, 21; Colossians 3:13, 16; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:18; 5:11, 15; Hebrews 3:13; 10:24–25; James 5:16; 1 Peter 1:22; 4:8–10; 5:5, 14; 1 John 1:7; 3:11, 23; 4:7; 2 John 1:5.

And seculars are starting to grumble at an entirely immanent frame. The universities and colleges of our nation have been the stronghold of secularism, and a staging ground for the erosion of Christian faith and with it, the annexing of what it means to be human. But all of that can change. All of that must change. And we have the opportunity to map out a new future.

The question for our time is whether the Church and Christian institutions in Australia will be warmed again with logic on fire, and whether all Christians, and especially educators, will take up the task of Christian persuasion in our post-secular age: to demonstrate the relevance, reasonableness, and accent of the Christian story. On the outcome of that question, much depends.

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Chapter 20
Towards an Embodied Pedagogy in Educating for Creation Care

Graham Buxton, Johannes M. Luetz ⓘ, and Sally Shaw

Abstract Throughout the history of the Church, those who have devoted their attention to formulating a theology of the Christian faith have concentrated primarily—indeed almost exclusively—on the relationship between God and humanity, with scant attention paid to the place of the natural world in the economy of God. This oversight is remarkable in light of the biblical affirmation of the goodness of creation, and—with some heartening exceptions—its pervasiveness within Christendom today is alarming given the urgency to live more sustainably on Planet Earth. This chapter addresses the need for appropriate educational curricula and strategies designed to increase awareness of—and active participation in—creation care initiatives in order to successfully address the environmental challenges confronting God's good but groaning creation. Following a two-pronged rationale for creation care based on the scientific biophysical imperative and the biblical/theological mandate to value and care for the natural world, the authors offer a brief survey of a number of seminary syllabi that demonstrate important progress in educating for creation care. The

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final part of the chapter presents two practical features of an embodied pedagogical approach designed to assist in raising not only awareness but also much-needed action with regards to care for God's creation. The biblical authors used literary devices to tell God's story because they recognized that their usage was able to draw the readers [hearers] into the narrative through their senses, imagination, intuition and affective functions. Accordingly, this chapter proposes an arts-based pedagogy, utilizing ideas from theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar, and others, who employ theatrical metaphors and models to describe God's world and work. The discourse argues that drama, along with the arts, have the capacity to encourage Christians towards a more holistic awareness of creation. A second constructive feature is the incorporation of an embodied learning pedagogy that involves student participation in off-campus creation care projects in order to stimulate practical hands-on learning in which sensory experiences lead to greater depth and meaning in the educational context.

20.1 Sustainability and Education: Requisites, Challenges and Opportunities

This introductory section constitutes an essential component of this discussion and should not be misconceived as merely an 'introduction' to the 'real' paper. It is as much a part of the chapter as it leads up to it. Intentionally accommodating longer verbatim citations for support, this section is organized as follows: Sect. 20.1.1 will discuss environmental considerations and the scientific and biophysical imperative for humans to live more sustainably. Section 20.1.2 will discuss the compelling, complicated and contested nexus between sustainability, education and human behaviour. Section 20.1.3 will synthesize important implications for an embodied pedagogy in educating for so-called 'creation care', detail the intended research contribution and offer an overview of the remainder of the chapter.

20.1.1 Towards Environmental Sustainability: The Scientific and Biophysical Imperative

From a physical science perspective, there are arguably challenges facing humanity today that will be difficult to meaningfully confront in the absence of significant awareness raising and widespread education for sustainability (UNEP 2012; Leal Filho et al. 2020). This has been evidenced over the years by the recurrent call of concerned scientists who are advocating for more environmentally sustainable practices. For example,

> Twenty-five years ago, the Union of Concerned Scientists and more than 1700 independent scientists, including the majority of living Nobel laureates in the sciences, penned the 1992 "World Scientists' Warning to Humanity" … They proclaimed that fundamental changes were urgently needed to avoid the consequences our present course would bring. (Ripple et al. 2017, p. 1026; cf. Kendall 1997)

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of this call a re-assessment, this time supported by 15,364 scientist signatories from 184 countries, adjudged:

> humanity has failed to make sufficient progress in generally solving these foreseen environmental challenges, and alarmingly, most of them are getting far worse … we have unleashed a mass extinction event, the sixth in roughly 540 million years, wherein many current life forms could be annihilated or at least committed to extinction by the end of this century. (Ripple et al. 2017, p. 1026)

The above literature exemplifies the overall robust science-mandated rationale for more sustainable development, which in the literature is often linked to the well-being of future generations. The Brundtland Report (World Commission on Environment and Development [WCED] 1987) famously posited: 'Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. (pp. 16, 41) This proposition is now coming under mounting pressure as landmark scientific studies are confirming the urgent need for more environmentally sustainable practices (Hansen 2009; Lenton et al. 2019). In its most recent annual Global Peace Index, the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP 2019) warned that '[t]he effects of climate change pose a major challenge to peacefulness in the coming decade' (IEP 2019, p. 43). Other scientific assessments include the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA 2005), recurrent assessment reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (e.g., IPCC 2014, 2018), and the recent global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES 2019), which poignantly cautioned that worldwide '1,000,000 species [are] threatened with extinction' (UN 2019a).

On occasion scientists have even employed stark imagery to warn of the consequences of unmitigated climate change:

> 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. (cited in Luetz et al. 2018, p. 64)[1]

In summary, the scientific biophysical imperative for humanity to live more sustainably is both well established in the literature (Ripple et al. 2017; IPCC 2018) and comprehensively supported by a robust scientific consensus (Cook et al. 2013).

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[1] See Brunner et al. (2014) for a discussion on eschatology and 'reimagining the apocalypse' in the chapter entitled 'Restoring Eden: Ancient Theology in an Ecological Age' (pp. 117–141).

20.1.2 *Education and Sustainability: A Compelling, Complicated and Contested Relationship*

In response to the environmental crisis exposed above, contemporary scientific discourses incontrovertibly emphasize the manifold benefits of mainstreaming widespread education-for-sustainability (Howe 2009; UNEP 2012; Walid and Luetz 2018; Leal Filho et al. 2020). Multiple benefits are reflected in the literature, including in empirical research that calls for learning about sustainability from the so-called 'poor' (Luetz et al. 2019), in case study research on community gardening in an Australian Higher Education setting (Luetz and Beaumont 2019), or in field-based research in South Asia that recommends mainstreaming disaster risk education in schools (Luetz and Sultana 2019; cf. Luetz 2020). According to Allen (2019), a key aspect of education for sustainability is 'making sustainability a core or overarching theme in curriculum, research and organizational administration' (p. 5). Furthermore, Baumber et al. (2020) have advocated carbon neutral education as involving a double-edged emphasis on both 'reducing carbon footprint and expanding carbon brainprint' (p. 1). Importantly, the need for education-for-sustainability is also enshrined globally in the so-called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This sustainable development framework is an assemblage of 17 universal goals agreed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 for the year 2030. Having been quasi-universally adopted and ratified by 193 countries as part of Resolution 70/1, these goals reflect broad intergovernmental support. According to the UN (2019b), the SDGs

> are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice. (para. 1)

Significantly, according to the UN (2019c), achieving the SDGs hinges on Goal 4—Quality Education:

> Obtaining a quality education is the foundation to creating sustainable development. In addition to improving quality of life, access to inclusive education can help equip locals with the tools required to develop innovative solutions to the world's greatest problems. (para. 1)

In summary, with robust universal support, the case for education-for-sustainability could hardly be stronger (Leal Filho et al. 2020). And yet, the nexus between education, sustainability and human behaviour is simultaneously compelling and complicated.

In the literature, there are two predominant schools of thought, which are discussed at length in Luetz et al. (2020) and will not be recapitulated here except for the following synoptic overview. In brief, in respect of education-for-sustainability, there exists long-standing contestation between the natural sciences-informed and social sciences-informed paradigms exposed below (Fig. 20.1).

On the one hand, there are those who advocate 'enlightenment reasoning', where human behaviour is seen as largely predicated on the knowledge of scientific facts,

Natural Sciences-Informed Paradigm (Information impinges on human behaviour)	Social Sciences-Informed Paradigm (Context + meanings motivate human behaviour)
Advocated and supported by natural/physical sciences (contested by "soft sciences")	Advocated and supported by social sciences (contested by "hard sciences")
Based on naturalistic and modernist worldviews of the early twentieth century	Based on postmodernist worldviews of the late twentieth century
Supported by positivist paradigm (truth/knowledge objectively knowable)	Supported by interpretivist/constructivist paradigms (truth/knowledge subjectively constructed)
Positivism – "the belief that objective accounts of the world can be given, and that the function of science is to develop descriptions and explanations in the form of universal laws – that is, to develop nomothetic knowledge." (Punch 2014, p. 17)	*Interpretivism* – "concentrates on the meanings people bring to situations and behaviour, [which] are essential to understanding behaviour" (Punch 2014, p. 17) *Constructivism* – "realities are local, specific and constructed … socially and experientially based" (ibid)
Scientific knowledge is paramount and indispensable for behaviour change	Scientific knowledge is secondary or even irrelevant for behaviour change
Research methodology preference > Quantitative research (theory verification; deductive) (Bryman 2016)	*Research methodology preference* > Qualitative research (theory generation; inductive) (Bryman 2016)
Nomothetic view > "sees generalised knowledge, universal laws and deductive explanations, based mainly on probabilities derived from large samples, and standing outside the constraints of everyday life." (Punch 2014, p. 33)	*Ideographic view* > "sees nomothetic knowledge as insensitive to local, case-based meanings, and directs attention rather to the specifics or particular cases. It prefers to see knowledge as local and situated." (Punch 2014, p. 33)
Human behaviour is seen as 'rational-dispassionate'	Human behaviour is seen as 'irrational-passionate'
Human behaviour is predictable and predicated on knowledge of scientific facts, hard evidence and robust peer reviewed information (Boyes and Stanisstreet 2012)	Human behaviour is unpredictable and psychologically, socially, contextually and situationally constituted (Sapolsky 2017, Kelly and Barker 2016)
The relationship between knowledge and action is self-evident (digested in Boyes and Stanisstreet 2012, p. 1592)	"The relationship between knowledge and action is not robust" (cited in Boyes and Stanisstreet 2012, p. 1593)

Fig. 20.1 Contrasting paradigmatic perspectives on education and human behaviour change. Adapted from Luetz et al. 2020, p. 3; cf. Punch 2014; Bryman 2016; Boyes and Stanisstreet 2012; Kelly and Barker 2016; Sapolsky 2017)

hard evidence and robust peer-reviewed information (Kant 1784; Gay 1996; Boyes and Stanisstreet 2012; Cross 2013; Roberson 2016). The literature also refers to this paradigm as the 'information deficit' model of change, which is:

> based on the assumption that if people understood more about the environment and the actions that would cause, or avoid, environmental degradation, they would behave in a rational manner and adopt environmentally sympathetic practices. In other words, … there [exists] a relatively direct and positive relationship between a person's cognitive base about environmental problems and his or her willingness to act in such a way as to reduce these problems. (Boyes and Stanisstreet 2012, p. 1592)

Notwithstanding the seemingly self-evident logic inherent in the 'enlightenment reasoning' paradigm of education-for-behaviour-change, social scientists have long cautioned that teaching scientific facts alone is insufficient or even completely irrelevant for human behaviour change. The reason is that human behaviour[2] tends to be irrational and psychologically, socially and situationally influenced and constituted (Boyes and Stanisstreet 2012; Burton et al. 2015; Kelly and Barker 2016; Sapolsky 2017; Young 2017). Hence an alternative theory of change has been postulated, which is based on interpretivist/constructivist epistemology and 'postmodernist reasoning',

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[2]In his book entitled *Behave*, Sapolsky (2017) concludes his 'extraordinary survey of the science of human behaviour' (Poole 2017, para. 1) with the following synthesis: 'The biology of the behaviors that interest us is, in all cases, *multifactorial*' (Sapolsky 2017, p. 602; emphasis original), meaning that 'behaviors are constantly shaped by an array of subterranean forces' (ibid, p. 605).

wherein human behaviour is understood to be irrational, unpredictable and influenced by non-cognitive or extra-cognitive inputs (Sapolsky 2017; Kelly and Barker 2016). In short, this postulate contests and calls into question the various assumptions and claims of 'enlightenment reasoning' (Duignan 2019). Its central argument is that:

> the relationship between knowledge and action is not robust (Hungerford and Volk 1990; Posch 1993; Rajecki 1982), and it is acknowledged that there is what has come to be known as a 'gap' between cognition and action (Kollmus and Agyeman 2002). In part, this 'gap' is due to the fact that behaviour is influenced by a plethora of other factors, not just knowledge; other beliefs, social pressures, physical facilitators and inhibitors can synergistically influence whether or not a particular action is pursued (Corraliza and Berenguer 2000). (Boyes and Stanisstreet 2012, p. 1593)

In synthesis, in respect of education-for-human-behaviour-change, there exists a deep chasm between the epistemologies of the two paradigms discussed above. On the one hand, in the natural sciences-informed paradigm, human behaviour chiefly arises from knowledge of scientific facts, verifiable evidence and robust peer-reviewed information (Boyes and Stanisstreet 2012), and on the other hand, in the social sciences-informed paradigm, human behaviour is socially, situationally, psychologically and contextually constituted (Sapolsky 2017; Kelly and Barker 2016; Young 2017). These significant paradigmatic dissimilarities between the sciences and humanities arise from differences in disciplinarity (Chen and Luetz 2020) and have even been characterized as 'paradigm wars' (Punch 2014, p. 15). These distinctions hold important implications for the subject matter under scrutiny in this discourse. Relevant linkages will be explicated next.

20.1.3 Intended Contribution: Towards an Embodied Pedagogy

As the above discussion has shown, the nexus between education, sustainability and human behaviour is concurrently compelling, complex and contested. In this context, alternative pedagogies in educating for 'creation care' offer promising prospects. This is chiefly because creative pedagogies promise to transcend the paradigmatic limitations highlighted above. Fostering consilience, creative pedagogies may concurrently 'convert and convince "the head"*[and]* enthrall and enchant "the heart"' (Luetz et al. 2020, p. 10).

In a previous paper (Luetz et al. 2018), these authors expressly addressed self-professing Christians by arguing that this readership would seem to be particularly invested in the conservation of God's creation for reasons of epistemology. 'Stating their premise that according to Scripture the world was created 'by' God,[3] belongs

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[3] 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' (Genesis 1:1; Holy Bible, NIV).

'to' God[4] and speaks 'of' God,[5] for Believers there would thus arise an important implicational corollary to also protect, conserve and care for the Earth on that basis' (Luetz and Nunn 2020, p. 9):

> 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 … Or inversely, the knowledge of God can be preserved through the conservation of His creation. (Luetz et al. 2018, pp. 59, 69)

In consequence, the authors called for 'a more holistic Christian education agenda [and] a deeper and more theologically persuasive understanding of the importance of caring for God's creation' (Luetz et al. 2018, p. 69). Building on this previous research, and envisioning this telos of a more holistic Christian education agenda, the authors now turn to exploring creative pedagogies and embodied learning as a means to the above-stated end.

The authors will argue that tactile, immersive and experiential education experiences promise to transcend the limitations imposed by the above-highlighted paradigmatic dichotomies (Sect. 20.1.2). Given that modern curricula are still overwhelmingly aimed at teaching scientific facts (to the cerebrum) rather than instigating soulful experiences (within the human heart) makes alternative pedagogies a vitally important field of leading-edge research and scholarship. Furthermore, seeing that '[t]he human mind is a story processor, not a logic processor' (Haidt 2012, p. 328), this chapter exposits that experiential approaches are urgently needed at a time when education is progressively characterized by 'online' learning, and where a growing number of people engage with other people (and with nature!) almost exclusively via the interface of a 'screen'. This is certainly due in part to the rapid pace of global urbanization, which sees more and more people congregating in cities and living removed from any immediate and direct connection with nature, and therefore, any sense of dependence on (or appreciation of!) the Earth for sustenance (McKibben 2010).

Thankfully, 'pedagogy of place' in outdoor education (Wattchow and Brown 2011) is progressively gaining currency by emphasising that modern humans must rediscover their sense of 'wonder' for the beauty of nature via tactile, immersive and 'soulful' educational experiences with, and importantly, *in* nature.[6] The following

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[4] 'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.' (Psalm 24:1; Holy Bible, NIV).

[5] 'The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.' (Pslam 19:1; Holy Bible, NIV). '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.' (Romans 1:20; Holy Bible, NIV).

[6] Similarly, intercultural literacy can be most successfully fostered through immersive cross-cultural experiences *in* other cultures rather than through exclusive reliance on theoretical textbook self-study (Nelson and Luetz 2021).

recommendation is excerpted from the scientific literature and reflects the support of 15,364 scientist signatories from 184 countries who offer the following guidance in their proposed shortlist of 'effective steps humanity can take to transition to sustainability':

> increasing outdoor nature education for children, as well as the overall engagement of society in the appreciation of nature. (Ripple et al. 2017, §(i) p. 1028)

This recommendation is similarly highlighted in the influential encyclical *Laudatosi'* – (English: Praise Be to You) *On Care For Our Common Home*, promulgated by Pope Francis to a global readership in Italian, German, English, Spanish, French, Polish, Portuguese, Arabic, and Latin (Nelson and Luetz 2019, Vaticana 2015):

> 'The relationship between a good aesthetic education and the maintenance of a healthy environment cannot be overlooked'.[7] By learning to see and appreciate beauty, we learn to reject self-interested pragmatism. If someone has not learned to stop and admire something beautiful, we should not be surprised if he or she treats everything as an object to be used and abused without scruple. If we want to bring about deep change, we need to realize that certain mindsets really do influence our behaviour. Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature. Otherwise, the paradigm of consumerism will continue to advance, with the help of the media and the highly effective workings of the market. (Vaticana 2015; §215 p. 157)

In synthesis, this theoretical chapter extends previous scholarship (Howles et al. 2018; Luetz et al. 2018) by means of exploring opportunities for embodied approaches in educating for creation care. It does so with the intention of building support for creative and immersive pedagogies that cultivate wonder and awe for God's creation, which once upon a time was assessed and pronounced by the Creator as 'very good' (Gen 1:31).

The remainder of this chapter is organized as follows: Sect. 20.2 will sketch the biblical witness to the beauty and inherent worth of God's creation; Sect. 20.3 will explore the legacy and ambiguity of Church history; Sect. 20.4 will discuss the concept of embodied learning; Sect. 20.5 will unpack the concept of creative pedagogies; and Sect. 20.6 will offer an overview of selected creation care courses aligned with the chapter focus. Finally, Sect. 20.7 will revisit core themes and present a concise synthesis of issues, questions and opportunities.

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[7] *Message for the World Day of Peace*, 1 January 1990 (Vaticana 1990, para. 14).

20.2 The Biblical Witness: Ode to Creational Physicality and Sensuality

Throughout the history of the Church, those who have devoted their attention to formulating a theology of the Christian faith, have concentrated primarily—indeed almost exclusively—on the relationship between God and humanity, with scant attention paid to the place of the natural world in the economy of God (see, for example, Santmire 1985). Such an exclusion is curious, if not myopic, since the biblical record offers a rich tapestry of the manifestation, goodness and glory of the natural world.

Many examples could be given here. Psalm 104 presents us with a picture of God delighting in his creation (culminating in verse 31: 'May the Lord rejoice in his works'), and in Psalm 148 we see the converse—all creation joins in worshipping God. Contrary to the more customary reading of the text, Richard Bauckham interprets the Genesis 1 account of creation as an 'ecological' rather than a 'dominion' text: in God's good creation other creatures find their own ecological 'living space' under human beings' benevolent care, delegated to them by God. The dominion granted by God 'presupposes that humans bear the divine image, so that God can authorize them to use their superior power in a way that reflects God's own rule over his creation' (Bauckham 2010, p. 18). Throughout his prolific writings on ecotheology, Norman Habel challenges his readers to hear the cries of creation in both Old and New Testaments. In his interpretation of Job 38–39, for example, he argues that the majesty and mysteries of the wild portrayed in those chapters 'helps humans to recognise their place in this planet and to discern the wonders of its ecosystems' (Habel 2009, p. 75).

In the New Testament gospel records, we see Jesus at home in creation, affirming it and setting much of his teaching within the context of the natural world. And turning water into wine is certainly a declaration of the goodness of creation! God has made all things well, blessing his creation and inviting humanity to participate with gratitude in all that he has made. It is precisely because he came to understand Christianity as the only reasonable explanation for the existence of pleasure in the world—'We should thank God for beer and Burgundy by not drinking too much of them'!—that the great English writer G K Chesterton came to faith.

And taking an eschatological perspective, Elaine Wainwright reminds us that the promise of a restored humanity in Isaiah 35:5–6 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). John's vision of the new heaven and new earth in Revelation unveils no ghostly super-spiritual dwelling place—no 'earth-despising gnosticism'[8]—but heaven descending to earth in a new order of physicality and sensuality.

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[8]See, on Revelation 21–22, Reid (2000) in Habel (2009).

20.3   Church History: Ambiguity, Anthropocentrism and Theanthropocentrism

Certainly, at different stages in the history of the Church, Christian thought has affirmed what the poet Gerard Manly Hopkins has memorably described as 'a world charged with the grandeur of God'. However, as Santmire so admirably develops in his seminal volume *The Travail of Nature*, it is more appropriate to speak of 'the ambiguous ecological promise of Christian theology' (Santmire 1985, p. 9). As a theological construct, nature—by which he means 'the earth', ecology, environment, cosmos—'has been in travail throughout most of Western history' (Santmire 1985, p. 11). It is impossible to do justice to the sweep of Christian thought with regard to this observation in a few paragraphs, but a few pointers will underscore the ambiguity to which Santmire refers.

In his major work *Adversus Haereses,* the outstanding second century church father Irenaeus contested Gnosticism's rejection of the created world as inherently evil, the creation of Demiurge, an evil demi-god. Irenaeus responded by developing his theology of Christ as the Incarnate Word, whose vocation was to unite all things (*ta panta*) under the Creator God, whose 'wisdom [is shown] in His having made created things parts of one harmonious and consistent whole' (Irenaeus 2014, 4.38.3). Regrettably, as Santmire shows, his ecological vision of God's history with creation was unable to generate a deep commitment to nature in theological thought in the centuries that immediately followed: the theology of nature in the early Middle Ages was characterized for the most part by the conceptual ambiguity of a world-affirming God of goodness and a world-transcending, self-sufficient God (Santmire 1985, p. 76). The monasticism of St Benedict and the Celtic monks in the early medieval period certainly opened up a new rapport with nature, a celebration of nature that flowered at a later period with Francis of Assisi, now revered as the patron saint of ecologists, and Bonaventure from within the Franciscan order, founded by St Francis in 1209.

However, the Franciscan promise was short-lived. From the late Middle Ages onwards the place of humanity in God's saving history became the critical focus in theology, especially during the Reformation era. So, for example, nature for Luther was 'a backdrop or, better, an existential springboard for grace' (Santmire 1985, p. 125). However, this dominant soteriological theanthropocentrism[9] was at the same time grounded in a profound recognition of God's created world: 'God's entire divine nature is wholly and entirely in all creatures, more deeply, more inwardly, more present than the creature is to itself' (Luther 1959, p. 60). And Calvin could write that 'this skilful ordering of the universe is for us a sort of mirror in which we can contemplate God, who is the otherwise invisible' (Calvin 1960, I.5.1, i.52–53). Nature was certainly not neglected by the reformers, but it tended to be relegated to

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[9]In *theanthropocentrism* everything revolves around God and humanity: nature is merely the backdrop to salvation history; in its extreme evangelical form, *theanthropocentric* concern for the environment is justified on the grounds that caring for creation witnesses to the glory of God, so leading others to Christ. For more discussion, see Young (1994) and Luetz and Leo (2021).

theatrum gloriae Dei in their primary theology of grace. And in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the rise of industrialization and the scientific era, and the ascendancy of 'enlightenment reasoning' (as discussed earlier in this chapter) inserted a wedge between grace and nature, so that the natural world was increasingly seen in utilitarian perspective, rather than being valued *for its own sake.*

Turning to more recent times, Karl Barth, the influential twentieth-century theologian, has similarly been criticized for viewing the natural world in the anthropocentric terms, as purely instrumental, 'merely the temporal setting for the really real' (Santmire 1985, p. 152), which is the drama between God and *humanity.* And yet he acknowledges that humanity must remain 'loyal to the earth', otherwise 'we shall never truly understand him' (Barth 1960, p. 4). And in an interesting observation Thompson notes Barth's sustained criticism of anthropocentrism, a perspective that overlaps with the concerns of ecotheologians, whose resistance to the 'humanizing of nature' resonates with Barth's opposition to 'mastering the text' of scripture (Thompson 2010, p. 194).

Another great twentieth-century Protestant theologian, Jürgen Moltmann, was profoundly impacted by a growing awareness throughout the 1970s and beyond about humanity's exploitation of nature. This fuelled his determination to present a doctrine of creation that was also shaped by *anthropological* considerations. For Moltmann, the contemporary environmental crisis is not just an environmental crisis per se but a crisis in human beings themselves. It is not just an ecological crisis, but more fundamentally a *crisis of domination* that has to do with the total orientation of human beings towards the life system on which they depend. What Moltmann achieved in his seminal volume *God in Creation*, and other subsequent writings, is to fire a comprehensive warning shot across the bows of evangelicalism in an attempt to correct a deficient theology that exalts humanity as the ultimate crown of God's creation *at the expense and to the neglect of non-human creation.* Bauckham follows Moltmann in his endorsement of the image of 'a community of creation' as the most helpful way to express the interconnectedness that all creatures, including human beings, share with each other within the divine community of the triune God (Bauckham 2010).[10]

In an earlier volume, the authors of this chapter noted that Christianity's weakness over the last century has been not only its unwillingness to speak prophetically into secular humanism's hubristic exploitation of nature, but also its slowness in elucidating and championing the Bible's ecological wisdom grounded in a carefully-articulated and informed biblical hermeneutic (Luetz et al. 2018). The Catholic Church and Eastern orthodoxy have been far more proactive than Protestant evangelicalism in affirming the biblical affirmation of the goodness of creation. However, it is heartening to see an increasing number of texts produced from within the evangelical community, as well as from a wide range of other Christian traditions, addressing the themes of creation care, ecological hermeneutics and environmental ethics (e.g., Edwards 2001; Habel 2009; Bauckham 2010; Horrell 2010; Toly and Block 2010; Snyder and Scandrett 2011; Brunner et al. 2014; Buxton and Habel 2016;

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[10]Significantly, Bauckham sub-titles his text *Rediscovering the Community of Creation.*

Bell and White 2016; Luetz and Leo 2021; Luetz and Nunn 2021). Some of these texts are particularly appropriate as resources in creation care education curricula, along with a range of other pedagogical strategies designed to assist in raising not only awareness but also much-needed action in tackling many of the environmental challenges confronting God's good but groaning creation.

20.4 Embodied Learning

The progressive educators John Dewey and Paolo Freire are well known in the field of adult education. Dewey's Theory of Experiential Learning and Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed were recognized to be radical as they challenged the prevailing orthodoxy of the day, as well as bringing about transformation which resulted in sustained change in their students (Fenwick 2003, p. 35).[11] Their ideas have been developed and expanded by numerous educationists and are used in a variety of different ways. Experiential and transformational learning continues to evolve with educationalists, such as Mezirow and Kolb, recognising the importance of the emotions, for 'humans react and learn through the lens of emotional laden experiences (Shuck et al. 2007, p. 108)'. However, some educationists contend that experimental learning has also developed some unfortunate orthodoxies. These, Fenwick argues, 'stem partly from central splitting of body and the mind … as the body in some respects has been banished from [adult] learning' (Fenwick 2003, p. 2). Abram also urges educationalists move away from 'the powerful influence of science that has encouraged our education systems to assume that what we experience with our senses [and our bodies] is somehow less real than that which can be quantified and measured' (Brien 1996, p. 3).

In light of this, a number of educationists have reacted to this Cartesian bifurcation and 'reclaimed' the concept embodied learning. This type of learning is not a new idea as it is found in the ancient Hebrews, the early church, indigenous societies and centuries later with theo-dramatists. Embodied learning was essential in these early societies where '[i]n the absence of writing, human utterance, songs, stories, or spontaneous sounds, were inseparable from the exhaled breath' (Brien 1996, p. 2). In addition, the Scriptures, early Christian writings and later Medieval European manuscripts were penned by authors who used a variety of literary devices: story, poetry, song, images as well as theatrical strategies, i.e. performances. They used descriptive writing with rich images to tell God's story. This happened because they recognized that their usage was able to draw the readers [hearers] into the narrative through their senses, imagination, intuition and affective functions. These were not primitive but sophisticated and holistic methods of communication and learning

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[11]Freire (n.d) says *conscientization* is the process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality through reflection and action. Freire says that we all acquire social myths which have a dominant tendency, and so learning is a critical process which depends upon uncovering real problems and actual needs.

(Foley in Mackay 2007, p. 1). No wonder Jesus (and the Bible) told so many stories and parables, seeing that '[t]he human mind is a story processor, not a logic processor' (Haidt 2012, p. 328).

Embodied learning is holistic as it requires learners to learn from, and with, the body, which includes their personality (the senses, thoughts, intellect, and emotions), as well as accumulated personal, social, cultural, spiritual and environmental knowledge (Stolz 2015, p. 477).[12] Thus, the body is recognized to be a tool of rich knowledge construction as well as being a knowledge carrier. (Smyrnaiou et al. n.d., p. 2). These ideas are confirmed by Merleau-Pony who says the notion of learning is to 'relearn' the way we perceive our experiences, for 'we are aware of our existence not just through objective rational thoughts but through sensory experience: spatial awareness, touch and tactile perception of space' (Smyrnaiou et al. n.d., p. 43).[13] Abram holds a similar view: 'the innermost essence of the self [soul], is not independent of the body. On the contrary, everything we think or do and relate to has its origins in the body' (Brien 1996, p. 2). Embodiment, of course, is also found in all elements of the theatrical.

Moreover, and given Balthasar's interest in theatre, he uses several theatrical terms in his theological writings. One example is *disponibility* (availability, readiness, openness and more), which he sees as 'a condition enabling the actor to convincingly embody the (poetic) reality of the role, to substantiate its truth. Without developing disponibility, actors [Christians] abandon their mission and left doomed to inauthentic performance' (Balthasar in Vander Lugt 2016, p. 33).

20.5   Creative Pedagogies

Theology and theatre have not always been amiable partners, as the words theatrical, drama and performance have carried, especially with the Reformation, negative connotations (Vander Lugt and Hart 2014, p. 7). However, by the twentieth century its partnership had been revised by Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar. His theodrama and his theological aesthetics are recognized to have been influenced by the praxis of the early church, early theologians, as well as the arts, literature and philosophy (Quash 2005, p. 110; Edgar 2003, p. 460).[14,15] Despite its complexity,

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[12]Stolz (2015) explains that this idea is contrary to the Cartesian division of the mind and body (p. 477).

[13]They suggest 'this must be an on-going process because as beings-in-the-world we are in an open dialogue with the environment we inhabit'.

[14]Balthasar's work was written as a trilogy: one part being his *Theo-aesthetics*, which he titled '*The Glory of the Lord* (the forms of beauty and perception); which gave birth to the second part, his *Theodrama* (the forms of human action as depicted and interpreted in history and in literature); and then later the third part, his *Theo-Logic* (the forms of philosophical insights)' (Quash 2005).

[15]'Balthasar's entire theological project was an attempt to answer Nietzsche, who stated that because power was the fundamental dynamic in history, truth is ugly, and goodness requires lying. Instead, going back to the Church Fathers, he argued that a proper sacramental ontology make grace, not

his theodrama was designed to assist Christians to re-discover a faith that is vibrant and in touch with lived Christian life. He also aimed to help Christians move away from a life that was preoccupied with one's inner self that so often passes itself off as 'spirituality' to a life that is wholeheartedly communal and corporate instead individualistic. Thus, he saw theodrama as a '*live performance* in solidarity with others'. Theodrama is therefore central to Christ's mission to the world accomplished through the church (Quash 2004, p. 144). Even though he did not endorse the theatrical concept of improvisational drama, it could be implied, for he observes that we are inherently familiar with drama 'from the complications, tensions, catastrophes, and reconciliations which characterize our lives as individuals and interaction with others'. (Balthasar, TD, 1, 17). 'Theodrama is not a play we learn before we get involved in the action … we learn it *in action*, as we go along'. (Begbie 2002, 98).

From the time of the early church, theologians have embraced the theatrical metaphor.

As a result, 'improvisation has emerged by way of expressing the radically creative and dialogical aspects of the experience of church mission as it seeks to deal with the problems of this age' (Potter 2013, p. 137). This can be seen in the words of Spolin, who writes 'improvisation is a carefully developed theatrical discernment—that is the actor's ability to become present to their surroundings and, without hesitation, act in creative, free response to what they are experiencing' (Spolin in Potter 2013, p. 137). Wells agrees that the 'spontaneity' element of improvisation can enable the players to 're-form into themselves' without 'a fixed script' to guide them. Thus, they act in the moment without fear, in confidence of the inclusion in Christ and the improvised drama of his life, death and resurrection (Wells 2004, p. 160).[16]

Improvisational drama also embraces the embodied, the affective and the imagination: as mentioned above, these aspects are found in both the Old and New Testaments, as well as in the early church. Christian writers and theologians over the centuries have reacted to an almost exclusive rational approach to understanding Scripture, and as a result challenged it through their literary work (McGrath 2010, p. 46). CS Lewis' richly imaginative narratives helped reorient Christians to understand the biblical story in fresh and new ways, in contrast to 'Scripture being seen as a theological outline with proof texts attached' (Ryken 1992, p. 15). George MacDonald suggests that Christians need to re-discover 'the complex symbolism that transforms the language of religious experience from easy platitude and comfortable doctrine to ambiguity and tension, to fear and trembling' (Dearborn 2006, p. 34). For the Scriptures reveal through their narratives that literary devices 'incarnate ideas in the form of poetic images, stories of characters in action, and situations in which readers can imaginatively participate' (Ryken 1992, p. 15).[17] Balthasar concurs: if theology

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power, the central reality of history. This is why his theology is basically an aesthetic theology' (Edgar 2003).

[16]Those performing improvisation, in contrast to a theatrical piece, 'do not have "parts" in the drama with "lines" prepared and learnt by heart' (Wells 2004, p. 160).

[17]Ryken highlights this well-known psychological discovery that the human brain assimilates truth in two distinct ways: rational thinking tends to activate the left side of the brain, whereas imaginative the right side.

loses 'its inherent spirituality, and with it its inherent poetry and beauty [it] loses its ability to convince, as well as its deep connection to God's creation' (Balthasar in Viladesau 1999, p. 12).

Balthasar's theological work also included theoaesthetics and theo-logic. His theological aesthetics emerged, in part, as a reaction to the dry, rational German theology of his day. In response he emphasized the need for Christians to express wonder, to imagine, to explore desire and respond to God's beauty in the primacy of Jesus Christ but also in all he has created (Vander Lugt 2016, p. 13)[18] He argued also that Christians in the twentieth century had lost a sense of wonder and thus could no longer see 'the connection between "the good, the true and the beautiful", for '[w]ithout beauty, the good is no longer attractive, so we are not motivated to pursue it' (Barrett 2009, p. 11).[19] For Balthasar these qualities are also manifested in creation and salvation (Balthasar, in Nichols 2011, p. 8).[20] And he argued that 'humanity must resist the temptation to corrupt the beauty of God imbued in creation. For there is a temptation for humans to see beauty as an attribute individualistically possessed and controlled' (Fraher 2008, p. 10). This he suggests has resulted in a loss of primal wonder and a lack of understanding and hence care for the natural world (Quash 2005, p. 108).[21]

Thus, when theodrama and theological aesthetics, and their derivatives, are incorporated into a holistic and creative pedagogy on the topic of care for creation, they are able to 'facilitate the adult realizing, and expressing that which is within and waiting to be articulated', as well as challenging their pre-suppositions in order to assist them to discover new things (Simpson 2006). This has always been the case but is even more urgent in light of our current environmental crisis. Christians must therefore be encouraged to grasp the biblical teachings that care for God's creation is an innate part of being made in God's image. As Ayres writes, '[f]or when we engage students on an emotional, embodied and relational level, we strengthen the possibility that deep and intimate learning can happen' … one that encourages 'ecological literacy and the commitments it cultivates' (Ayres 2014, p. 107).

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[18]CS Lewis who observed, 'we do not merely want to see God's glory [radiance] but to "pass into it, to receive it ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it"' (Vander Lugt 2016, p. 13).

[19]Balthasar contends that 'modern theologians have trivialized beauty, reducing it to an alluring but dangerous distraction from devotion to God' (Aiden 2011, p. 8).

[20]Balthasar writes, for they 'serve as the structure that is needed if [human beings] are to perceive and respond to Christ's death and resurrection, which brings creation to completion' (Nichols 2011, p. 8).

[21]Balthasar' explains that Balthasar's work entitled *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, explains the perception of God's self-manifestation ('the beautiful') can be linked to the ethics of creation care (Quash 2005, p. 108).

20.6 Experiential Environmental Education: Universities, Seminaries and Churches

Today a growing number of international theological seminaries and bible colleges infuse care of the earth into aspects of theological education. For many, their overall goal is for their students 'to see that creation care is not an "issue" the church has the option to take up or not. Caring for creation goes to the heart of our human vocation announced in Genesis 2—namely, to till and "keep" the garden of creation'(ICSD 2016, p. 25). Many focus their courses on the role of humanity within God's creation and the neglect of creation care with respect to present-day ecological issues.[22] These courses are mainly delivered through traditional teaching methods: lectures, group discussions, and electronic or visual media, with the students being required to read a variety of materials and complete assignments.

Some, though, use a mixture of traditional pedagogy and an experiential approach, the latter approach as noted above being the work of John Dewey, Paolo Freire and others. Examples of the few available experiential courses include the following:

(1) The Chicago Lutheran School of Theology (2019) offers the experience of spending time in a remote retreat centre in the Glacier Peak Wilderness of Washington. This course draws on the fields of liturgical studies, ecotheology, and education; practising a cycle of daily prayer; and spending considerable time outdoors (Chicago Lutheran School of Theology 2019).

(2) The Saint Paul School of Theology (2019) offers a Theology of Growing and Eating course. In addition to using traditional teaching methods, it provides a variety of practical projects such as growing vegetables and preparing dishes from them to share with other students and then to share their insights with their church congregations (Saint Paul School of Theology 2019).

(3) The John Ray Institute (n.d.) in the UK offers a Christian Rural & Environmental Studies course, whose uniqueness lies in its innovative approach combining academic expertise with the practical experience of the Christian conservation organization A Rocha UK. Their focus is on the practical side of conservation, sustainable farming practices, ways to mitigate climate change as well as assisting developing countries with water, farming and wildlife projects (John Ray Institute, n.d.; A Rocha UK, n.d.). All these courses encourage students to reflect (and complete assignments) on what they have learnt, how creation can be sustained, how these courses have impacted their own lives and in what ways students can share their insights with others.

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[22]The Report on Faith and Ecology Courses in North American Seminaries, compiled by the Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development (ICSD 2016), 'indicates that there are more than 190 courses on faith and ecology at 58 institutions' (p. 3) in the USA and Canada. Curricula feature such aspects as biblical reasons for care of creation, historical reasons for its lack, the ethics of western consumerist lifestyle, climate change, inequality, growing and eating organic food, among others.

(4) Projects associated with the organization A Rocha International (n.d.) use what could be likened to a hands-on pedagogy. Their projects occur in different countries, with some in rural settings and others in urban ones, but all involve caring for God's creation in practical ways. Harris says, '[w]hen work in ecology is approached with the goal of serving God by understanding and caring for his creation, it becomes an act of worship and obedience, a way to witness to his inbreaking kingdom' (Harris in Bartholomew and Goheen 2007, p. 204). A Rocha's fieldwork has also become an opportunity for visitors both to witness the glory of God revealed through creation, and to learn about the biblical reasons for care through discussions with those involved (Harris in Bartholomew and Goheen 2007, p. 204).

(5) The Candler School of Theology (2019) at Emory University in the USA has devised an eco-theological and creation care course that uses an embodied learning approach involving traditional pedagogy mixed with so-called 'on the ground learning'. Ayres describes it as 'an embodied pedagogy of engagement, a teaching practice that engages the senses, emotions, and commitments beyond what is possible in more formal discussion in the seminary classroom'. (Fenwick 2003, p. 35). Theology students cultivate an ecological literacy through a direct experience with the natural world, during which they are encouraged to have times of silent contemplation and engage in deep conversations with the other students regarding their experience (Ayres 2014, p. 205). This underlines Wendell Berry's observation, namely that 'our bodies are part of the Creation, and they involve us in all the issues of mystery' (Berry in Ayres 2014, p. 210).

(6) In Australia the Catholic, Uniting, and Anglican churches run workshops and retreats on faith and ecology, often with a focus on spending time in the bush reflecting on God's creation (Uniting Church Faith and Ecology; Catholic Earthcare). [However, it appears few Australian theological colleges run ecotheology courses, and those that offer them do not use creative or embodied pedagogical approaches.]

(7) Regent College in Canada offers a course entitled Technology, Wilderness, and Creation that uses the creative arts to encourage people to engage in caring for the environment (Regent College, n.d.). Its pedagogy is almost entirely experiential and includes the use of the arts. The participants are immersed in rich learning experiences, with a strong emphasis on community work (as demonstrated in the ecological web of connection).[23] It takes students on an 8-day voyage in an open rowing/sailing boat as an occasion for study and reflection on their relationship to God and creation. During this journey, they explore practically, within a Christian theology framework, selected biological, ecological, psychological, aesthetic, spiritual and economic aspects of what, why, and how humans need to care for God's creation. Residing on Galiano Island, they prepare and eat locally grown food and discuss society's addiction to consumerism, and the drastic arising effect it has on the environment. There is an emphasis on

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[23]The founders Loren and Mary-Rose Wilkinson are well known Canadian theologians and educators in the field of ecology and food.

the goodness of God's creation, along with times of worship and sharing the Eucharist. Loren Wilkinson's beautifully and skilfully made film Making Peace with Creation is an excellent teaching tool and elaborates on the topics of the course (Wilkinson 2016). Student testimonies demonstrate a biblical ecological conversion experience akin to 'conversion' experiences advocated in other literature (Howles et al. 2018; Vaticana 2015; cf. Regent College, n.d.).

(8) Other relatively recent educational schemes are occurring in churches and include A Rocha UK's Eco-Churches and Australian-based Five Leaf EcoAwards. These two schemes are similar in that they encourage, assist, inspire and reward churches of different denominations and religious organizations for undertaking environmental action.[24] These awards are non-competitive, with churches completing tasks from a list of flexible criteria to earn each certificate.[25] The success of these schemes demonstrates a growing desire for church congregations to practically take up God's call to care for one's neighbour *and* God's creation. Both schemes report testimonies of positive change within their congregations. However, it is hard to find information on the long-term benefits of these and the more traditional type of courses and whether the initial changes have been sustained.

20.7   Concluding Synthesis: Issues, Questions and Opportunities

As the world collaborates to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), holistic education-for-sustainability is fast becoming a critical emergent priority (White 2008; Fetzer and Aaron 2010; Boyes and Stanisstreet 2012; Luetz and Walid 2019; UN 2019a, b, c; Leal Filho et al. 2020).

This discourse first expounded the scientific and biophysical imperative for sustainability (Sect. 20.1.1) and then critically reflected on the limitations of the so-called 'enlightenment paradigm', which puts too much stock in reason, rationality and cognition and too little faith in pedagogical practices that touch the human head, heart *and* soul (Sect. 20.1.2). This chapter has sought to extend previous research (Howles et al. 2018; Luetz et al. 2018) by means of exploring embodied pedagogies that offer opportunities for tactile, immersive, creative and 'soulful' educational experiences (Sect. 20.1.3). Section 20.2 noted the biblical witness to the beauty and inherent worth of God's creation. This witness may be summarized as follows: 'A masterful artist

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[24] Also available in Australia is Uniting Earth web which has many resources available for church services.

[25] Eco-churches UK offers three awards: bronze, silver and gold, whereas the Five Leaf Eco scheme offers six different awards. In 2018, over 1000 churches of different denominations were involved. Responses to these awards reveal a diversity of large and small structural and congregational changes, i.e. creating more eco-friendly buildings, community gardens, educating communities on sustainability and advocating with decision-makers to consider the poor and the environment. In addition, contemporary worship/liturgy has been composed, e.g. songs written by A Rocha USA (The Small Seed) and Australia (Seasons of Creation). These are used by different denominations.

created the natural creation all around us, and it is stunningly beautiful, infinitely complex, and amazingly valuable' (Merrit 2010, p. 34). In light of the ambiguity of Church history (Sect. 20.3), embodied learning (Sect. 20.4) and creative pedagogies (Sect. 20.5) offer promising prospects, which universities, colleges, seminaries and churches are increasingly grappling with all over the world (Sect. 20.6). A synthesis of contemporary creation care course offerings suggests that embodied pedagogies are in a relatively early stage of development and that there is some reticence at Christian education institutions to assimilate them more readily. This continued reliance on curricula that are steeped in 'enlightenment reasoning' (teaching scientific facts to the cerebrum to the neglect of instigating positive emotional experiences in the human soul) may still influence protestant communities of faith today:

> we have the remarkable gift of encountering God through the written Word, but could it be that the Reformation emphasis on *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone) has desensitized us to God's other book, one that has spoken truthfully for millennia? [Although the] Christian community has long held that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are 'inspired' (*theopneustos*, 2 Tim. 3:16) by God and the basis for faithful reflection in the church … Christian writers have maintained that Creation can be read as a text about God and that God has presented us with 'two books' – Scripture *and* the natural world. (Brunner et al. 2014, p. 23)

This argument is underscored by Merrit (2010), who compares the sanctity of creation to the sanctity of Scripture:

> There are two forms of divine revelation: the special revelation in Scripture that is able to lead us to salvation and the general revelation we receive through nature. Both are from God … So when we destroy creation, which is God's revelation, it's similar to tearing a page out of the Bible. (p. 2)

In keeping with this argument, if destroying creation is akin to tearing a page out of the Bible, what should it be called when—as the United Nations recently warned— '1,000,000 species [are now] threatened with extinction'? (UN 2019a) And what emotions may be invoked in the Master Artist who imagined and created it into being—and who took stock of it by declaring it 'very good'? (Gen 1:31). Brunner et al. (2014) speculate:

> God is the Artist of all that is, in heaven and on earth: 'The heavens are telling the glory of God; / and the firmament proclaims his handiwork' (Ps. 19:1). As human greed and domination slash that handiwork, the Artist weeps. (p. 28)

God is certainly not alone in grieving this loss—'the whole creation groans and travails in pain together' (Romans 8:22, KJV). This includes scientists who report having 'broken down about the losses unfolding, whether it's the bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef, the fire ravaged forests of Tasmania, the fish deaths in the Murray, or more localized impacts'. (Law 2019, para. 18).

Could it be that 'amidst the world's sixth mass extinction, the worst since the time of the dinosaurs' (Law 2019, para. 3), education needs to confront new perils

with new pedagogies? Could it be that in a post-fact and post-truth era 'enlightenment reasoning' is inept at promoting and sustaining the needed sea change towards more environmentally sustainable human behaviours? Are scientific facts a thing of the past, especially when 'facts' are nowadays seemingly countered by 'alternative facts'? How can Christian education institutions concurrently 'enlighten' the mind *and* the heart? And how can embodied pedagogies more effectively heighten tactile, immersive and creative educational experiences? Can 'soulful' learning be more effectively integrated into contemporary curricula?

While these and other related questions cannot be easily answered, the authors contend that they are worthy of further reflection, rumination and research. To close, the authors want to enhearten the reader to entreat humans everywhere to prioritize listening *to* and learning *from* and *within* creation as opposed to learning *about* it from *without*:

> Paul of the Cross (1694–1775), founder of the Passionists, penned these thoughts: 'When you are walking alone, listen to the sermon preached to you by the flowers, the trees, the shrubs, the sky, and the whole world. Notice how they preach to you a sermon full of love, of praise of God, and how they invite you to glorify the sublimity of that sovereign Artist who has given them being.' (Brunner et al. 2014, pp. 24–25; citing James 1997, p. 495)

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Chapter 21
Priceless Perspectives: Equipping Students to Think Critically About the Abortion Discourse

Julie Robinson, Nicole Stirling, and Sharon Barendse

Abstract The question of what constitutes a well-rounded Christian education invokes energetic discussion and diversity of opinions. What is often lacking is an analysis of how students are equipped to navigate what is arguably the greatest blessing or challenge they will ever face—pregnancy. Recent surveys of Australian students in Grades 10–12 showed around half are sexually active and, therefore, face a real risk of unintended pregnancy. At the same time, Australia has some of the most liberal abortion laws in the world. The topics of pregnancy, parenting and abortion are not generally included in the Christian studies curriculum, but societal messages in mainstream media are relentless. Most students will leave Christian schools without having had the opportunity to think deeply and critically about the issues of pregnancy and abortion. This chapter presents a mixed-method case study outlining the inception, development, implementation and outcomes of a youth education program titled *Perspectives*, which engages students in respectful, in-depth conversations about these issues. This program has been developed by a local Brisbane pregnancy support centre, Priceless House (Priceless Life Ltd.). *Perspectives* has been piloted and run for 5 years in two Christian co-educational schools with Grade 10–12 students.

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21.1   Introduction

The *6th National Survey of Australian Secondary Students and Sexual Health*, conducted in 2018, reported around half of the respondent Grade 10–12 students are sexually active (Fisher et al. 2019), and therefore face a very real risk of unintended pregnancy. At the same time, Australia has some of the most liberal abortion laws in the world (Cardwell 2019; Children by Choice 2019a; Dick 2019). Apart from science subjects, the topics of pregnancy, parenting and abortion are not generally included in Christian studies curriculum, yet societal messages that surround students in mainstream music and media are relentless (Evers et al. 2013; Shaw 2010; Smith et al. 2011; Wright and Rubin 2017). Most students will leave Christian schools and colleges without having had the opportunity to think deeply and critically about the issues of pregnancy and abortion (Rasmussen 2015).

This case study critically analyses the development, theoretical framework, implementation and progress of a 90-min youth education program entitled *Perspectives.* This program was developed by a Brisbane (Queensland) pregnancy support centre, Priceless House (Priceless Life Ltd.), whose volunteers have been working with women and their families facing unplanned or challenging pregnancies for almost 25 years. *Perspectives* aims to equip students with the understanding that facing an unexpected or challenging pregnancy is often a complex matter, and careful consideration of all options is necessary in order to make an informed decision. The program has been piloted and run for 5 years in two independent Christian schools in Brisbane with both female and male Grade 10–12 students. Elements of evidence-based learning can be viewed in the program through establishing students' existing knowledge and providing co-operative learning experiences (Clark et al. 2011; Pashler et al. 2009). This chapter argues that *Perspectives* offers a holistic educational program that fills the current gap in the Christian and wider Australian educational curriculum which is a legitimate and necessary part of students' high school education in the wake of Australian postmodern society.

21.2   A Review of Literature on Sex and Pregnancy Education Programs in Australian Schools

While research regarding Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in high schools has been conducted for many years, there has recently been a noticeable increase in scholarly interest. National surveys of the sexual behaviour and attitudes of secondary school students have been conducted every 5 to 6 years, since 1992 (Smith et al. 2009; Richters 2015). The *6th National Survey of Secondary Students and Sexual Health* surveyed 6327 students from every Australian state and territory from government, independent and Catholic schools (Fisher et al. 2019). Participating students enrolled in Grades 10, 11 and 12 reported that mostly RSE was delivered by their regular health and physical education (HPE) teacher (82.1%) as

part of their HPE subject (Fisher et al. 2019). In this survey, 32.8% of Grade 10 students stated they had had sexual intercourse, compared with 44% of Grade 11 students and 52.9% of Grade 12 students (Fisher et al. 2019).

Literature on high school educational programs related to pregnancy and abortion are sparse. Several Australian studies have documented that good quality delivery of RSE requires teachers to acquire knowledge on a range of topics, but many teachers feel professionally ill-equipped (Ollis and Harrison 2016; Smith et al. 2011). School nurses and external providers, and to a lesser extent counsellors and chaplains are called on to deliver RSE content (Burns and Hendriks 2018; Mitchell et al. 2014). Smith et al. (2011) evaluated the responses from nearly 300 secondary school teachers, throughout Australia, on their experiences of teaching sexual health. Many of the teachers stated their professional learning comprised of one-off short sessions which they deemed inadequate. It was also found that 16% of teachers reported no professional training in sexual education. Smith et al. (2011) also documented three central reasons for using external providers to deliver sexuality education: (1) teachers lacking confidence or being uncomfortable with the content; (2) time constraints on classroom teachers; and (3) an apprehension of parental criticisms. These studies support earlier research findings, which suggest that despite access to curriculum materials, teachers often feel ill-equipped and face barriers to delivery of sexual education (Alldred et al. 2003; Dyson and Mitchell, 2005; Henderson et al. 2007; Milton 2003; Sex Education Forum 2014, 2015; Smith et al. 2013).

The dominant external provider of school sex education programs in Queensland is True Relationships and Reproductive Health (formerly Family Planning Queensland). In South Australia, the Shine SA (sexual health information, networking and education), formerly the Family Planning Association of South Australia, plays a major role in school-based sex education and has provided sexuality education for teachers since its formation in the 1970s (Beckinsale et al. 1997; Johnson et al. 2016; Jose 1995; FPQ 2019; Smith et al. 2013). One study analysed the responses of 386 adolescent male students from South Australian urban and rural high schools and found that these students were more inclined to choose abortion (39%) in preference to keeping the baby (30%) or leaving the decision to their partner (30.9%) (Condon et al. 2006).

Interestingly, researchers in the USA and Ireland found that adolescent male students are more likely to choose to continue the pregnancy over the choice of abortion (Lohan et al. 2011; Marsiglio and Menaghan 1990). According to several studies, the explanations for adolescent male students' attitudes to pregnancy resolution options were mainly religiosity, masculinity and socioeconomic status, 'with evidence for an association between religiosity and pregnancy resolution choices being the strongest' (Boggess and Bradne 2000; Lohan et al. 2011, p. 1508; Lohan et al. 2010, Layte et al. 2006, Misra and Hohma 2000).

Literature on pregnancy education in high schools reveals some schools have utilised infant simulator-based programs in an attempt to decrease adolescent pregnancy rates. In these programs, there is usually an educational component with the main emphasis being 'care' for the lifelike model which has been programmed to

imitate a baby's feeding and sleeping patterns (Brinkman et al. 2016). A school-based pragmatic cluster randomised controlled trial of 57 schools in Perth, Western Australia was carried out between 2003 and 2006, with 1267 girls in an intervention group while 1567 were in the control group. Participants were followed up until the age of 20, through hospital and abortion clinic medical records. It was found that the infant simulator-based program did not reduce teenage pregnancy (Brinkman et al. 2016).

Contemporary Christian education is faced with contesting challenges of increasing relativism, humanism, individualism, secularism and atheism which is progressively eroding the biblical moral and ethical laws and frameworks in society (Anthony 2018; Groothuis 2009; Taylor 2016b). Despite ongoing criticism (Maddox 2014, 2015) and mixed messages from church authorities (Martin 2019), one of the goals of Christian educators is to prepare students to be functional and effective citizens in society. This means equipping students to develop critical thinking skills, to address the key issues pertinent to the political, cultural and social environment (Bailey 2012; Collier 2013).

Through an analysis of this research, it is evident that *Perspectives* addresses a large gap in the Australian high school curriculum in relation to student knowledge and decision-making processes around pregnancy and abortion. This lack of information extends to knowledge around foetal development and the cultural narrative of abortion, where the political left currently dominates the societal discourse (Smee 2018). Peppard (2008) paints the ideological picture in Australia, as in the USA, of 'cultural wars' in our society over issues such as sex education, sexuality and abortion. These 'battles' ultimately determine cultural and moral values. She states perceptively, 'Schools continue to be an arena for the culture wars' (p. 500).

21.3   Intended Contribution

This chapter critically analyses the development and effectiveness of an innovative and cutting-edge high school program, which is unique in Australia. It addresses the pressing need for pregnancy, parenting and abortion education which is generally not included in the Christian or wider Australian educational curriculum. Sexual education programs proliferate but who talks to young people about what happens if there is a pregnancy? There is an obvious gap and *Perspectives* aims to address this need.

The case study concludes with some observations and insights gathered for education stakeholders in the Christian co-educational sector. Furthermore, this study seeks to contribute to the field of holistic sexual education, which is a legitimate and necessary part of students' Christian education. These observations are posited amid an Australian Christian educational sector which seeks to operate in an increasingly secular society where tolerance of religious views is sharply declining (Burns Coleman and White 2006; Emerton 2019; Randell-Moon 2009).

21.4   Perspectives Program Framework and Development

The underlying ethos of Priceless Life Ltd. (Priceless House) is that all people have value and are worthy of life and respect. However, the organisation also sits within a cultural context in which citizens have freedom of choice, a broad range of views on sex, pregnancy and pregnancy options, and abortion is legally available and subsidised by the Australian Government through Medicare (Children by Choice 2019b). So, there are clearly defined responsibilities, expectations, ethical boundaries and standards of practice regarding belonging to professional bodies. Although the authors are Christians, they intentionally utilise secular material that is scientifically verifiable, logically sound, from resources that are reputable and peer reviewed, in order to demonstrate that a life-affirming position is not bound to or limited by religious conviction. Many students in Christian schools are not Christians, so the program must cover complex issues accurately, sensitively and respectfully.

The creators used a theoretical framework based on synthesising biblical principles with the political, cultural and social key issues. In the Bible, the message of Christ was often counter-cultural, eliciting different responses (Matthew 13; Mark 17–27; ESV Bible 2012). Jesus used a discovery teaching approach, leading people to reach their own conclusions and decisions about His teachings (Lee 2006). This approach resonates with modern inductive teaching methods but it also fits well within social work and counselling methods. Social workers assist clients to gather information and consider their options and available resources in order to make informed decisions. Client self-determination is an ethical principle in social work that recognises the client's right to be free to make their own decisions and choices free from coercion (Australian Association of Social Workers 2010; Barker 2013).

Out of these convictions, and in the absence of a distinctively Christian educational response to abortion public discourse, the *Perspectives* program was birthed, in 2014, and piloted the following year. It was initiated by Priceless House team member Helen Glen with the production of the DVD resource, and then passed on to Julie Robinson, Melissa Taylor, Jay Verri and Sharon Barendse to continue developing the program. The program was modified over five years through feedback from teachers and students, and regular facilitator debriefs. When Queensland Member of Parliament, Rob Pyne, tabled his 2016 Bills to liberalise abortion laws, the pilot school invited the *Perspectives* team back to address the legislative reform in their Grade 12 ethics class (Queensland Government 2016; Parliamentary Committees 2016). The Ethical Decision-Making module was introduced to help students evaluate the controversial abortion bill. Although Pyne withdrew his Bill in early 2017, legislative reform continued to be a topic of discussion.

The developers then introduced the Size, Level of Development, Environment and Degree of Dependency (S.L.E.D.) (Schlemon 2014) segment as a logical process of differentiating the born and unborn against concepts of humanness and personhood using four categories: size, level of development, environment and degree of dependency. Part of presenting this module included an interactive prop activity using LEGO, which was well received and provided some light-hearted moments as

students tried to guess what the construction would be. In 2017, the personal abortion stories of Jaya Taki and Miss X were made public through various media, bringing to the forefront the issues of abortion coercion and the mental health effects of abortion on women (Carr Barraclough 2019; Wong 2017). The *Perspectives* team decided to include some material about this.

In October 2018, Queensland saw a dramatic shift in the public sphere with legislative change allowing legal abortion on demand, effectively at any stage of pregnancy for any reason (Smee 2018; Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 (Qld)). Through group discussions, the *Perspectives* team began to query student knowledge about foetal development, suspecting that students had little knowledge about embryology. This was confirmed when an average of 45% of students over 2018 and 2019 reported having very little knowledge about foetal development. The team expanded the Foetal Development module and created the Human Rights and Dignity module. The most recent segment introduced examines cultural messaging around pregnancy, abortion, adoption and parenting, identifying common messages and making them explicit at the start of the program. The team also added a question on the evaluation sheets asking students about 'the one thing' that impacted them the most from the day's presentation.

A recent incident in New South Wales (NSW) highlights some of the societal attitudes that motivate the *Perspectives* program educators. In June 2019, four local council buses carried an advertisement by the organisation *Emily's Voice* . The advertisement showed a woman's pregnant belly with her hands in the shape of a heart placed over it and a strapline that read, 'a heart beats at four weeks' (Fig. 21.1). The NSW Government immediately censored the advertisement. Transport Minister Andrew Constance stated that he was 'appalled' and ordered its immediate removal following a complaint made to him on social media. An outraged

Fig. 21.1   Photo taken from Emily's Voice Facebook page

Newcastle constituent described the scientific fact as 'dangerous propaganda' and 'a guilt directive on what a woman should do with her body'. Minister Constance wrote on Facebook at the time, 'I'm looking in to how this was allowed to happen' and added that he was 'worried that the image could be upsetting to school students' (Lampard 2019; Moloney 2019; Smith 2019). Not to be deterred, *Emily's Voice* paid for the advertisement to be displayed on a billboard in a prominent location. Further complaints, this time to the proprietors of the billboard, resulted again in censorship and the sign was taken down. *Emily's Voice* finally placed their sign on a trailer which could not be censored and was driven around or parked where they wished (McEachen 2019; O'Rourke 2019).

Facilitators now incorporate this narrative into the program with thought-provoking questions. Why is the scientific knowledge that a heart beats at 4 weeks so controversial and offensive to some? Why was this advertisement seen as inappropriate for school students? Why did people react the way they did? Who are the power brokers in this story and how was the power used? What was the broader context of the message? What was happening culturally, politically and socially at the time? In what ways does this incident feed into a prevailing cultural discourse? What does it say about the marginalisation of voices that do not fit the current societal discourse? This approach encourages students to question, think critically and unpack popular messaging and prevailing societal discourse.

In response to the needs of schools, modular units are adaptable to suit curriculum and different subjects, ranging from an ethics class, a Christian studies class, an HPE class, legal studies or study of society class. The use of real-life Australian stories in the DVD (Priceless Life Ltd. 2018) produced for the program and the personal testimony was viewed by the authors as strategic to 'flesh out' information students were receiving. Small group interactions allowed for safe and respectful peer discussions where students could share, evaluate and express their views and hear the views of others.

The *Perspectives* program structure now incorporates:

- brief introduction to Priceless House;
- PowerPoint presentation introducing current discourse and messaging;
- short survey serving as an icebreaker;
- 14-min DVD containing real-life stories of Australian men and women who have faced unplanned or challenging pregnancies, as well as medical and scientific information;
- small group guided discussions with chat cards, puzzles, journals and fetal development models;
- Ethical Decision-Making module;
- S.L.E.D.
- Human Rights and Dignity (Verri, 2018a, b);
- personal testimony either by a facilitator or an online resource;
- Q&A panel: students are invited to ask questions;
- gift for each student: 10-week foot-pins and journals;
- evaluation forms distributed.

The development team faced several hurdles in its marketing efforts given the sensitivity of the material, the prevalence of moral relativism and the dominant prevailing abortion discourse (Fleay 2018; Heydon 2017; O'Rourke 2016). School leadership was usually understandably cautious. Furthermore, competing curriculum priorities and timetabling pressures caused the *Perspectives* team to adapt the program to satisfy the Australian Curriculum framework and to accommodate individual school's timetable constraints.

The process for implementing the program included marketing (Barendse and Taylor 2017; Barendse et al. 2017; Robinson 2019; Taylor 2016a) and liaising with local schools through letters, brochures, emails and meetings to showcase the program. The planning of the pilot phase encompassed evaluation, recruitment and training of facilitators (Robinson and Taylor 2014; Taylor 2017a), including screening for suitability and working with children safety checks (Fraser 2014), selection of schools (Barendse 2016; Barendse 2017b), policy and procedures and risk management documentation (Taylor 2017b). Parental permission slips were included, and a parent information evening offered. Debriefing for facilitators, reflection on student feedback, and reports to schools following presentations were built into the program from its conception. Despite a lack of funding, limited resources and reliance on volunteers, the feedback from students and staff via evaluation sheets deemed the pilot program to be a success.

21.5   Methodology

Since *Perspectives* was piloted in 2015, it has run for over 5 years in two independent, co-educational Christian schools in Brisbane. The program has been delivered to over 650 female and male Grade 10–12 students. A total of 541 feedback sheets have been collected. One Christian school has invited the *Perspectives* team back every year since the pilot with 403 evaluation sheets collected over the 5 years. The numbers of Grade 12 students participating in subsequent years are as follows: 105 students in 2016; 104 in 2017; 90 students in 2017 and 60 students in 2019. Unfortunately, competing curriculum priorities such as excursions, and timetabling errors led to a reduced number of students participating in 2019.

A mixed method, case study methodology was utilised for the analysis of data due to the holistic understanding and representation that case studies embody, with the in-depth focus on a single program (Bryman 2016; Barendse et al. 2019; Punch 2014; Yin 2009). The two-fold analysis of the study relates to the ontological (students discerning the nature of reality through the cultural messaging around pregnancy and abortion) and epistemological (the acquiring of knowledge on issues related to pregnancy and abortion) through an interpretive paradigm (Guba and Lincoln 1998). The research follows the principles of purposeful sampling in order to gain information and rich qualitative material (Barendse et al. 2019; Stavraki 2014). The schools' data privacy and ethical policies were adhered to in relation to data privacy and ethical considerations. The schools were responsible for informing parents about the

program and gave permission for the subsequent use and publication of anonymous data collected.

The authors collected both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive picture of student feedback (Cresswell and Plano Clark 2007). Quantitative data were analysed to evaluate resource quality, facilitator performance, program and module suitability, population awareness of the topic, how students rated the program modules, facilitators and the appropriateness of the program (Barendse 2017a). Qualitative data were used to more fully explore student views. Students were informed that feedback was optional, anonymous and that it would be used to assist the team to improve the program (King-Sears et al. 2019). Rating scales allowed quantitative analysis, and closed and open-ended questions provided qualitative data, which were analysed using an 'exploratory design' approach (Creswell 2014).

Several themes emerged and these were used to correlate the key findings. Gender was collected (also voluntary) to determine attitude trends and to provide an additional layer of understanding to whether students felt comfortable doing the program in co-ed or single gender groups. Data groups (for qualitative and quantitative data) were entered, summarised, analysed and calculated in an Excel spreadsheet.

21.6 Results and Key Findings

Relevance of Program and Age Appropriateness

In the early years of presenting, the team was concerned with the suitability of the program to students, including age appropriateness. However, in these domains, *Perspectives* was consistently rated by 94% or more students to be relevant and appropriate.

Student Comfort and Facilitator Performance

The *Perspectives* team was also sensitive to student comfort. Sharing in small co-educational groups on delicate subject matter can be confronting yet 85% or more students reported that they were comfortable with the small-group work. From 2015 to 2018, 96% or more students reported that they thought the facilitators did a good job. This confirmed that the skills of the   *Perspectives* team were an essential element of the success of the program, and this was maintained through careful screening and training.

Evaluation of Modules and Resources

Facilitator feedback initiated the introduction of the Q&A module (which 88% of students rated as educationally beneficial) to stimulate discussion and to allow the entire group to have access to some of the important discussions happening in the small groups. The lower than usual ratings of the S.L.E.D. module (5% below the baseline) and the types of questions, comments and discussion during the Q&A panel later led the development team to incorporate a module to make more explicit the

cultural messaging which students had evidently imbibed but of which they were not necessarily aware.

Questions also asked students to rate various resources used during the program, including the 14-min DVD and chat cards. In the assessment of the DVD, 96% of students rated the following at 3 or more on a scale of 1 to 5: their learning from the DVD, its suitability to them, how sensitively medical information was presented and its age appropriateness. Almost all the students (99.5%) thought that the chat cards were good catalysts for conversation, that they were well worded, clear and easy to understand and that they felt comfortable discussing the subject matter in groups.

Across all evaluation domains, the DVD continued to be rated highly by 93% of students. It was found that 94% of students reported to have been meaningfully impacted by the personal testimony segment. Close to 90% of students rated the 10-min survey segment (which included questions about statistics, legislation and foetal development) as educationally beneficial. The student feedback indicated that the foetal puzzle resource rated lowest in terms of its educational impact and therefore the development team relegated it to be an optional resource for facilitators to use if needed for stimulating discussion in groups.

Throughout the course of the program, quantitative (97%) and qualitative feedback consistently indicated that the information provided by *Perspectives* was important to discuss in schools.

Feedback from Young Men

In 2016, facilitators delivered *Perspectives* to a large cohort of about 100 Grade 11 and Grade 12 male students at a Christian school. They were asked this question, 'Prior to today, how often have you thought about, or talked about the issues raised here (in the Perspectives presentation)?' Students were asked to rate their answers on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was 'never' or 'not at all' and 5 was 'always' or 'a great amount'. More than 70% of these students rated the question at 1 or 2, indicating they had 'never' or 'rarely' thought about or talked about the issues of pregnancy, parenting and abortion.

Greatest Single Impact 2018 and 2019

In 2018, a further question was added to the feedback form asking students about the 'one thing' students were most impacted by in the presentation—'What was the one thing that stood out most to you?' In the 2018 cohort, individual take-aways could be grouped into 13 different categories, the top five being:

1. Hearing the different perspectives 19/90 (21%)
2. Statistics 18/90 (20%)
3. The impacts of abortion on women or men 18/90 (20%)
4. That the unborn baby (also) matters 10/90 (11%)
5. The real-life stories 6/90 (7%).

In the 2019 cohort, there were 22 different responses, with the five most frequent answers being:

1. Some aspect of foetal development (23%) (e.g. the baby's heart begins to beat from around 3–4 weeks)
2. The numbers of abortions in Australia every year (17%)
3. Jaya Taki's personal story about her coerced abortion (15%)
4. Research on the mental health effects of abortion (10%)
5. That in Australia, late-term babies who survive abortion procedures are not given medical assistance but are left to die (9%).

Other answers included: the statistics on babies diagnosed with Downs Syndrome being terminated; legislation that allows for legal abortion up until birth (including now in Queensland); that some women are coerced into unwanted abortions; and that there are support services in the community which will help women and men facing pregnancies that are challenging. In the most recent classes (May 2019) on a scale of 1–5 (where 1 = never or none and 5 = always or a great amount) 100% of students rated 3 or above to the question 'How informative did you find today's presentation?'.

21.7 Concluding Synthesis

The *Perspectives* program highlights an educational area of critical need in Australian postmodern society. This was evident in the last presentation, in 2019, in which a particularly poignant moment occurred as the team handed around foetal models, including a life size and weight baby model at full term, wrapped in a bunny rug. The team observed the responses of each student as they received the models and particularly noted the young men's responses. Some of them appeared initially surprised, some confused, some delighted. Almost all instinctively then cradled the model to their chest, held it and smiled. While the other smaller models were returned once inspected, the full-term baby model remained in the arms of the last young man in each group until the presentation finished. Some students rated the experience of holding the 'baby' as the 'one thing' that impacted them the most that day.

The presenting team reflected on how there appears to be a 'disconnect' or disinterest with pregnancy and babies for many young men today. They speculated that this could be due to several factors, including small family sizes and not having the opportunity to be around babies. One facilitator remarked there does not seem to be colloquial English language that describes paternal feelings of a man towards unborn or born babies. By contrast, women are often referred to as being 'clucky' or 'maternal'. The impact and repercussions of such discourse would be a worthy topic of research in the future.

The team would also like to see a stand-alone foetal development component produced for use in primary schools, professional development for teachers, youth leaders and chaplains, and further research conducted to further inform program development and maximise student learning. The program could be used outside schools for youth and adult education across various contexts and funding to allow

payment of volunteer team members would likely increase availability to present to more schools. Board members at Priceless House are currently considering the possibility of making facilitator training, as well as *Perspectives* modules, available via webinar to expand the reach of the program. Discussions are also underway regarding partnering with other organisations across Australia and overseas. The team have also begun working on a module which will address a biblical or theological view of pregnancy, parenting and abortion. The interest and positive feedback generated by students, and the satisfaction reported by school staff give ample justification to continue developing the *Perspectives* program.

The goal of *Perspectives* is that students will complete the program with a greater awareness of the complexities around unintended pregnancy, and a greater compassion for and willingness to assist those who find themselves having to navigate it. This may not only empower students personally but may additionally contribute to influencing further research, career choice and/or public policy. At least one of the volunteer facilitators is on the team today because someone came to her school and talked about some of these issues.

It is hoped the contribution by the *Perspectives* team might also lead to schools examining their own policies around students facing unintended pregnancy. Too many Christian young women secretly terminate unintended pregnancies because of an inability to continue their education, or out of a sense of deep shame or unwillingness to disappoint their parents or peers (Boulden n.d.; Paget 2017). At the very least, *Perspectives* allows Christian schools the chance to empower their students with an apologetic about life issues, so they can more confidently engage in conversations on these topics in secular universities, colleges and workplaces after graduation.

The words of a student from a 2019 *Perspectives* class seem a good place to conclude this chapter. The team had finished presenting the first part of the program and had divided into small groups for discussion. As one of the facilitators drew her chair to sit with her group, she asked the students how they were all feeling after viewing the DVD. There was a momentary silence, until one Grade 12 girl blurted out, 'Well, I'm just so glad you're here, because nobody talks to us about this stuff'.

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Chapter 22
Towards Intercultural Literacy—A Literature Review on Immersive Cross-Cultural Experiences and Intercultural Competency

Wendy Nelson and **Johannes M. Luetz**

> *The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only one page.*
>
> (Attributed to St. Augustine, 354–430).

> *Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness.*
> (Mark Twain, 1835–1910).

> *So much of who we are is where we have been.*
> (William Langewiesche, b. 1955).

Abstract Owing to the expansion of globalisation, cultural interactions have brought studies into Intercultural Competence (IC) to centre stage (UNDP 2004; Bissessar 2018; Nelson et al. 2019). According to leading scholars and organisations, educational institutions have a vital role to play in helping their students develop the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes. This chapter provides a review of literature relating to the topic of IC, specifically focusing on the effects of short-term cross-cultural experiences on the development of IC in school and university students. To

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this end, it examines the meaning and importance of IC, the literary search methodology, and relevant findings that were synthesised from this review of the literature. Notably, few studies in the literature related directly to Australian high school students, and there is a compelling case to conduct more empirical research in this area. To this end, this literature review explores how existing knowledge gaps may be leveraged as opportunities for future quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods research. Finally, the research offers a brief outlook on the prospects of nurturing IC in a post-COVID-19 global context.

Keywords Intercultural competency · Intercultural literacy · cross-cultural education · Racial equity · Literature review · Youth With A Mission (YWAM)

22.1 Introduction: Research Background, Inception and Intended Contribution

The authors' interest in this topic was sparked many years ago while working with the Christian mission organisation Youth With A Mission (YWAM). This involvement exposed the authors to a highly intercultural ministry context, which was characterised by both recurrent international travel and highly culturally diverse campus and ministry settings. One of the lead author's main roles during her 3 years at the YWAM Darwin campus was leading the Mission Adventures (MA) program in Australia and into South-East Asia. The MA program is a short-term (usually about 2 weeks) cross-cultural mission model designed for groups of high school students, and many YWAM locations around the world still run this popular program (YWAM Woolongong 2019; YWAM Montana 2019). YWAM's stated hope is that young people will grow in their Christian discipleship and develop empathy and a growing willingness to serve, partnered with the ability to confidently and casually share the love and gospel of Jesus (YWAM Montana 2019; YWAM Nanaimo 2019; YWAM Woolongong 2019).

During (and following) MA programs there appeared to be observable and sometimes stated changes in the attitudes of the young people who participated in these cross-cultural experiences. These changes included increased empathy, improved cultural sensitivity and understanding, a heart for the less fortunate, an idea of, or a change in, career direction or aspiration, and an overall expansive view of the world, or worldview. Upon much introspection, personal contemplation and critical reflection, this chapter's lead author (and the leader of these MA programs) has formed the view that short-term cross-cultural experiences, despite being brief, can play a positive and immensely formative role in the lives of young people.

The same can be said of this chapter's supporting author, who similarly trained for cross-cultural ministry, leadership and social development situations in the context of YWAM's global University of the Nations (UofN), ultimately completing multiple international field assignments of 2/12/24 to 48-week duration. Having thus studied in eight countries on four continents with students from more than 100 nations, this

chapter's supporting author can similarly affirm that these intercultural experiences have helped him to gain both 'global vision' and a deep and lasting appreciation for sociocultural, ethnolinguistic and theological diversity.

Furthermore, in many personal discussions that these two authors have had with numerous other professionals in this area, similar reflections were numerously expressed, which ultimately gave rise to the idea that more formal study of this phenomenon was warranted. Hence, this literature review was undertaken to broadly explore the following research question:

> What effects do short-term cross-cultural experiences have on the inter-cultural competence (IC), emotional intelligence (EI) and career aspirations (CA) of Australian high school students?

Consequently, this research will attempt to synthesise, analyse and draw conclusions from a range of sources related to the impact of short-term, cross-cultural experience on the intercultural competence (IC) of Australian high school students. While this chapter is particularly interested in the Australian context, most findings similarly apply in other country contexts and are therefore believed to be widely, if not universally, applicable and relevant.

As massive recent racial protests have shown in countries around the world, racial inequity is perceived to be a ubiquitous contemporary crisis (Harmon et al. 2020), including in Australia (Anthony 2020; BBC 2020) and in 'every corner of America' (Burch et al. 2020). With many of the problems linked to both 'systemic' and 'academic' undercurrents (Harmon et al. 2020), there is a clear need for more IC-enhancing experiences and immersive or 'embodied' pedagogies (Buxton et al. 2021), which makes the contribution of this research both timely and important.

This chapter is organised as follows. Following this introduction to the study background and the authors' joint interest in IC (Sect. 22.1), the chapter next covers the rationale for conducting research in this area (Sect. 22.2), a discussion of the manifold conceptual approaches to IC (Sect. 22.3), the methodology used for identifying relevant literature (Sect. 22.4), a synthesis of key findings (Sect. 22.5) with concluding reflections on the overall meaning and specific benefits of cultivating IC (Sect. 22.6), and finally, a brief postscript exploring prospects, options and implications of seeking to nurture IC in a COVID-19 world (Sect. 22.7).

22.2 Research Rationale: Contemporary and Theological Reflections

Until the ermergence of COVID-19, globalisation and constant change have unequivocally occasioned a dramatic rise in cross-cultural interactions (UNDP 2004; Bissessar 2018; Nelson et al. 2019). In consequence, the growing importance and interest in the field of intercultural competence and literacy are widely reflected in the literature (UNESCO 2007; Monash University 2018; Klingenberg et al. 2020). It

is now apparent that students today[1] live in the most diverse, multicultural, interconnected and rapidly changing time in human history (Luetz 2019a; Luetz and Merson 2019) and the ability to competently engage in this multicultural world has been described as the 'literacy of the future' (UNESCO 2013; OECD 2018). This is a new kind of literacy. By all accounts, to thrive in this modern world, humanity will do well to cultivate intercultural literacy (IC). Many scholars, educators, managers and social scientists increasingly consider IC just as important as reading, writing and numeracy (UNESCO 2013; cf. Unger and Luetz 2019). IC promotes skills in areas of global economics and trade, diplomacy, poverty reduction, environmental sustainability, human rights, social justice, emotional intelligence and empathy, among others. At the same time, IC has been shown to diminish or even redress ethnocentrism, xenophobia, racism, ignorance and discrimination (Tiessen and Epprecht 2012; Zamastil 2011; Kitsantas 2004; Potts 2015). Furthermore, research has found positive intercultural experiences to be a vitally enabling factor for the development of IC, academic achievement and career choice (Dwyer 2004a; Potts 2015; Zarnick 2010; OCED 2018; Tiessen and Epprecht 2012).

The relatively recent onset of intense globalisation has brought studies into IC acquisition to centre stage, and relevant education plays an essential role in its success (Deardorff 2011; Nelson et al. 2019). According to a report by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), schools 'play a critical role in helping young people to develop global competence' (OECD 2018, p. 4). Furthermore, developing a global and intercultural outlook is a process—a lifelong process— that education can shape (Barrett 2018; Mansilla and Jackson 2011; Deardorff 2006, 2011; UNESCO 2013; UNDP 2016; OECD 2018, p. 4). Therefore, it follows that course programs and curricula at educational institutions today must progressively reflect our increasingly complex and interconnected multicultural societies (UNESCO 2007; Nelson et al. 2019).

Relatedly, ideas of cultivating humility, teachability, striving for unity and harmony, and advocating for justice are themes that are strongly supported in the Bible. In 1 Peter 2:8 the Apostle Paul admonishes the community of believers as follows: 'Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind' (ESV). Similarly, the prophet Micah declares, 'But he's already made it plain how to live, what to do, what GOD is looking for in men and women. It's quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbor, be compassionate and loyal in your love, And don't take yourself too seriously—take God seriously'. (Micah 6:8, The Message).

Other writings of the Apostle Paul seem to similarly underwrite the importance of IC: 'I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings' (Corinthians 9:23; NIV). In several places throughout the Bible, it seems that God works with His people in culturally sensitive and appropriate ways without requiring them to first 'convert' to another culture. God rather appears to take customs already in use and investing them with new meaning (Kraft 2002).

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[1] At least until the sudden and disruptive onset of COVID-19. This theme is developed in Sect. 22.7.

Furthermore, in the Bible, heaven is described as a place of multinational, multilingual, multicultural and multiethnic congress: 'After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands'. (Revelation 7:9; NIV). According to Patterson and Scoggins (2002), this heavenly picture demonstrates the fact that true unity in Christ allows cultural, linguistic and ethnic differences to live together in loving harmony with each other. Importantly, this heavenly perspective affirms Biblical support for the idea that such diversity is not coincidental but rather inherently ingrained in the divine design for human community and that development of cultural literacy is therefore a key competence of timeless and transcendental value and significance. Relatedly, using Mission as a hermeneutic lens is not a novel approach. A solid body of scholarship supports the connections between Paul's writing and the theme in Revelation to intercultural literacy (Wright 2006). As such, IC-related scriptures, here and elsewhere in this chapter, are not to be misconceived as serving purposes of deductive proof-texting but should be more appropriately understood as seeking to build on well-established traditions of theological interpretation (Brewster 1997).

Another pertinent example of this IC-related idea is presented in the parable of the good Samaritan, where the hero of the story is someone from a race and religion that is vastly different from the Jewish audience. Furthermore, there had been long-term animosity, even hate, between the Samaritans and Jews (Brindle 1984; Tabor n.d.; Maris 2015). Jesus concludes the story by saying: 'Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?' The expert in the law replied, 'The one who had mercy on him'. Jesus told him, 'Go and do likewise' (Luke 10:37; NIV). Jesus is seemingly admonishing spiritual influencers that human cultural biases are irrelevant, but that care, empathy and intercultural and interreligious compassion are at the core of what it means to be human (Otaigbe 2016). This is conforming with the Biblical emphasis on justice, mercy, humility and teachability, which this chapter has already alluded to above (Micah 6:8, NIV). Furthermore, in his first letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul highlights the importance of synergy and working together as one united body:

> There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body. It is the same with Christ. We were all baptized by one Holy Spirit. And so, we are formed into one body. It didn't matter whether we were Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free people. We were all given the same Spirit to drink. So, the body is not made up of just one part. It has many parts… In that way, the parts of the body will not take sides. All of them will take care of one another. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it. If one part is honored, every part shares in its joy. You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it. (1. Corinthians 12:12–14 and 25–27; NIRV).

Incarnationally, these Biblical ideologies seemingly translate into a mandate for Christians, especially those in education, to lead the way in the development and formation of IC. It is evident that education plays a pivotal role in developing cross-cultural competence, but education can only go so far. Kraft (2002) posits that the real solution comes from Christ. As such, this implies that Christian educational

institutions are unique as they can provide 'theological tenets for an all-redeeming and all-transforming education that can theoretically free the mind and allow it to capture themes that liberate it from societal statuses and prejudices that confine and limit' (Jadhav 2014, p. 97) while 'developing a framework for cultural competence in order to work with others in a meaningful, relevant, and productive way' (Jadhav 2014, p. 122). Therefore, figuratively speaking, Christian education institutions have a unique ability to lead the way in opening the eyes, hearts and minds of humankind to the benefits of living with each other in a united sense of humanity, and in turn, reap the blessings promised by God (Andrews 1998, cf. 1 Cor. 9:20–23).

Moreover, the notion to treat others the way one wishes to be treated is an explicit virtue in all major world religions, including Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Taoism, etc. (Armstrong 2012). The UNDP affirms this notion by stating that there is a universal 'belief in the basic moral equality of all human beings' (UNDP 2004 p. 90). Given that adolescence is a crucial stage of development (Allison and Higgins 2002; University of Rochester Medical Centre NY 2019), this literature search is mostly focused on and invested in scrutinising the benefits of cultivating IC in high school students. Curtis (2015, p. 91) asserts,

> Adolescence is a dynamically evolving theoretical construct informed through physiologic, psychosocial, temporal and cultural lenses. This critical developmental period is conventionally understood as the years between the onset of puberty and the establishment of social independence (Steinberg 2014). The most commonly used chronologic definition of adolescence includes the ages of 10–18 but may incorporate a span of 9 to 26 years depending on the source (APA 2002).

According to the Swiss child developmental psychologist Jean Piaget, in later adolescence children develop the ability to think critically in a scientific manner. They are capable of forming their own ideas on ethical issues and are able to communicate and debate these perspectives effectively. They are learning to think for themselves and are engaging in global concepts, such as justice, history, freedom, liberty, politics, and patriotism without difficulty (Lewis 2018; Rochester Medical Centre NY 2019; Scott and Cogburn 2019). In a similar vein, Polisar (2015) recommends that cultural emersion/immersion should begin in high school. Taking cross-cultural trips during high school is also important because not everyone perceives the need or has the desire to attend university. Therefore, offering cross-cultural experiences only at the university level is insufficient as many will miss out (Polisar 2015). Further, intercultural experiences seem to inform and impact on students' choice of study at university, wherefore cultural emersion/immersion should ideally occur *prior to* tertiary study. Relatedly, the American–German developmental psychologist Erik Erikson suggested that late adolescence is a stage of life where young people are exploring what is possible and are planning their future (Wallace-Broscious et al. 1994; Harvard University 2019; Stanford Children's Health 2019). It is thus a preferential time to influence adolescents as they explore optional career choices (Lewis 2018). This will have a strong influence on their perception of how to attain happiness in life (Quak and Luetz 2020)

From a Christian worldview perspective, the wisdom literature of the Proverbs teaches: 'Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they

will not turn from it' (Prov. 22:6; NIV). From this verse and the foregoing discussion, a Biblical mandate may be deduced that envisions Christian educators to leverage their unique position of influence for the development of interculturally competent young leaders. In his letter to Timothy, the Apostle Paul encourages his young protégé as follows: 'Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity' (1 Timothy 4:12, NIV). This theme of looking beyond individualistic concerns was similarly highlighted by Martin Luther King Jnr., who encouraged the formation of transpersonal or even transnational perspectives: 'An individual has not begun to live until he can rise above the narrow horizons of his particular individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity' (King 1957 p. 250). He went on to stress, 'the function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character is the goal of true education' (King 1947, p. 124). In synthesis, developing IC may contribute to preparing future generations that are more empathetic, compassionate and culturally sensitive and competent. Relatedly, such education may assist in developing global citizens who are not only interculturally competent, but also have the gift of self-less compassion.

Finally, there is much support in the literature for the notion that short-term cross-cultural experiences, in both the secondary and tertiary context, are on the rise in many western nations (Potts 2016; Ngo 2014; Gower et al. 2018; Campbell-Price 2014; Kitsantas 2004; Potts 2015; Tiessen and Epprecht 2012). However, the literature also appears to converge around the view that there remains a lack of academic attention (and an absence of evidence-based data) surrounding such experiences (Allison and Higgins 2002; Campbell-Price 2014; Jackson 2015). This lack of hard data also supports the case that further empirical research will be beneficial in this area.

22.3 Conceptual Approaches to Comprehending IC

As discussed above, humanity currently resides in an interconnected, rapidly changing and multicultural era, and as a result of this unprecedented connectivity, intercultural human encounters have exponentially increased (OEDC 2018; Nelson et al. 2019). Moreover, from an etymological perspective, this rapid change has spawned new terminologies and has thus given rise to a growing family of conceptual approaches to comprehending IC. The shortlist below, by no means exhaustive, identifies a plethora of available terms that have been excerpted from the literature:

'intercultural competence' (e.g. Bennett 2004; Deardorff 2006; UNESCO 2007; Potts 2016; Salisbury 2011; Moloney and Genua-Petrovic 2012; Miller and Tucker 2015; Zarnic 2010), 'cultural competence' (e.g. Gower et al. 2018; UNESCO 2006), 'cross-cultural competence' (e.g. Kitsantas 2004; Wang and Gu 2005; Greenholtz 2010), 'global competence' (e.g. OEDC 2018) 'cultural sensitivity' (e.g. Zamastil-Vondrova 2011; Commins 2010; Luetz et al. 2019), 'cultural intelligence' (Deardorff 2011) 'intercultural sensitivity' (e.g. Commins 2010; Zarnick 2010; Potts 2016), 'intercultural development' (e.g. Bennett 1986, 1993, 2004), 'global development' (e.g. Potts 2016; OECD 2018 'cultural awareness' (e.g. UNESCO 2005; Gower et al. 2018; OEDC 2018; Picardo 2012), 'cross-cultural skills' (e.g.

Kitsantas 2004; Gower et al. 2018), 'cross-cultural perception' (e.g. Zamastil-Vondrova 2011), 'cross-cultural understanding' (e.g. Tiessen and Epprecht 2012; Kim 2001), 'inter-cultural understanding' (e.g. Chayakonvikom et al. 2016; Guntersdorfer and Golubeva 2018; Zarnick 2010), 'global understanding' (e.g. Kitsantas 2004; Tiessen and Epprecht 2012; Potts 2016) 'international understanding' (e.g. Kitsantas 2004; Hadzic 2015; Commins 2010), 'global mindedness' (e.g. Zamastil-Vondrova 2011), 'global citizenship' (e.g. Tiessen and Epprecht 2012; Potts 2016; Lilley et al. 2015), 'global civic engagement' (Potts 2016) 'global perspectives' (e.g. Gower et al. 2018; Kim 2001) 'ethnocentrism' (Sumner 1908; Bennett 1986, 1993, 2004; Deardorff 2006).

Scrutinising the usage of these terms in the literature, it appears that many of them have a similar meaning and can seemingly be used interchangeably (Monash University 2018). However, ongoing terminological debates have made it hard for academics to agree on a universal nomenclature (Deardorff 2006). Nonetheless, Deardorff (2008), in collaboration with other leading scholars, reached a consensus on a definition and related concepts that encompass IC, which generated the first evidence-based framework definition for IC (Deardorff 2008): 'Intercultural competence is the ability to develop targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behaviour and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions' (Deardorff 2006, pp. 241–266). Another prominent definition of IC is offered by Fantini and Tirmizi (2006): 'a complex of abilities needed to perform *effectively* and *appropriately* when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself' (p. 12; emphasis original). Because of its prevalence in the literature and its use by leading academics in the field (e.g., Bennett 1986, 1993, 2004; Deardorff 2006, 2008, 2011), this literary study will use the term IC as its terminological concept of choice, along with the definitional approach espoused by Deardorff (2006; above).

22.4 Methodological Approaches: Identifying Literature for Review

In order to locate as many relevant publications as possible, educational, social science, psychological and other databases were consulted to identify studies on the effects of intercultural experience through intercultural visits. Following the advice of Creswell and Creswell (2018, pp. 32–34), the search expressly focused upon reports in refereed journals and university publications.

The first search for information on the cross-cultural competence of Australian high school students identified a lack of data and highlighted the need for more empirical studies on this subject. Given that the initial search revealed very little relevant research relating specifically to Australian high school students, the search scope was subsequently widened to include studies on both university students in Australia and high school students in other countries. This wider search was more fruitful and located a range of studies which underpin the findings presented below. In the words of Punch (2016), 'Raising the level of abstraction of a specific topic

helps to show its connections with the literature' (p. 71). 'Good literature reviews are extremely valuable … Therefore, if you find a good literature review, my advice is to use it' (Punch 2016, p. 74). [A previous literature review featuring digested knowledge on the nexus between IC and sustainable development (Nelson et al. 2019) had given the authors prior orientation about the state of the art surrounding this field of investigation.]

The relevant literature was then read and re-read carefully, with the aim of determining the key concepts of IC and how it is formed and developed. This review also included relevant literature on a Christian worldview surrounding the development of cross-cultural competence and why adolescence is a key age for immersive inter-cultural experiences. The literature was reviewed to identify agreements and consensus from multiple expert sources, and this information was then collated and used to further inform the selection of additional pertinent literature. Once a sufficient overview had been achieved, research findings were synthesised. According to Punch (2016), synthesising involves being critical, examining and critiquing research methods, the generalisability and transferability of the findings, reflecting on quality, consistency and cohesion within the data and in general, stating the known knowledge and defining where the knowledge gaps are, and finally, working towards a framework presentation of integrated thematic literature search-informed perspectives. The following section will present the findings of this search.

22.5 Synthesis of Key Findings

The literature survey illuminated several key themes, which surround cross-cultural experiences and their effects on participants. These key themes are discussed next and are organised as follows: (1) The benefits of cultivating IC; (2) The nexus between cultivating IC, emotional intelligence and academic achievement; (3) The benefits of IC on career aspirations and employability; (4) The duration and purpose of intercultural experiences; (5) Overview of instruments for measuring IC; (6) Ethical considerations; (7) Opportunities for future research.

22.5.1 The Benefits of Cultivating IC

The increasing demand for cross-cultural experiences seems to be overwhelmingly linked to the benefits that participants acquire through such experiences (Tiessen and Epprecht 2012). All studies supported the notion that cross-cultural experiences tend to impact positively on the IC of participants. Sample evidence has been excerpted from research conducted by Salisbury (2011):

> Studying abroad significantly affects the positive development of intercultural competence. Furthermore, this effect appears to be general rather than conditional. This analysis found no evidence to indicate that the effect of studying abroad varies systematically between

gender, race, SES, institutional type, pre-college tested academic preparation, pre-test score, or college experiences (p. 92).

Researchers Zamastil-Vondrova (2011) and Potts (2015) have similarly reported that cross-cultural immersive experiences spawn several benefits, including greater respect for cultural difference, tolerance and the advancing of attitudes, perceptions and the knowledge of multiculturalism. The OECD report asserts that global understanding 'can teach young people the importance of challenging cultural biases and stereotypes' (p. 4), potentially reducing ethno-cultural conflicts and increasing respectful interactions (2018).

These experiences are associated with the development of understanding in areas such as civic engagement, cultural identity, IC, diplomacy, global citizenship and global development (Potts 2016). Zamastil-Vondroa (2011) stated that participants had reported an increased interest in international affairs and news because of their experiences. Kitsantas (2004) recorded that such trips significantly contributed to an increase in cross-cultural skills and global understanding needed to effectively operate in our multicultural world. Potts (2016) affirmed these results, stating that learning abroad tended to foster holistic perspectives and global development prospects, with benefits accruing not only to the individuals themselves but also to national and global stakeholders. She further claimed,

Australian students construct identity and move towards global citizenship through spending time in multiple contexts… when connected with the social context, these outcomes expand from individual to society as a whole (Potts 2016, pp. 12 and 19).

Language teacher Jose Picardo (2012), who facilitates international experiences for his students, claims:

working with other people we learn about their cultures and become able to explore new ideas and prospects. Options that would not have occurred to us before stand out as obvious if we understand how other people experience the world… Global awareness and international collaboration during formative years results in more rounded individuals, encouraging our pupils to see things from different perspectives and helping them to make informed decisions, acquiring transferable skills that will be useful to them and will remain with them for life… This is why, I believe, it is so important for students to have a deeper global awareness and understanding of other cultures (para. 3 and 9).

In their study of Australian school students, Moloney and Genua-Petrovic (2012) provide evidence that cross-cultural trips assist students to explore their own culture and acquire techniques of analysis and comparison for other cultures. The study suggests that such intervention facilitates intercultural learning outcomes in students.

Dolby (2008) asserts that Australian students who spend time in multiple learning environments and in 'out of comfort zone' experiences are more likely to develop a global outlook of comparative thinking and knowledge across cultural and interpersonal barriers that tends to increase their global networks and helps them to become more effective global citizens. According to Manning (2016), since adopting a cross-cultural learning experience into their degree programs, Susquehanna University has become more culturally diverse and culturally aware as a campus, and as a result of this, has seen an enrolment growth in 'non-white and international students' (para.

11). Importantly, a clear majority of studies found that IC cannot be fully grasped or acquired in classroom settings but needs to be enriched through processes of immersive experiential learning (Potts 2016; Tiessen and Epprecht 2012).

In summary, research overwhelmingly recognises the positive role that cross-cultural experiences tend to play in the formation and development of IC—immersive inter-cultural experiences encourage students to understand and engage competently with the world around them. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that such trips, in both high school and university settings, are on the rise in many western nations (Potts 2016; Ngo 2014; Gower et al. 2018; Campbell-Price 2014; Kitsantas 2004; Potts 2015; Tiessen and Epprecht 2012). However, the literature also appears to converge around the synthesis that there is a paucity of evidence-based data surrounding such experiences, especially in the Australian high school context (Allison and Higgins 2002; Campbell-Price 2014). This dearth of empirical data supports the case for further research in this area.

22.5.2 The Nexus Between Cultivating IC, Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement

The literature search also revealed a positive correlation between intercultural experience and emotional intelligence (EI). More specifically, research has demonstrated that immersive cross-cultural experiences have resulted in the development of intrapersonal, interpersonal and cognitive capacity (Potts 2016). According to Mayer et al. (2008), 'Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the ability to carry out sophisticated information processing about emotions and emotion-relevant stimuli and to use this information as a guide to thinking and behaviour' (p. 503). Fostering EI capacity is important for overall success in work and in life (Cherniss 2000). Studies also found that cross-cultural experiences can lead to higher levels of emotional resilience and growth in one's ability to recognise ethical and moral issues. Hence cross-cultural travels were found to accelerate the development of open-mindedness, increase sympathy and patience and foster tolerance and empathy while concurrently reducing ethnocentric attitudes (Kitsantas 2004; Zamastil-Vondrova 2011; Potts 2016; Chieffo and Griffiths 2004; Hadis 2005; Fairchild et al. 2006; Zimmerman and Neyer 2013).

According to Zamastil-Vondrova (2011), most students admitted that prior to the intercultural experience they had misgivings and misconceptions about the nature of people from other cultures and overall aspects of certain regions. However, in a follow-up interview 8 years later, Zamastil-Vondrova (2011) reported a participant's perspective as follows: 'It was and still is one of the best things that has ever happened to me and has greatly shaped who I am and who I will become' (p. 6).

Wagner and Christensen (2015) found that intercultural experiences provided participants with the opportunity to reflect on issues such as social justice and the environment as well as build their confidence to act on such convictions. Furthermore, such experiences seemingly cultivate participants' commitment, not only to social

justice but also to moral development (Ehrlich 1997; Sax and Austin 1997). In the evocative words of Kraft (1997):

> It is within cross-cultural settings within our own society and internationally that the most powerful, life-changing experiential learning can, and often does, occur. We may be shattered by culture shock, but if we persevere, the lessons can be overwhelmingly powerful and life-changing. I believe it is only when all of the cues which prop up our racial, gender, ethnic, religious, and cultural biases are knocked out from under us, that we can begin the process of becoming caring and compassionate people who can reach beyond the individual child in our own culture who is in distress, and begin to reach out to a world filled with millions of suffering and dying people (p. 162).

Moreover, one of the Tiessen and Epprecht's (2012) participants claimed that the immersive experience essentially constituted '[a] unique opportunity for students to gain a deeper understanding of development work, that adds an irreplaceable and enriching dimension to a degree in development studies, and allows for personal and intellectual growth at an unprecedented level' (p. 4). As shown, learning abroad not only promotes EI but also a sense of intellectual connection to the world (Luo and Jamieson-Drake 2014). Furthermore, Gower et al. (2018) found that students' placement in other countries enhanced their academic outcomes, and Tiessen and Epprecht (2012) contended that such experiences enriched academic learning with practical, hands-on experience. Relatedly, McLeod et al. (2015) found that such experiences fostered an increase in participants' internal locus of control compared with those who did not travel.

Finally, Zamastil-Vondrova (2011) also discovered that participants identified a multitude of skills that were strengthened because of this experience including confidence, adaptability, global perspective, leadership, map reading, effective communication, empathy, creativity, valuable travel skills, business etiquette and many more. This led to a more sophisticated interpretation and understanding of basic concepts taught in the classroom.

Not only did these experiences cultivate emotional and academic learning but many students also expressed that cross-cultural trips were the highlight of their education. As one participant stated, '[t]his is hands down the most influential, productive, life changing and, downright, best course DEVS[2] has to offer' (Tiessen and Epprecht 2012, p. 2). When surveyed by Zamastil-Vondrova (2011), 22 of 23 students reported that study abroad was 'the defining moment of their education, the single most important aspect of their education, the best thing that ever happened to them and that studying overseas was unforgettable' (p. 5). Notwithstanding these qualitative findings, there was nevertheless a sense that more systematic data collection and analysis would benefit the state of empirical research, especially in the Australian high school context (Allison and Higgins 2002; Campbell-Price 2014). In consequence, more empirical research is needed to build this field of investigation.

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[2]The Global Development Studies program (DEVS) was conducted at Queen's University and 'found overwhelming support for international work-study courses as a way to enrich their academic learning with practical, hands-on experience, and to help launch them into careers' (Tiessen and Epprecht 2012, p. 2).

22.5.3   The Benefits of IC on Career Aspirations and Employability

In addition to the benefits discussed above, cross-cultural trips abroad also present a multitude of opportunities in furthering career goals and increasing employability (Dolby 2008). Results across several larger-scale studies found that 'learning abroad influenced [participants'] decision to expand or change academic majors and 62% reported that learning abroad ignited an interest in a career direction' (Potts 2016, p. 13). Relatedly, students rated their experience abroad 'as worthwhile or very worthwhile for increasing their motivation and passion for their chosen career direction' (Potts 2016, p. 13) and ultimately developed 'a better idea what [they] want to do after graduation' (Brandenburg et al. 2014, p. 110). Furthermore, Dwyer (2004b) found in his research across intercultural, academic, personal and vocational benefits that the largest reported difference was in career impact. This has already prompted several leading institutions to design courses and programs that combine career advising with a learning abroad experience (Potts 2016; Bracht et al. 2006).

In summary, several studies postulate that not only do cross-cultural experiences enrich study and help inform career pathways but they also increase employability by launching participants into careers, as employers rate cross-cultural acumen as a highly desirable attribute (Potts 2016; Zarnick 2010; OCED 2018; Tiessen and Epprecht 2012). Notwithstanding this predominantly positive perception, there is nevertheless a sense that more systematic empirical studies are useful to further enhance understanding of the Australian high school context (Allison and Higgins 2002; Campbell-Price 2014). In short, building this field of investigation will require more empirical research.

22.5.4   The Duration and Purpose of Intercultural Experiences

With demand for cross-cultural experiences increasing, short-term programs have emerged as a popular alternative to longer term experiences. This can be attributed to making destinations more accessible, keeping down costs and decreasing demands on time (Potts 2016). This popularity is reflected in statistics, which show that in the USA 62% of all cross-cultural immersive experiences were short (Institute for International Education 2015), and in Australia around 55% of programs were under 10 weeks (Australian Universities International Directors Forum 2015).

Notwithstanding the apparent popularity of short-term trips, there remains an ongoing academic debate about the value of concise experiences in comparison to semester or longer programs (Potts 2016; Hartlan 2011). Nevertheless, across the areas of IC, EI, academic attainment, personal growth and career impact, 'students in short-term trips reported significant and lasting effects up to 50 years later' (Potts 2016, p. 7) and in some cases, short-term participants claimed stronger effects than

semester-length participants (Murphy-Lejeune 2002). According to The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE 2007), '[i]t appears that the amount of time one is abroad is not as important as whether a student has such an experience. This suggests that there is value in increasing the number of short-term cross-cultural or "study away" opportunities for students' (p. 17).

In short, there is support in the literature for well-designed short-term experiences, which can have significant long-term benefits for participants (Dwyer 2004b; Shiveley and Misco 2015).

22.5.5   Overview of Instruments for Measuring IC

As intercultural educational programs continue to proliferate, the accurate measurement of competencies is a vital success factor for valid and reliable conclusions (Greenholtz 2010). Leading thinkers in the field of intercultural understanding have developed widely used and accepted models and instruments for measuring IC. An overview of popular approaches is summarised in Table 22.1.

22.5.6   Ethical Considerations

From an ethical perspective, intercultural learning experiences can also enhance moral development, understanding of ethical issues and commitment to social justice issues (Sax and Austin 1997; Potts 2016; Tiessen and Epprecht 2012). In their research, Willis (2012) and Rennick (2012) discuss the significance of religion in the field of international live-learn experiences and how beliefs can drive the desire for such experiences. Both also highlight the need for closer examination of the specific motives and experiences of religious-based experiences. Epprecht warns of the power imbalance that can occur if the motivations of participants are purely about their own learning and the need to quench a moral desire (Tiessen and Epprecht 2012). Andreotti (2011) puts it crudely, warning that this notion can lead to an unintended 'narcissistic approach to activism' (p. 151). This concern is central to ethical dilemmas surrounding the topic (cf. Holliday 2012; Luetz and Havea 2018; Luetz 2019b). However, this is not the intention of most such experiences and drawing attention to this issue and the need for empowerment of host nations or communities is thus highlighted as far more profitable for the effective planning and implementation of such trips (Tiessen and Epprecht 2012).

Another major ethical issue is that the often-prohibitive cost of travelling abroad can make such an experience unattainable for some (Allison and Higgins 2002; Tiessen and Epprecht 2012). Therefore, of paramount consideration must be the safeguard to prevent these experiences from becoming 'a rite of passage or holidays for the wealthy upper-middle class dressed up to be education to ease the conscience' (Allison and Higgins 2002, p. 24).

Table 22.1 Overview of the key dimensions in IC-related research

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Milton Bennett—Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)

The DMIS looks at IC as a progressive and developmental process (Bennett 1986, 1993, 2004). The DMIS is based upon on a constructivist view and reflects how one's world is formed in terms of understanding cultural differences between oneself and other distinct groups (Pedersen n. d.; see also Bennett 1986, 1993, 2004)

Mitchel R. Hammer—Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)

Based on the work of Bennett, Hammer developed the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). It is "constructed to measure the orientations toward cultural differences described in the DMIS. The result of this work is a 50-item (with 10 additional demographic items), paper-and-pencil measure of intercultural competence" (Hammer et al. 2003 p. 421). Hammer (2012) states: "The IDI has been rigorously tested and has cross-cultural generalizability across both international and domestic diversity" (p. 117)

Geert Hofstede—Six Dimensions of Culture Model

As a leader in intercultural understanding Hofstede (2011) developed a model that consists of six dimensions of culture. He defined culture as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others" (p. 3). The six dimensions are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, long-term versus short-term orientation and indulgence versus restraint (Hofstede 2011) For intercultural interactions, these six dimensions serve as a concise, accessible, and useful tool for developing an understanding of different cultures, values and beliefs

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Emotional Intelligence—Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Scale (MSCEIS)

The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) is an ability-based test designed to measure the four branches of El described in their model. The four levels of the MSCEIS are perceiving, using, understanding and managing emotions (Salovey and Grewal 2005). MSCEIT uses the format of intelligence testing to measure the emerging scientific understanding of emotions and their function, specifically El. The MSCEIT consists of 141 items and takes 30–45 min to complete (Salovey et al. 2003)

Empathy—Toronto Empathy Scale (TEQ)

One of the leading measures of empathy is the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ), developed by researchers Spreng, McKinnon, Mar and Levine as a self-report measure to efficiently and reliably assess empathy as an emotional process. The finished product is the TEQ "a self-report style, uni-dimensional, 16-item, five-point Likert type scale developed to assess the empathy levels of individuals" (Totan et al. 2012, p. 179)

It is crucial that much thoughtful planning goes into the preparation for such trips (Tiessen and Epprecht 2012). There is currently a campaign for greater regulation and professionalisation of cross-cultural learning experiences as it is claimed that the potential accreditation of these trips could help mitigate ethical issues and contribute to the overall safety and quality of such experiences (Allison and Higgins 2002).

22.5.7 Opportunities for Future Research

In synthesis, as exposited by the literature search above, multiple knowledge gaps persist in relation to the IC of Australian high school students. This conclusion validates the need for further research in this area. There are several useful avenues for conducting future quantitative, qualitative and/or mixed methods research, and Sect. 22.5.5 lists popular quantitative data collection instruments. From a qualitative paradigm of research inquiry, phenomenology would appear to be one appropriate methodological approach as its design is chiefly 'concerned with questions of how individuals make sense of the world around them' (Bryman 2016, p. 26).

22.6 Concluding Reflections: The Timely Benefits of Cultivating IC

This literature search explored multiple themes, which emerged from the search criteria, including in areas of cultivating IC, EI, academic achievement, career choice and employability, duration, purpose and ethics. The findings suggest that short-term, cross-cultural experiences can help students to function as more enlightened, sensitised and responsible global citizens in this increasingly globalised, complex, multipolar and multicultural world (Luetz 2019a). Furthermore, it can be expected that as our world continues to globalise (should this be possible in a COVID-19 world; Sect. 22.7 below), the demand for IC-enhancing experiences, not only from students but also from employers, may continue to increase (Kitsantas 2004; Unger and Luetz 2019). Notwithstanding, the literature search also identified a lack of IC-knowledge relating specifically to the Australian high school context. More specifically, 'growth in participation in these trips has not been matched by academic attention or analysis' (Campbell-Price 2014, p. i). Consequently, with limited data available in the area of short-term intercultural experiences, especially in relation to Australian high school students, the literature search scope was ultimately widened to additionally encapsulate Australian university students and data from North American sources. In synthesis, the foregoing literature search converges around the finding that more empirical research is needed into the impacts of short-term cross-cultural exposure trips on the IC-formation of high school students, both in Australia and beyond. More specifically, the analysis presented above suggests fertile opportunities for future research to investigate the benefits of immersive cross-cultural exposure trips for adolescents, the development of cultural literacy, and how best to implement processes of experiential learning in different school settings. A better understanding of the linkages between immersive cross-cultural experiences, IC and Christian education holds the obvious promise that policymakers, educators, pastors and other relevant stakeholders and duty bearers may more effectively leverage such experiential learning for the betterment of inter-cultural human relations. As massive recent racial protests have shown in countries around the world, racial inequity is

perceived to be a ubiquitous contemporary crisis (Harmon et al. 2020), including in Australia (Anthony 2020; BBC 2020) and in 'every corner of America' (Burch et al. 2020). With many of the problems linked to both 'systemic' and 'academic' undercurrents (Harmon et al. 2020), there is a clear need for more IC-enhancing experiences and immersive or 'embodied' pedagogies (Buxton et al. 2021). While conventional classroom education mostly conveys information and thereby overwhelmingly aims to 'convert and convince the 'head' [rather] than enthrall and enchant the heart' (Luetz et al. 2020, p. 7), this strategy may no longer be adequate. In view of both persistent and pervasive racial inequities, there seems to be an increasingly urgent case for Academia to confront new perils with new pedagogies. The reason is that in today's postmodern, post-fact and post-truth era, conventional classroom education seems to be ostensibly inept at promoting and sustaining inter-culturally attuned human behaviours, at least not to the extent that this appears to be needed. Immersive and 'soulful' educational experiences with, and importantly, *in* other countries and cultures, will invariably foster more IC, more inter-cultural literacy, and ultimately, more inter-culturally sympathetic human behaviours. This chapter has sought to gently, respectfully but insistently argue, both on the basis of the authors' lived experiences and on the basis of the literature, that to thrive in this world, humanity must unite to proactively cultivate IC as a 'new kind of literacy' (Nelson et al. 2019), which has already been conceptualised as the 'literacy of the future' (UNESCO 2007; OECD 2018). This aspiration is supported by all of the world's major religions (Armstrong 2012). In the words of a great Christian, 'My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours' (Tutu 1991, p. 35).

22.7 Postscript—Nurturing Intercultural Competency in a COVID-19 World?

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus (COVID-19) a pandemic, thereby fast bringing disruption to both international travel and what had been (until then) the most interconnected and globalised society ever (OECD 2018; Nelson et al. 2019). At that time, this book chapter had been largely finalised with a pre-COVID-19 frame of the world. However, many changes since then have raised pointed questions about both the future of globalisation and the likely prospects of nurturing IC in an intra- or post-COVID-19 world (WHO 2020; Ducharme 2020; Enderle 2020). There is now a timely moment to take fresh stock of what the pandemic may imply, both for IC-development and its application to practice. Selected questions and implications are explored in this postscript.

Perhaps the challenge most pertinent to this discussion is the nearly complete disappearance of international travel (Gössling et al. 2020; Fitz-Gibbon 2020; Leal Filho et al. 2020). As a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the far-reaching physical distancing measures that have been implemented to contain it (Hsiang et al.

2020), there are now fundamental global changes unfolding, which include the near-certain onset of a severe global recession, the possibility of peak or *de*-globalisation[3] (Sułkowski 2020), and the increased reliance on digital communications in place of interpersonal contact, among others (Díaz et al. 2020; Sułkowski 2020; Wells et al. 2020). Due to the varying responses of individual countries, at this stage it seems to be largely impossible to forecast the depth and breadth of future changes, albeit already the '[v]irtualization of communication seems to be an important change' (Sułkowski 2020, p. 2). Evidently, COVID-19 travel restrictions have mostly put on hold prospects for the development of IC by 'immersive' cross-cultural experience, given that international air travel from and to many countries is presently impossible or even prohibited, including in Australia (Gössling et al. 2020; Besser 2020). At the time of finalising this postscript (June 2020), the Australian Government Department of Health has the following notice posted on its website: 'There is a ban on all overseas travel, with few exceptions. Since 25 March 2020, all Australian citizens and permanent residents have been prohibited from travelling out of Australia unless granted an exemption'.[4]

In this context, the question arises whether virtual forms of communication can rise up to the challenge of the moment and purposefully engender cross-culturally immersive experiences? Relatedly, with 'immersion' currently limited to the two-dimensional size of a computer (or mobile phone) screen, can virtualisation usher in meaningful intercultural communication, given that this format tends to mask or conceal many of the vital clues, styles, mannerisms, voice intonations, etc. that typically characterise full-bodied interpersonal encounters? (Goettsch 2016; Holtbrügge et al. 2013; Zakaria et al. 2020). Social scientists are already seemingly concerned about how the increased use of technology may impact on 'normal, instinctual' forms of human communication (Morris 2020). The challenges are multifarious and include: constantly seeing an on-screen image of oneself, an obvious inability to read full-body language, a lack of real-time feedback, the digital divide eclipsing large parts of the global population, and the fact that many people are just seemingly not 'wired' to connect via screen or phone for extended periods of time (Morris 2020; Sander and Bauman 2020). The new terms 'online meeting fatigue', 'zoom exhaustion' or 'video chat fatigue' give an idea of some of the challenges involved (Digital Market Media 2020; Morris 2020; NSW Health 2020).

A relevant example is discussed by Uono and Hietanen (2015), whose research reported eye contact behaviour differing significantly between cultures. For instance, while maintaining eye contact during social interaction may be more culturally appropriate for Western Europeans, it tends to be less so for East Asians. More specifically, studies have demonstrated that Japanese people showed less eye contact than Canadians during face-to-face interaction (McCarthy et al. 2006, 2008). It would seem that a virtual communication context could make simple gestures or mannerisms,

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[3] 'De-globalisation' has been defined as the 'reversing certain effects of globalization' (Sułkowski 2020, p. 3).

[4] https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-travellers.

including eye contact, far more prone to being misinterpreted. While the authors of this chapter cannot be sure how COVID-19 will ultimately impact on IC formation, it seems to be already clear that the use of digitally mediated interaction is seemingly adding an extra layer of analysis through which communication will need to be translated and deciphered (Zakaria et al. 2020).

If cross-cultural communication is to remain largely constrained to an on-screen format for the foreseeable future, it is an open question how effectively (mis)understandings may be engendered and managed (or missed). One possible outcome could be that virtual communication may establish its own norms, mannerisms, communication styles and subcultures, which may be altogether distinct from—or superimposed on—'ethnic' culture (Diehl and Prins 2008; Unger et al. 2021). While limited vision of the world (and other people) through a camera lens (or computer screen) is preferable to having no vision or interaction at all, it would seem that reliance on virtual conferencing can never be a complete substitute for true, immersive and full-bodied cross-cultural experiences. This principle is reflected in the famous scripture on love and partial knowledge, which this postscript has adapted for the contemporary COVID-19 context: 'For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror [computer screen]; then we shall see face to face [in person]. Now I know in part [via audiovisual senses]; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known [via full-bodied meeting]' (1. Cor. 13:12, NIV).

To conclude, while this postscript cannot exhaustively analyse (let alone answer) how a post-COVID-19 future may impact on IC-formation, the question remains how relevant research can be meaningfully carried out if international interpersonal contact remains enduringly curtailed in the wake of the (still unfolding) pandemic? (cf. Daoud 2020) This is certainly a significant challenge that future research projects will need to overcome. As authors, we dare not make a prediction. As the Danish physicist Niels Bohr (1885–1962) famously said, '[p]rediction is very difficult, especially about the future' (cited in Brown 2008, p. 21).

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Chapter 23
Universal Design for Learning in Christian Higher Education: Inclusive Practices for Students with and Without Disability

Louise Gosbell

Abstract Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework for teaching and learning developed to give all students equal access to education and to meet the needs of all students in the classroom. The principles of UDL focus attention on flexible learning environments with multimodal teaching styles that can accommodate individual learning abilities and strengths. While this model is often considered specifically in relation to the inclusion of students with disability and learning difficulties, the benefits of the UDL approach are wide reaching. With a focus on atypical learning styles and different methods of feeding back learned information, UDL is beneficial for all learners and not just those labelled as having a disability or learning difficulties. Despite the documented advantages to all learners of the UDL approach, higher education providers, including Christian institutions, have been slow to adopt the inclusive principles of UDL. This chapter will outline the current protocols for seeking accommodations for students with disability in higher education in Australia as directed in the Disability Standards for Education (DSE). After a summation of the limitations of the current approaches to including students with disability in tertiary education in Australia, this chapter will outline the aims and methodology of the principles of UDL and consider its application in Christian higher education. The final section will give a theological rationale for why the inclusion of students with disability should be a priority for theological education and provide practical examples of what UDL might look like in the theological classroom.

Keywords Disability · Inclusion · Pedagogy · Universal design for learning · Theological education

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23.1 Introduction

Thérèse Rein, the wife of former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, often speaks of the impact her father had on her views of disability and her passion for the inclusion of people with disability in all areas of society. During his time in the RAAF (Royal Australian Air Force) in World War II, Rein's father John Rein, was involved in a plane crash that left him with a severe spinal cord injury resulting in paraplegia. After a period of time in recovery, Rein eventually decided to retrain as an aeronautical engineer. The university he wished to attend, however, advised him that due to his paraplegia, it would not be able to accommodate him as all the university's lecture theatres were tiered, and access was only possible via stairs. Not easily dissuaded, Rein insisted he would be able to make the situation work if the university would allow him to enrol. On the first day of classes, Rein made his way to the university campus in his newly modified vehicle equipped for a driver with paraplegia. He offered transportation to and from classes each day for any of his peers who would commit to helping him get in and out of the lecture rooms for the duration of his degree. Through this mutual exchange of services, he completed his university degree and went on to work as an aeronautical engineer in the industry for the next forty years of his life. Although Rein had a physical disability, it was not his disability per se that had almost prevented his entrance into university; it was the inaccessibility of the university campus. Once the issue of physical access was overcome through some willing friends, there were no longer any barriers to Rein's success in achieving his tertiary qualifications.

In 2019, the experiences of John Rein in the 1940s seem distant and surreal. It is difficult for us in the modern western world to imagine a time that public buildings such as universities were so physically inaccessible for students with disability that the only option available was being physically carried into the classroom. Much has happened both in Australia and globally since the 1940s to improve access to social contexts for people with disability. Initiatives such as the 1992 Disability Discrimination Act in Australia and the development of the international UN Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008 are examples of such progress. However, the reality is that for many students with disability, higher education in Australia is just as inaccessible as it was for Rein in the 1940s. Rather than physical barriers to education—the absence of ramps or accessible bathrooms—the challenges that continue to prevent the inclusion of students with disability in higher education today are pedagogical and have to do with issues of inflexible and inaccessible curricula, assessments, and teaching methods.

This chapter will address the current state of play with respect to the implementation of the Disability Standards for Education in higher education in Australia and the current protocols involved in students seeking accommodations based on disability. In considering various approaches to improve accessibility and remove barriers for students with and without disability in higher education, this chapter will focus on the pedagogical concept of Universal Design for Learning. This model encourages systemic moves towards inclusion by expanding the options available to students in

relation to three key areas: student engagement, representation, and expression. The final section of this chapter will give a theological rationale for why the inclusion of students with disability should be a priority for Christian higher education and give some practical examples of what Universal Design for Learning might look like in the theological academic setting.

23.2 Disability Standards for Education and the Current State of Play in Higher Education in Australia

1983 saw the development of the 'World Program of Action Concerning Disabled Persons' by the United Nations, and one of the key aims of this program 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' (Hills, Anderson, & Davidson, 2018, p. 4). However, it was not until 1990 that the first laws were passed in the USA, which were designed to reduce discrimination against people on the basis of disability. This Americans with Disabilities Act in the USA was followed shortly by similar legislation in other countries, including Australia, which in 1992 passed the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). The DDA prohibits discrimination against people with disability in a range of different contexts, including employment, accessing goods and services, transportation, communication, medical care, public buildings, accommodation, as well as education.[1]

Although the 1992 DDA made it unlawful to discriminate against a person with disability with respect to education, the particular nuances of the act were not articulated clearly until the development of the Australian Government's Disability Standards for Education (DSE) in 2005. The DSE set out the obligations of education providers in Australia so that students with disability can have 'access to the same educational opportunities and choices as all other students' (National Disability Coordination Officer [NDCO], 2015, p. 3). Under the DSE, Australian education providers have three specific obligations:

1. To consult;
2. To make reasonable adjustments;
3. To eliminate harassment and victimization (DSE, 2005).

While there is an expectation that institutions will modify internal policies and procedures to work towards greater inclusion of students with disability, the primary emphasis of the DSE is on the adjustments institutions must make for individual students with disability to be able to access education. These adjustments are 'measure(s) or action(s) taken by an education provider that has the effect of assisting a student with a disability' (DSE, 2005). In this respect, any adjustments that are made on the basis of disability occur as a response to the particular needs of an individual

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[1]This list is representative only and not exhaustive.

student therefore making the process individually rather than institutionally driven. The onus then lies on the student with a disability to make requests of the education provider based on their own individual needs.

There are, however, several significant concerns with this student-initiated approach particularly because of the pressure it puts on individual students with disability to be able to express and advocate for their own educational needs. Research indicates that many students with disability find this process 'humiliating and stigmatizing' (Izzo, Murray & Novak, 2008, p. 62; Field, Sarver, & Shaw, 2003) and for some students, the fear of stigmatization is such that they choose not to disclose their conditions to their education provider at all. In addition, this student-initiated method of requesting accommodations also assumes that a student with disability has 'sufficient knowledge about their disabilities to properly communicate their needs, which is not always the case' (Griful-Freixenet, Struyven, Verstichele, & Andries, 2017, p. 1628; Holloway, 2001). An additional flaw with this approach is that the process is reliant on students' understanding of the kind of 'reasonable adjustments' that are available to them on campus (Kilpatrick et al., 2017). As a result, only those students who are willing and able to advocate for their own needs, and can request specific accommodations, are the ones who benefit from any disability-related adjustments from education providers.

An additional issue with the student-initiated process is the fact that any adjustments that are required by students are only enacted retrospectively. In many cases, it is only *after* a student initiates the process of seeking disability accommodations that any adjustments to teaching or assessment methods are given any consideration. This often creates a lag time between the initial request and when the adjusted lecture materials or assessment guidelines might be available for the student. Furthermore, these accommodations do not roll over into each new semester. Students then are not only required to bear the responsibility of advocating for their own needs, but this process must be repeated at the beginning of every new semester thus making the process time-consuming and labour-intensive (Field et al., 2003; Izzo et al., 2008; Tobin & Behling, 2018).

The cumbersome nature of this individualized approach does not only impact students but also university faculty who must 'retrofit or modify existing instructional and curriculum materials' in order to accommodate the needs of individual students (Izzo et al., 2008, p. 62; Field et al., 2003). It is understandable then that this kind of accommodation approach which is about 'making one change, one time, to help one person' (Tobin & Behling, 2018, p. 5) is considered burdensome by both students and faculty(e.g., Cook, Rumrill, &Tankersley, 2009; Murray, Lombardi, Wren, & Keys, 2009; Zhang et al., 2010; Lombardi & Murray, 2011). Not only this, but research indicates that accommodations made for individual students are not making any impact at an institutional level with respect to the policies and procedures for including students with disability. The 2015 review of the DSE suggests that even in cases where formal complaints have been made about the failure of an education provider to offer 'reasonable adjustments', the nature of 'confidential conciliation' means that 'the complaints process makes (little difference) to systemic improvement over time through precedent-setting and publicity' (Urbis, 2015, p. ii).

The 2015 Urbis review of the DSE also suggests that one of the major concerns with the implementation of these standards concerns the ambiguity of the vocabulary employed. The DSE outlines that education providers are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for students with disability, yet, no guidelines exist to quantify this for staff or students. The only explanation offered states that adjustments are required for a student with a disability so that they can access education 'on the same basis as a student without a disability, and includes an aid, a facility, or a service that the student requires because of his or her disability' (DSE, 2005). However, educational institutions are provided a caveat as to the extent of the adjustments they are required to make: an education provider is required to comply with the requested adjustments unless these accommodations 'impose unjustifiable hardship on the provider' (DSE, 2005). This lack of clarity over the key terminology used in the DSE was flagged as a major concern in the 2015 review of the DSE (Urbis, 2015, p. ii).

While in 2005, a system that relied on individual requests for disability accommodations may have seemed manageable given the small percentage of students with disability in higher education, this approach is no longer feasible. In 2001, the percentage of students with disability in undergraduate courses in Australian tertiary institutions was 3.1%. In contrast, in 2016, this number had increased to 6%, equating to a 94% increase in the number of students with disability (Universities Australia, 2017; Hills et al., 2018). Given this growing number of students with disability in tertiary education, making modifications for students on an individual, case-by-case basis is no longer a viable solution. Disability accommodations must be addressed at the institutional rather than at the individual level. While it is likely there will always be the need for some individualized disability accommodations, these specific requests would be substantially reduced if the issues of accommodation were prioritized and addressed by higher education staff and faculty at a systemic level during the course development stage rather than waiting until individual requests are submitted at the beginning of each semester (Scott, McGuire, & Shaw, 2003).

Whether students identify as having a disability or not, the reality is that the student body in any higher education institution in Australia is far more diverse now even than it was in 2005 when the DSE was written. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the percentage of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, low socioeconomic areas, and rural communities, indigenous students, international students, and students with refugee status have all increased substantially since 2001 (Universities Australia, 2019). Yet even these statistics do not reflect the full range of diversity present in our tertiary institutions with any given class being comprised of a mix of students who have come directly from high school as well as mature-age students with greater life and work experience. In addition to age, work and study skills, a higher education classroom is also going to feature students who possess a broad diversity of social and analytical skills such as time-management skills, the ability to deal with pressure and deadlines, as well as experience with using technology (Gradel & Edson, 2009–2010).

Given the higher attrition rates for students with disability (Pliner & Johnson, 2004; Kilpatrick et al., 2017; Hills et al., 2018) as well as the statistics on the

broad diversity of students already present in Australian higher education institutions, it is apparent that the 'one-size-fits-all' approach to non-traditional learners is simply not effective. While we continue to approach tertiary education in this way with the onus on an allegedly small number of 'atypical' learners requiring specific disability accommodations, we fail to recognize the enormous breadth of learning styles and abilities already present in any tertiary classroom. For this reason, rather than waiting for requests for individual accommodations, higher education must begin to be forward-thinking in planning and preparing for learner variability at a systemic rather than at an individual level. Thus, as Hitch, Macfarlane, and Nihill (2015) suggest, our 'perceptions of inclusive teaching much evolve to embrace the multiple forms of diversity present in contemporary student cohorts' beyond just factors of disability (p. 143; Clarke & Nelson, 2014) in order to improve the attrition and success rates for students with disability and for all learners.

23.3   Universal Design for Learning

According to Universities Australia's 2019 statistics, higher education providers have seen growth between 2008 and 2017 of 105% in the enrolled number of indigenous students, 66% in the enrolled number of students from low socioeconomic areas, and 50% increase in students from remote and regional areas, as well as 123% growth in students with disability (Universities Australia, 2019). Given this growth in diversity in students, it is clear, a new approach to learner variability is required beyond the existing method of seeking individualized accommodations for students with disability. One pedagogical method that was developed in the 1990s that is making a considerable impact in all levels of education is Universal Design for Learning.

The terminology and concepts that underpin UDL are reliant on the concept of Universal Design, which was developed in the world of architecture. The term Universal Design was coined by architect Ronald Mace in 1985 and refers to architectural environments that are usable by all people. Universal Design shifts the focus from making accommodations specifically for people with disability and instead focuses on creating spaces which are usable by *all people* ' regardless of the person's functional limitations' (Aune, 2000, p. 57). The aim of Universal Design is 'to embed accessibility features in buildings during design and construction rather than making expensive retrofitted products to meet the growing needs of diverse populations' (Gradel & Edson, 2009–2010, 111; Mace, 1985; Rose, 2000). Although creating accessible spaces has the advantage of benefiting people with disability, the advantages are felt far beyond this specific demographic group. One of the best examples of this universal design is curb ramps which create small ramps from the footpath to the road to accommodate wheelchair users as well as people using strollers and shopping carts.

It was the principles associated with Universal Design in the built environment that lead to the development of UDL in education.[2] First developed in the 1990s by neuroscientists at the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) in Boston, UDL sought to appropriate Mace's concepts about the accessibility of the built environment and apply that concept to education. The aim then of UDL is to develop flexibility and universal accessibility in education to impact the broadest range of learners simultaneously which would reduce the need for disability-specific accommodations for individual students. When accessibility features are intentionally built into pedagogy from the planning and development stage, the task of 'retrofitting' units becomes virtually unnecessary. Not only this, but when issues of accessibility are addressed systemically at the institutional level, individual students with disability are relieved of the burden of seeking individualized accommodations (Black, Weinberg, & Brodwin, 2015; Tobin & Behling, 2018).

Following its introduction, UDL was quickly adopted by primary and high school educators who saw merit in UDL's attention to learner variability. Although there has been a slower response from the higher education sector (Rose, Harbour, Johnston, Daley, & Abarbanell, 2006; Tobin & Behling, 2018), interest in UDL is growing as university faculty begin to embrace UDL as 'a conceptual and philosophical foundation on which to build a model of teaching and learning that is inclusive, equitable, and guides the creation of accessible course materials' (Schelly, Davies,& Spooner, Schelly et al. 2011, p. 18). UDL aims at proactively anticipating a diverse student body and factoring that diversity into the development and implementation of tertiary classes (McGuire, Scott, & Shaw, 2006; Griful-Freixenet et al., 2017; Basham, Israel, Graden, Poth, & Winston, 2010; Edyburn, 2010). By anticipating and preparing for a broad range of learning styles and abilities from a unit's inception, university faculty are better able to accommodate the natural diversity of a classroom with substantially less need for individualized student accommodation requests.

One of the key foci of UDL is on the concept of learner variability and the natural variation among students in any given classroom. The current approach to disability accommodation outlined by the DSE assumes that a classroom works in a particular way with a cohort of 'normal' or 'typical' students being in the majority with only a small percentage of students with disability being 'atypical' learners who might require specific disability accommodations. The burden of responsibility then lies with those individual 'atypical' learners to not only understand and advocate for their own needs but also to suggest pedagogical changes that might facilitate their individual 'deficits'. In contrast, the UDL approach suggests that the division of students into 'typical' and 'atypical' learners actually creates a false dichotomy and is based on the concept of the 'mythical average learner' which in reality does not exist (Meyer, Rose, & Gordon, 2014, p. 2). Instead, proponents of the UDL approach

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[2]There are alternative models to UDL—Universal Design of Instruction (Burgstahler, 2009) and Universal Instructional Design (Goff & Higbee, 2008). Although they all have slightly different approaches, what they have in common is "proactive planning and inclusive design of instruction, course materials, and learning environments to meet the needs of a wide range of students" (Davies, Schelly, & Spooner, 2013, p. 196).

suggest that if there is one guaranteed thing in any classroom, it is that learner variability is the rule rather than the exception (CAST, 2018c). The foundations of UDL are then that educators need to prepare for the 'predictable variability' that is present in any learning environment rather than seeing students with disability as the anomaly (CAST, 2018b, p. 1). By anticipating and preparing for learner variability from the outset, educators are in the position where they can create learning environments that are more engaging, user-friendly, and accessible for all students. Rather than seeing individual disability accommodations as a distraction or interruption to the 'standard' teaching approach, the UDL guidelines mean educators can 'anticipate and value the incredible strengths and diversity of our learners' (CAST, 2018b, p. 2). The UDL framework thus 'challenges us to rethink the nature of curriculum materials and endow them with the inherent flexibility necessary to serve diverse learning needs' (Rose & Meyer, 2002, p. 82).

23.4   Three Principles of UDL—Engagement, Representation and Expression

According to the Center for Universal Design in Education, there are four keys areas where UDL can and should be utilized: in instruction, in services, in information technology, and in physical spaces (Burgstahler, 2009; Center for Universal Design in Education, 2019). Despite the importance of all four of these areas, due to space restrictions, we will only address here the issues of UDL in relation to instruction, that is, the actual teaching and learning that takes place in the higher education classroom.

The traditional approach to higher education has been that people who are academics attain PhDs and use their expertise in their specific field to lecture in tertiary institutions with the aim of imparting information to students who are also interested in this same field. Although academics may have extensive experience in researching as well as knowledge of their specific field, what is often missing is targeted training for higher education faculty on the actual theory and methods of pedagogy (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004; Roettger, Roettger, & Walugembe, 2007). While the traditional method of tertiary faculty simply lecturing *at* students is still the most common method of teaching in many disciplines, the evidence suggests that this approach is simply not effective and is becoming *less* effective as our student cohorts become more diversified. While this method of merely speaking *at* students might have some impact, it is not an ideal pedagogical method because humans 'are not empty receptacles into which knowledge is poured; we are active meaning makers' (Kohn, 2017, n.p.). Effective teaching then transcends merely imparting information and seeks to create opportunities for students to develop meaning.

The UDL approach to pedagogy seeks to assist educators with focusing attention on the processes involved with thinking and learning. What is it that drives students to learn? What helps students to engage better with teaching materials? How can

students learn to evaluate and critique what they are learning? How can students learn to apply what they are learning? Having its roots in the field of neuroscience means that the UDL approach developed from consideration to the way in which the brain learns and processes different kinds of information. Izzo et al. (2008) suggest that 'From a neurological standpoint, people learn in distinct ways regardless of their backgrounds' (p. 61). But a student's capacity to learn is also directly impacted by the means and tools utilized in the process of teaching. While the traditional approach of higher education—an educator presenting large amounts of information from the front of a lecture hall—will always be able to connect with some learners, it will never have the ability to connect with the growing diversity of learners we have in our tertiary classrooms.

The primary aims of UDL are summarized in three key principles. The common element across all three of the UDL principles is on education that provides students with flexibility and 'with a wider variety of options' in all areas of teaching and learning (Rose & Meyer, 2002, p. 74). The three UDL principles refer to:

– **Multiple Means of Engagement**—This relates to the 'why' of learning. Why do students want to learn in the first place? How can we teach in ways that encourage and maintain student enthusiasm and interest?
– **Multiple Means of Representation**—This relates to the 'what' of learning. What are the tools and methods we are using to present information? How can we employ a range of different styles and techniques to appeal to a broad range of learning styles and abilities?
– **Multiple Means of Expression**—This relates to the 'how' of learning. How can students show that they understand a topic? Are there various options available for students to be able to express their knowledge, e.g. in written or verbal form? (CAST, 2018a).

The primary focus of the UDL principles is on offering flexibility and variety in respect to the way information is presented to students, the way students can report back the information they have learned, and options in the way educators seek to engage the interests and abilities of all students in the classrooms. The reason for this is that:

> Options are essential to learning, because no single way of presenting information, no single way of responding to information, and no single way of engaging students will work across the diversity of students that populate our classrooms. Alternatives reduce barriers to learning for students with disabilities while enhancing learning opportunities for everyone (Council for Exceptional Children, 2011 as cited in Tobin and Behling, 2018, p. 25).

At the heart of the UDL model is the belief that diverse classrooms require 'diversity in instruction' (Boothe, Lohmann, Donnell, & Hall, 2018, p. 3; Hitchcock, Meyer, Rose, & Jackson, 2002). The tertiary teaching environment has to be characterized by flexibility in all areas: in modes of delivery, in access to unit materials and course content, and in terms of assessment, which allow students to express their developing knowledge in a range of different ways. This kind of approach to tertiary education does not only create the best kind of learning environments for all learners but will

also 'provide students with disabilities effective, equitable, and non-discriminatory learning environments that enhance positive student achievement, alleviating the burden of requesting accommodations' (Black et al., 2015, p. 19).

23.5   Implementing UDL in Theological Education

23.5.1   Disability Theology

Since the publication of Nancy L. Eiesland's ground-breaking book *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability* (1994), the field of disability theology has grown exponentially. Part of this developing interest is an acknowledgement that in the past, disability has been overlooked and marginalized in Christian academic writings and church practice (e.g., Yong, 2016; Anderson 2003a, b). Not only have church and theological communities been ill-equipped to support and include members with disability, but many church leaders and academics have never given any serious theological consideration to issues of disability (Anderson, 2003a). In this way, Perry Shaw's (2014) concept of the 'null curriculum' is highly significant (p. 7). Shaw suggests that when a topic is not addressed in the curriculum, this in itself is a message that is sent loud and clear about the perceived relevance of that topic. In this case, the absence of disability from theological discussions relays a message that discussions of disability yield nothing meaningful in either the field of theology or in the life of the church. One of Eiesland's aims in writing *The Disabled God* was to counter this perspective, to help put issues of disability on the theological agenda, and to highlight that viewing God from the perspective of disability can actually help to expand our understanding of God and his compassion for those who experience limitation and marginalization.

While Eiesland's work sparked the beginning of an exponential increase in theological publications on disability, the issue of disability is still very often relegated to the margins of both church communities and theological institutions (Annandale & Carter, 2014). Very few theological institutions in Australia run courses specifically on theology and disability,[3] which means that ministers and church leaders have no theological or practical training on issues of disability and inclusion and are not equipped to address these issues when they arise (Yong, 2016). But while discussions of disability are often relegated to the margins in both society at large as well as in the church, the global statistics indicate that disability is not a marginal issue at all. According to the 2010 World Report on Disability, the World Health Organization estimates that approximately 15% of the world's population currently live with some form of disability (WHO, 2011, 8; Gosbell, 2018). In Australia, the

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[3]The Australian College of Theology (ACT) are a consortium of 16 theological colleges across Australia. In the ACT's available units, there are a number of units available on disability and theology which have been taught at various times at Mary Andrews College, Youthworks College, Sydney Missionary Bible College, and Ridley College.

current statistic sits at 18.3% of the national population living with some form of disability (ABS, 2016). And while it is easy to assume that medical advancements lower the rates of disability, the reality is the opposite with global ageing populations resulting in people spending more years of their lives with limited mobility or sensory impairment (WHO, 2011).

Disability, in many senses, is a universal experience of humanity. As Anderson (2003b) has noted, disability 'crosses all lines of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, and religious preference' (p. 37). While it is difficult or impossible to change most of these bodily states, disability is an ever-present reality for all human beings who, at any point, could move from being able-bodied to disabled through illness, accident, or ageing (Gosbell, 2018). Anderson (2003b) noted that it is for this reason that terms like 'temporarily able-bodied' to describe people who are presently without disabilities serve as an important reminder that 'almost everyone will experience disability in some form or fashion' at some point in their lives (p. 37).

Given these statistics on the number of people with disability globally, it is inevitable that people with disability and their family members will be part of church communities, and it is inevitable that students with disability will enrol in theological education. Given the prevalence of disability, it is also certain that the students in theological institutions will, at some point in their ministry experience, encounter people living with disability but may not be theologically equipped to understand or respond to it (Annandale & Carter, 2014).

Presently in Australia, the approach to disability accommodations in theological institutions is the same as that taken by public universities to address accessibility needs on an individual basis. In this sense, the response of theological educators to disability is virtually indistinguishable from that of public higher education. And yet, there are some principles that are fundamental to Christian belief that should challenge theological educators to think differently regarding the issues of disability.

First, at the heart of the Christian message is the belief in the *imago dei* and that all people, irrespective of physical or intellectual ability or disability, are created in God's image (Gen. 1:27). Such a belief in the inherent value and dignity of all people should provoke theological educators to consider the value of diversity in theological institutions and be willing to create spaces for people who might challenge the concept of the traditional learner. How can theological institutions demonstrate a commitment to this belief in the way they seek to welcome and include students of all abilities? Second, Jesus' life was characterized by his communion with those living on the margins of society. While the religious leaders of Jesus' day avoided and belittled the poor, people with disability and other marginalized members of the community, the earthly life of Jesus serves as a model of inclusion in seeking out those who were shunned, overlooked, and ignored and offering them a valued place in the people of God. Jesus' parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son (Luke 15) all highlight the value of the individual and their place in the kingdom. The message of seeking out the one sheep lost from the herd is an image that stands in stark contrast to educators who complain that having to make disability accommodations for 'only one student' is not really worth the effort.

Third, while the concepts of UDL challenge the methods of teaching at all levels of education and in every discipline, they should resonate with theological educators more than in any other field of study because of the focus on giving students skills for life and ministry. While Christian higher education generally replicates the same kind of lecturing approach used in other academic disciplines, the pedagogical aims of theological educators need to be shaped by the very words and beliefs they are proclaiming to teach. Rather than simply attempting to impart knowledge to students, the aim of theological education is to teach students in such a way as to equip and train them to 'correctly handle the word of truth' (2 Tim. 2:15) so that the 'servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work' (2 Tim. 3:17). This is not simply about passing on knowledge but helping students develop the skills and wisdom to think, critique, and apply learning for themselves. In this respect, theological educators should have a vested interest in creating learning environments that equip students to be thoughtful and reflective learners more than just repositories of information. Such institutions need to prepare students for an understanding of Scripture that exegetes their own lives and will transform their relationships with the people they interact with.

Fourth, while success in academia is quite often measured by high grades and awards, the inverted message of the cross as 'foolishness' to the world (1 Cor. 1:18) and the contrast between earthly and divine wisdom (e.g., James 3:13–18), should challenge us to rethink what success looks like in Christian higher education. Is success really the acquisition of high grades or should educators instead be focused on seeing students with transformed hearts through a greater understanding of God's plans and purposes for their lives? Is success in theological education measured by academic achievement awards and invitations to postgraduate studies or is it measured by a person's renewed commitment to live in community and be a Christ-like servant in the Body of Christ? Surely for theological educators, student success should be measured by Scripture's depictions of wisdom and growth rather than earthly ones.

It is for these reasons that Bruce C. Birch (2003) contends that:

> Theological schools should not address the issues involved in welcoming students with disabilities simply because they are forced to do so by state or federal law…Theological schools must address these issues because it is consistent with our theological purpose…(in) providing for and equipping the ministries of the whole people of God (p. 24).

23.5.2 Practical Suggestions for Implementing UDL in Theological Education

UDL is still in its early days in terms of tertiary education, but it has grown exponentially in the last few years as higher education providers across the USA (where it originated) and across the globe are implementing UDL in the tertiary setting. The research being gathered indicates that UDL has positive impacts in a range of areas, including student engagement and confidence as well as helping students to

become more self-motivated and successful in attaining results (Black et al., 2015). However, as Pliner and Johnson (2004) have noted, 'after 150 years of status quo preservation, the creation of higher education environments that are accepting and supportive of students with diverse needs is a formidable task that requires a major cultural transformation' (p. 105). Given that tertiary education and the traditional lecturing model are still the standard model of teaching, it is indeed a daunting task to contemplate how this might be done differently. But for the sake of greater inclusion of our increasingly diverse student base, and for the sake of the long-term impact of our teaching, new approaches to inclusive education must be considered.

In research conducted by Ensuring Access through Collaboration and Technology (EnACT) in 2009, they found that there were four key UDL-informed changes educators could implement that would make an impact on student satisfaction and success:

1. Informative and clear course syllabi;
2. Multiple teaching styles and modes to convey course concepts;
3. Offering pedagogical practices for students to engage and respond by giving feedback;
4. Differing and thorough guidelines for course assignments (EnACT, 2019, n.p.).

Points one and four on EnACT's list speak to the information presented to students in course syllabi. Although the writing and presentation of the contents of syllabi often seem like a distraction from the real business of teaching, the information provided on a course syllabus sets the tone for the entire teaching unit. The content of the syllabus prepares students for what they can expect in terms of 'classroom atmosphere, student success, and teacher-student relationships' (Wood and Madden, 2012, p. 1). Clear and concise information about assignments, marking criteria, as well as multiple contact methods for the lecturer all impact on a student's connection with the material presented in the course syllabus and increase their confidence in their ability to complete the unit (EnACT, n.d.). The inclusion of an accessibility statement about accommodations for students with disability also builds student confidence and 'signals to students that (educators) are aware of the presence of students with disabilities' (Raphael, 2015, n.p.; Langford, 2018).

As noted above, one of the most significant elements of the UDL approach is option and variability. One way to better engage learners is to employ a variety of teaching styles and modes in the classroom. This might mean alternating up-front lecture time with small group sessions, in-class activities, or short video presentations. This is not merely about filling in time in the lecture, but about reinforcing the key points of that session by using different means of representation. Another way to facilitate learning with a diverse audience is to include a range of different voices in the presentation of material. These voices can be included in the form of guest speakers, videos used in class or at home, or diversity in the set reading lists. The benefit of including the voices of people with disability, voices from the majority (developing) world, and the voices of those from other Christian traditions, for example, is that it gives students a wide variety of theological perspectives on any given issue. It also gives students the opportunity to encounter a variety of didactic styles, some of

whom students may resonate with more than their primary lecturer, thus encouraging greater connection with the course unit. This variety of approaches is also important for the UDL principle of engagement. The more integrative and multi-modal the tertiary classroom is, with a range of different ways for students to connect with the teaching connect, the more likely students are to engage with the course and remain engaged for the entire semester.

Multiple means of representation should also be considered in terms of course reading material, for example, giving students' options to select more traditional readings in one week with videos or podcasts in another week. Whenever possible, it is also helpful to include options for the ways in which students can access the same set of information, for example, when a podcast is set for the week's 'reading', consider finding a podcast that also has a full transcript available for students with auditory processing disorders. When allocating videos as part of course material, it is important to select videos with captioning—or ensure this gets added to the video— as captions are not only beneficial for students with hearing impairments but are also helpful for international students, students with auditory processing disorders, as well as students accessing course material in the college library or on public transport. When selecting material for course readings, it is also important to check that the materials are published in accessible formats that are compatible with the use of screen-reading devices for students with low vision and also include descriptions of any images which are embedded in the documents.

As well as multiple means of representation, another key element of UDL is multiple means of expression, that is, the way students can demonstrate what they have learned. Just as tertiary education has become fixated on a particular method of presentation in tertiary education, we have also become particularly reliant on the essay as the standard measurement of assessing student knowledge. While some students thrive in essay-writing, many others do not. Failure to do well on an essay can be an indication that a student has not understood the course material, however, it can also be due to an inability to express information in the prescribed manner. The traditional method of marking essays considers the means of expressing information as important as the information being expressed. As a result, educators grade not only a student's understanding of the essay topic but on their ability to put that information together in a specific format. Instead, the UDL approach proposes lecturers focus on the concept of 'construct relevance', that is, ensuring 'we are actually testing students on only the skills that we want them to demonstrate' (Tobin & Behling, 2018, p. 179) rather than focusing on their skills at using a particular medium to express that information. Offering students alternative methods of showing their knowledge that is not as reliant on the *means* of expression can be helpful for many students with disability and students from different cultural backgrounds. For this reason, it is helpful to include assessments that are student reflection pieces that do not require the traditional essay format, class presentations, as well as audio or video submissions of required work.

The aim of UDL is about building into the curriculum and course development as many options as possible for students in terms of engagement, representation, and

expression, which facilitate learning for a much wider group of learners. By incorporating inclusive elements in the curriculum from the outset, such as video captioning and alternative forms of media, the likelihood of students requiring individualized accommodations is greatly reduced. But the benefits of the UDL approach are not just felt by students with disabilities but by all learners as they are given different ways to connect with the class content.

It is the primary aim of educators to make a difference in the lives of their students. However, for theological educators, the imperative for effective pedagogy is far greater as it is considered to have not only lifelong but eternal consequences for believers. For this reason, theological education is not merely about imparting information, but aims to teach students the skills of how to wrestle with the truths of Scripture for themselves and apply these truths in their daily lives. Given this is the case, it should be the desire of all theological educators to ensure that the methods used are engaging and as relevant and user-friendly as possible for the broadest range of learners. However, if theological education maintains its current trajectory of replicating traditional lecture-style pedagogical methods favoured in most tertiary disciplines, theological educators will not reach the diverse range of learners in the classroom. By making teaching material more flexible, accessible, and inclusive, educators can assist their students to not simply gain knowledge and recall information, but facilitate the process of lifelong learning and application.

23.5.3 UDL and Inclusive Pedagogy and Practice

In order for UDL practices to be most effective in Christian higher education, these practices should be combined with a concerted effort to include issues of disability in the institution's curricula. As noted above, the 'null curriculum' refers to the absence of a particular discussion from an institution's curricula (Shaw, 2014, p. 7). This 'null curriculum' 'encompasses the tacit, nonverbal, unspoken aspects' (Anderson, 2003a, p. 147) of what is taught in theological education revealing the theological agenda and ethos of the individual education provider. Through its absence from theological curricula, the issue of disability is effectively rendered irrelevant to the theological student's pedagogical experience and ministry preparations. In order to better equip and prepare theological students for the broad range of people they will encounter in their lives and ministries, Christian higher education must make a commitment to, as Robert C. Anderson refers to it, 'infusing the…theological curriculum with education about disability' (2003a, p. 131). The point Anderson makes is that given disability is part of the human experience, it should also be part of theological discussions. This should not only be done through teaching units specifically focused on disability ministry but also through incorporating discussions of disability into existing theological curricula.

For those unfamiliar with thinking theologically about disability, natural connections between the content of Scripture and issues of disability may seem difficult to find. And yet, issues of embodiment, the value of human bodies (both able-bodied

and disabled), and the nature of inclusion, are all significant themes addressed in Scripture. Not only this, but disability-related language appears regularly throughout both the Old and New Testaments. In attempting to place disability within current theological curricula, theological educators would do well to consider the following questions that are raised through Scripture or subsequent interpretations of it:

– What do the healing miracles of Jesus imply about the value or acceptability of disabled bodies?
– What does it mean for all humanity—including people with and without disability—to be created *Imago Dei*?
– Was disability a result of the Fall?
– Does Jesus deny any link between sin and disability in John 9?
– What will our perfected, completed bodies look like in the future kingdom?
– Will all disability be eliminated in the future kingdom, or will something of human disability be retained in the resurrected body?
– Is Moses' reference to being 'slow of speech and tongue' a reference to a speech impediment, and if so, how might this reframe discussions of Moses' leadership as a person with disability?
– How does Augustine's belief that Romans 10:17 ['faith comes by hearing'] excludes the Deaf from Christian faith on the grounds they are unable to hear the Word of God impact ministry to those who are Deaf and hard of hearing?
– What impact, if any, do the regulations limiting the actions of Levitical priests with disability (Lev. 21) have on candidates for the priesthood today?

Even in this small number of examples, it can be seen that the possibilities for incorporating issues of disability in theological curricula are extensive not only in respect to exegesis and biblical studies but also in a range of disciplines including theology, ethics, practical theology, philosophy, church history, and pastoral care. As Robert C. Anderson (2003b) has argued:

> Including the story of people with disabilities within theological curriculum provides theological students with a foundational understanding of disability as they begin their careers. Sharing the human story of disability also enables people to not only understand each other better through the eyes of faith, but also demonstrates how members within congregations may find deeper ways to care about each other (p. 38).

23.6   Conclusion

This chapter has introduced readers to the concept of Universal Design for Learning. Although widely utilized in K-12 education, UDL is in its early days of being used in the tertiary setting. Already though, the benefits of adopting UDL methods are being seen with students in UDL classrooms being more engaged, motivated, and confident in their own abilities to succeed. One of the great benefits of the UDL approach is that it is inclusive in nature. Rather than relying on individualized approaches to accommodating students with disability, the UDL approach proposes that by making

teaching more accessible and inclusive by utilising multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression, is better for all students. Although implementing UDL-enhanced changes feels like a daunting task, the long-term impact on students' learning and application of skills is seen to be worth the efforts. Given that tertiary educators already see the impact of UDL methodologies, it is worth considering the implications of the UDL approach for use in theological education also. As tertiary educators, and particularly as theological educators, we must improve our teaching skills in order to ensure we are not just speaking as 'resounding gongs or clanging cymbals' (1 Cor. 13:1), but teaching in a way that allows students to take the information they have been given and apply it in practical ways in their own life experiences. While this focus should be important for faculty in all tertiary institutions, it should be even more the case for those of us involved in theological education who see not only earthly but eternal consequences for the impact of our teaching skills on students' knowledge and appropriation of Scripture.

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Chapter 24
Sexual Addiction and Christian Education

Check for updates

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Abstract Sexual addiction (SA) and hypersexual disorder (HD) describe prevalent contemporary phenomena that the public remains poorly educated about. Notwithstanding widespread agreement among concerned stakeholders that SA and HD constitute an understudied and underappreciated challenge, the analysis digested in this research converges around the synthesis that Christian Education (CE) stakeholders have not yet had the intrepidity to meaningfully confront this issue. While SA/HD may cause serious bio-psychosocial and spiritual distress, including severe consequences for the affected and their family members, neither the condition, nor its aetiology, is well understood (or even acknowledged) by psychiatrists and medical professionals. Even the latest edition of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) does not include any mention of SA/HD. This treatise arises from a literature study, which the authors have supplemented with corresponding critical analysis. The synthesis suggests that religious/spiritual beliefs strongly impinge on both SA/HD aetiology and recovery prospects. Moreover, this study argues for more thematisation of SA/HD within CE environments. CE settings can provide a wholesome contextual environment where a better understanding of SA/HD can be mainstreamed and normalised—rather than moralised—for the greater good of both sufferers and society. This chapter charts pertinent perspectives, challenges and opportunities.

Preamble: Perspectives, viewpoints, analyses and syntheses presented in this chapter are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the values and/or opinions of the institutions with which the authors are affiliated.

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24.1 Introduction

Perspectives introduced and digested in this discourse have arisen from the authors' professional and personal backgrounds, which include both authors' life observations and encounters with friends, relatives and/or acquaintances over several decades. Cumulatively, these inputs have given rise to a growing sense on the part of the authors that the realm of sexual addiction (SA) and hypersexual disorder (HD) remains an overall understudied and underappreciated challenge (and opportunity), and importantly, one that Christian education (CE) providers are well placed to address, and crucially, may not (yet) have had the courage or intrepidity to meaningfully confront.

Taken together these observations and encounters have also offered unique and nuanced contemporary perspectives into human behaviour, which suggest that challenges involving SA/HD are far more prevalent than commonly assumed. Even though in public spaces sufferers of SA/HD tend to be somewhat secretive about their struggles, keeping them concealed, masked, or even bottled up, there appears to be a growing desire among many of them to comprehend and process issues through forthright acknowledgement and systematic intervention strategies. In summary, sustained cognisance of SA/HD has informed this study through a synthesis of key themes. These themes will be briefly introduced next and then traced, discussed and analysed throughout the remainder of this chapter.

Themes identified as crucial contributing factors to SA/HD aetiology are as follows: (1) exposure to online pornography, particularly at a young age; (2) neurological factors; (3) childhood trauma and abuse (sexual, physical, psychological and spiritual) and (4) shame. As will be shown, these contributing factors to SA/HD aetiology impinge widely on societal wellbeing and are therefore of interest to education stakeholders, including CE providers.

In the literature (reviewed in Sect. 24.2), sexual addiction or hypersexuality is broadly described as the inability to manage and control excessive fantasies, preoccupations of sexual thoughts and behaviours that interrupt the individual's life and cannot be discontinued even when faced with negative consequences (Collins and Collins 2011). Educators and therapists are concerned about the proliferation of negative impacts on school and work-related tasks due to increased time that individuals spend on computers for pleasure-seeking (Manohar et al. 2018). Besides the negative impacts on CE, there are socio-functional and psychological dysfunctions associated with compulsive pornography use and sex addiction that will be explored below (Darshan et al. 2015). Given the differences in diagnostic and terminological approaches facing SA and HD (Manohar et al. 2018), in this chapter, and according to Karila et al. (2014), sex addiction, hypersexual behaviour, compulsive sexual behaviour and hypersexual disorder are used interchangeably. In addition to investigating the themes mentioned above, the literature study promulgated in

this chapter will also explore the neuroscience and findings from recent research to build an understanding of the similarities between substance addiction (e.g., drug and alcohol), behavioural addiction (e.g., gambling) and sex addiction. SA represents a fertile area of research interest, which is further underscored by both lack of empirical data (George et al. 2019; Manohar et al. 2018) and consequently, a lack of professional acknowledgement in the latest edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) (George et al. 2019; Kafka 2010; Manohar et al. 2018). Relatedly, there are significant gaps in research of this condition worldwide and in Australia (De Alarcón et al. 2019). In consequence, the lack of research in this area has resulted in controversy and disagreements in the diagnosis of SA/HD (Kafka 2010). Relatedly, there are still ongoing and non-conclusive debates over the addictive aspects of compulsive online and offline sexual behaviours (Wéry and Billieux 2017).

By pointing out the similarities between SA/HD, pornography use and substance and other behavioural addictions, this discourse explores opportunities for education providers—in conjunction with professional service providers—to promote the prevention and treatment of this silent condition in a holistic way. Importantly, Christian communities and CE providers, including churches, can both contribute *to* sexual addiction (through spiritual abuse), and/or redress it (through rehabilitative care). According to Oakley and Humphreys (2019), misusing creed (e.g., Christian doctrine) to criticise, attack, control, accuse, belittle, condemn or produce guilt and shame in victims is defined as spiritual abuse (Oakley and Kinmond 2013). Inversely, Christian communities and CE providers may also contribute to the prevention and successful recovery *from* addiction (Grim and Grim 2019). As such, Christian stakeholders have been described as forming part of both the problem (Heimlich 2011) *and* the solution (Cook 2004; Zimmerman and Maton 1992). Moreover, SA/HD may significantly impinge on Christian faith (Fairley 2018) through the perceived progressive separation from self and God/Christ (Baltazar et al. 2010). In short, shifting SA/HD into the light of scholarly scrutiny holds the promise of a more mature and more enlightened interaction between concerned stakeholders. As will be explored and exposited, SA/HD constitutes a realm of study and engagement that holds particular promise for CE environments.

Both Christians and non-Christians alike, including their families and relatives, are being broken by a silent condition whose social consequences are typically far more visible than its causative psychological underpinnings. As such, this chapter argues for more thematisation of SA/HD within CE environments, including in areas of Christian psychology and counselling, high schools, teacher training, churches and other Christian professional development domains. Christian educational settings can provide a wholesome contextual environment where a better understanding of SA/HD can be mainstreamed and normalised—rather than moralised—for the greater good of both sufferers and society. Furthermore, the authors argue that appropriate thematisation (that does not stigmatise or shame the sufferers) is broadly in the public interest, as the trickle-down benefits will positively affect and transform society beyond the immediate sufferers concerned.

The methodology of this research is based on a review of pertinent literature, which the authors acknowledge and elaborate as follows: As mentioned, the four key themes identified for analysis (Sects. 24.2.2, 24.2.3, 24.2.4 and 24.2.5) emerged naturally from the authors' synthesis of what issues contribute to SA/HD aetiology, and what strategies promise to enable effective remedial responses at the intersection of SA/HD and CE environments. Furthermore, in scoping relevant literature for review, the four themes represent an appropriate starting point for literary analysis as these topics are independently highlighted as critical areas of interest by Carnes (2015) and Weiss (2013). As such, the literature review scoped and analysed all available literature that fell within the purview of this focus. Being selective in scoping literature for review denotes acceptable methodological practice in social science research (Punch 2014; Bryman 2016). More specifically, Punch (2014) stresses that every literature review 'needs to be selective, on an appropriate basis' (p. 106), and Rudestam and Newton (2000) underscore the point that literature reviews aim to 'build an argument, not a library' (p. 59). Hence, in addition to being limited to the four themes denoted above, literature selected for review was additionally limited in scope to peer-reviewed psychology and behavioural science articles, social science books, PubMed and selected internet websites. More specifically, given the lack of reliable statistics in conventional peer-reviewed research (George et al. 2019; Manohar et al. 2018), this review elected to accommodate the inclusion of quantitative data released by Pornhub, which is the world's single-largest internet-based pornography and video sharing site (O'Connor 2017). Inclusion of these statistics was deemed useful by these authors as this internet portal presently represents the only avenue to source current statistics about contemporary online pornography activities (O'Connor 2017).

This discussion is organised as follows: Sect. 24.2 will offer a review of the literature in accordance with the four themes, including the conceptual description of SA (Sect. 24.2.1), the effects of online pornography on young people (Sect. 24.2.2), the relevance of neurological factors (Sect. 24.2.3), childhood trauma or abuse, including sexual, physical, psychological and spiritual (Sect. 24.2.4) and finally, shame (Sect. 24.2.5). These contributing factors to SA/HD aetiology significantly impinge on social well-being. They are therefore of immense interest to educators, including CE providers, wherefore Sect. 24.3 will attempt to critically digest, analyse and synthesise these themes in light of their relevance to Christian education. Next, Sect. 24.4 will summarise knowledge gaps, research limitations and opportunities for future research. Finally, Sect. 24.5 will close with concluding reflections.

24.2 Reviewing the Literature

24.2.1 Description of Sexual Addiction (SA) and Symptoms

Review of the available literature suggests that when sexual thoughts or behaviours become compulsive, they can lead to functional distress and inabilities, which in

turn can consequentially progress into habitual sexual behaviour (Schreiber et al. 2012). Compulsive sexual behaviour (CSB), sex addiction (SA), sexual impulsivity (SI), hypersexual behaviour (HB) or hypersexual disorder (HD) are only some of the many terms which researchers have used interchangeably (Karila et al. 2014), and definitional criteria across these conceptualisations are also broadly similar (Carnes 2013). Considering this de facto multi-definition of SA, to determine what exactly constitutes SA remains challenging. DSM-5 (APA 2013), refers to hypersexuality as a symptom of excessive sex drive. Additionally, in DSM-5, SA is not recognised as a mental disorder or addiction (Reid 2016). However, some sex addicts may or may not consider or even be aware that their sexual urges might be abnormal, which makes the terminology in DSM-5 challenging, if not inadequate. Hall (2011) argues that the terminology used by DSM-5 is ambiguous because SA is not caused by above-the-norm sexual cravings; instead, it is a product of a sexual drive and urges. According to Kafka and Krueger (2011), sexuality as a behaviour can be immensely diverse, and its ominous pathological side can make definitional research and scholarship challenging.

According to Carnes (2015) and Goodman (1990), symptoms of SA include (1) intense preoccupation with sexual behaviours or fantasies; (2) frequent and extended engagement in sexual acts; (3) repeated failed attempts to reduce, control or stop the behaviour; (4) loss of time due to activities necessary for engaging in the behaviour, or recovering from its effects; (5) inability to fulfil or neglecting occupational, relational, recreational activities, academic, domestic or social obligations; (6) continuation of the behaviour despite negative consequences (i.e. social, financial, psychological or physical problem); (7) tolerance building: to achieve the desired effect there is a need to escalate the intensity and/or frequency of the behaviour; (8) withdrawal symptoms such as restlessness, physical symptoms or irritability if the behaviour is stopped.

Collins and Collins (2011) observed that being touched or touching oneself (e.g. masturbation) can in some individuals become addictive through changes in brain chemicals, which cause higher and more intense cravings and urges for increased touch. Brain maturation is significant for addiction development (Gluck et al. 2016). According to Price et al. (2016), this finding is significant as the brain development of children and young adults may be impacted by instant and unrestricted access to the internet and regular use of pornography. According to Regnerus et al. (2015), between 60 and 70% of men and 20–30% of women aged 18–23 confirmed viewing pornography in 2014. However, the question remains when exactly engaging in these sexual behaviours and entertaining fantasies turns into compulsion or addiction? According to APA (2013), compulsivity is described as repetitive attempts and actions taken in efforts to decrease and manage distress and anxiety.

Similarly, Goodman (1993) and Kafka (2010) argue that excessive sexual behaviour produces both pleasure and also facilitates escape from distress or dysphoric states and pain. Some refer to SA as hypersexuality (HS), and according to Karila et al. (2014), SA generally acts as an umbrella for including different nomenclatures that all refer to the same concept. Hence, SA is typically understood to comprise various behavioural problems that can include excessive masturbation,

pornography use, cybersex, chat line and phone sex, massage and strip club visitations and sexual acts with consenting adults (Karila et al. 2014). Some authors point to the definitional challenges and ambiguity of SA and associate this conceptual state of the art with the lack of empirical research, explanatory diversity and insufficient sampling methods (Kingston and Firestone 2008).

Najavits et al. (2014) in their study assessed the sexual behavioural addictions (in substance users) and concluded that only 9.80% out of 51 participants acknowledged or admitted being addicted to sex or pornography. Here there is a question raised; is it possible that some addicts may not even be aware of their addiction? Additionally, to outline exactly what is considered a real dysfunction is challenging and caution must be taken in order to prevent the potential misuse of that narrative to stigmatise or pathologise individuals (Kaplan and Krueger 2010). For example, 'some set the limit between normal and pathological sexual behaviour at more than seven orgasms in a week' (Kafka and Krueger 2011, p. 381). Hall (2011) argues that SA manifests in various ways. Furthermore, questions are raised about SA manifestation in diverse cultures and what behaviours are considered dysfunctional? However, what is considered pathological or normal can vary considerably, both within and between different cultures and individuals. Therefore, primary quantitative-based definitional approaches may be insufficient.

In summary, there is no consensus definition of what precisely constitutes SA. Instead, different normative approaches and agendas have led scholars to propose a vast array of competing conceptualisations and dissimilar typologies. This definitional limbo complicates discourse analysis or 'speaking the same language' about SA.[1]

24.2.2   The Role of the Internet and Pornography in Shaping Sexual Addiction (SA)

The digital revolution is marking a new era of information age, which has resulted in the proliferation of widely accessible, advanced and ever-evolving communications technology. However, technology is progressively being blamed for contributing to a global cultural pandemic of problematic addictive behaviours. In 2015, Telstra reported that a vast number of 10–12-year-olds had a smartphone with an average usage of 14.7 h per week. Digital Life (2015) reported that by the age of 17, phone usage had increased to 26.3 h per week. The current generation, more than any other generation that came before, is exposed to digital technology (Foubert 2019), which concurrently creates both unprecedented advantages and adverse effects. Research suggests that use of online and offline pornography, especially in children and adolescents, may cause decreased social integration, higher misconduct issues, increased

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[1]This situation is similarly observed in other research domains that are equally characterised by an absence of definitional consensus (e.g. Luetz and Merson 2019), thus leaving a situation that scholars have characterised as 'confusing' and 'unhelpful' (Dun and Gemenne 2008, p. 10).

antisocial behaviours, lower interpersonal connections and more depressive symptoms (George et al. 2019). Several reports indicate that certain young adults are at risk of developing an addiction to online pornography with severe social, academic, and behavioural implications, which can be strikingly similar to compulsive gambling, drug abuse and alcohol addiction (Sani 2010). In consequence, technology has made it easier for young people to continue and escalate their unhealthy sexual behaviours until adulthood (Weiss 2013).

Easily accessible online explicit sexual materials are impacting both youth and adults. The pornographic video and website producer and publisher Pornhub declared 33.5 billion adult visitors at their hub in 2018, which represents an increase of 3.3 billion compared to 2017, with 71.6% of usage occurring via smartphones (Pornhub Insights 2018). Furthermore, according to some, in the last decade, accessibility to high-speed internet has led to an explosion of new opportunities for established addicts as well as offering increased privacy to engage in enticing sexual behaviours that previously would not have been possible to express or voyeuristically experience (Delmonico and Griffin 2009). However, research in this area appears to be limited in Australia. The only Australian study with a representative sample of 20,094 research participants showed 1.2% of women and 4.4% of men included in the survey considered themselves addicted (Rissel et al. 2016). Therefore, further research in Australia is required to verify, confirm and build on these previous findings.

Voon et al. (2014) argued that even though pornography could trigger the brain toward compulsive and addictive sexual behaviours, it is not necessarily established that pornography itself is addictive. This poses the question why some people are more negatively impacted than others. Voon et al. (2014) also found a relationship between the brain activity and age of exposure—the younger the individual, the higher and more significant alterations in the brain will occur. Relatedly and importantly, this may point to pornography's role in fostering substantial negative impressions that can have severe implications on the brains and sexual and emotional developments of younger people (Carnes 2015; Price et al. 2016). In recent research, Pizzol et al. (2015) expressed concern regarding the initial timing and exposure to pornography and the negative influences of early exposure on the sexual development of young adolescents. These developmental difficulties may include an abnormal decreased sexual desire for real partners or erectile dysfunctions, which have increased among young people in recent times (Landripet and Štulhofer 2015; O'Sullivan et al. 2014).

According to Cooper (1998) and De Alarcón et al. (2019), there is a likely risk of escalating and maintaining SA due to the 'triple-A' effect (accessibility, affordability, anonymity). For people with a self-perceived 'healthy' sexuality, online pornography or sexual activities may be complementary, whereas for others who do not consider their sexuality to be 'healthy', these may become progressively substitute and compulsive and may ultimately lead to SA/HD (Griffiths 2011). Therefore, more robust research in this area is needed to shed light on pertinent differences and causes.

Weiss (2013), Carnes (2015) and Price et al. (2016) stated that online pornography might have adverse effects on sexual and emotional development and sexual functioning, particularly among youth. Behavioural dysfunctions such as internet

addiction (Chamberlain et al. 2016), gaming and SA/HD (Ioannidis et al. 2018), are examples of technology-enabled addictive behaviours. Moreover, Wright et al. (2017) indicated that regular use of pornography leads to distorted perceptions of satisfying and healthy sexual behaviours and progressively diminishes sexual satisfaction for the user. For others, the regular masturbation (due to frequent pornography use) causes dwindling sexual satisfaction through negative arousal alterations and reduced sexual performance or decreased desire for the real partner (Wright et al. 2017). On the other hand, studies, such as Bridges (2008) seem to suggest that non-addictive and mutual use of pornography might enhance sexual satisfaction in a relationship. However, Bridges also concluded that these seemingly positive results were achieved and generated only when the pornography users were female, and there were negative results associated with decreased sexual satisfaction in a relationship when pornography users were male. Other studies demonstrated that positive results of including pornography materials in a relationship were reliant upon too many variables and were therefore inconclusive (Minarcik et al. 2016). Furthermore, the same study additionally cautioned that participation of only one partner in a study may lead to the results being incomplete, biased and non-conclusive. Overall, future studies utilising larger samples will be required to better understand the role of the internet and pornography in shaping SA.

24.2.3   Neurology of SA/HD

Some studies have shown the same reward system nerve cells are shared between sexual arousal and addictive substances use (Frohmader et al. 2010; Weiss 2013), while a smaller number of nerve cell activation is shared between natural rewards (e.g. food) and addictive substances (Cameron and Carelli 2012). Some researchers have determined that while the natural reward of food cannot cause permanent changes in synaptic plasticity, the opposite occurs with compulsive and recurrent sexual activities (Chen et al. 2008). Similarly, Pitchers et al. (2013, 2014) concluded that the exact same neuroplasticity[2] alterations are occurring during sexual conditioning and chronic substance use.

Pitchers et al. (2014) noted that ejaculation imitates the same effect of chronic drug administration (i.e., heroin) on the brain's reward system (the ventral tegmental area) and a constant use of heroin shrinks the dopamine-producing nerve cells (as ejaculation temporarily shrinks them). This in turn results in dopamine in the reward centre to be temporarily down-regulated and ultimately leads to impairment of the dopamine system. Equally, Kraus et al. (2016) concluded that a downregulation and dysfunctional dopamine system leads to increased tolerance, which requires extra stimulation to achieve the desired rush or effect. The study further found that over

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[2]Neuroplasticity is the brain's ability to change continually throughout the individual's life span (Doidge 2015).

time, the tolerance and need for higher stimulations can change the sexual preferences towards more extreme behaviours. Consequently, the escalation of compulsive sexual behaviours, in an attempt to reach the desired effect, might bring negative consequences for concerned individuals, their families and society (Carnes 2015; Carnes and Love 2017). Additionally, Voon et al. (2014) noted that the responses to pornography prompts by individuals with compulsive sexuality are very similar to the responses to drug prompts by the drug addicts. Additionally, the study of Voon et al. (2014) pointed to a higher craving (wanting) and not a higher sexual desire (liking) among hypersexual/compulsive pornography users compared to the non-addicts and over 50% of participants displayed difficulties or inabilities to reach erections with a real partner while able to reach erection with pornography. Likewise, Seok and Sohn (2015) observed similarities between the brain of a sex addict and the brain of a drug (e.g. heroin) addict. They further stated that the dorsal orbital prefrontal cortex lights up in the sex addict's brain (in response to sexual cues) in the same way that the drug addict's brain lights up (in response to drugs prompts). Equally, Weiss (2013) stated that through momentary amplified bursts of dopamine, whether in response to an addictive substance or behaviour, addiction can develop. Moreover, Volkow et al. (2016) explained that Pavlovian learning[3] could be generated through dopamine floods that initiate reward signals.

24.2.4 Childhood Trauma and Abuse

According to Carnes (2015) and Weiss (2013), SA is strongly associated with early childhood trauma and abuse, which may include adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), highly sexually dysfunctional or restricted environments or attitudes, low self-esteem, depression and anxiety (Coleman 1992, 2012; Carnes and Love 2017). Carnes and Love (2017) further examined the neurological and family dynamics/attachment styles (see footnote 4) as significant aetiology for SA. These authors observed that 97% of sex addicts experienced emotional abuse, 81% sexual abuse, and 72% physical abuse. According to Carnes et al. (2009), addicts suffer from increased shame, negative self-perception and unworthiness. Engaging in excessive and compulsive sexual behaviours are some of their coping mechanisms for dealing with negative feelings and isolation (Carnes and Love 2017; Weiss 2013).

Carnes and Love (2017) observed that addicts typically originate from families that are characterised by insecure attachment styles and where an average of 87% addiction pre-exists in their family system. Furthermore, Carnes and Love (2017) concluded that the prevalence of SA/HD is around 87% in a disengaged family system, 77% in a rigid system (i.e., Christians upbringing and/or when sexuality is a

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[3]This method produces a reflex behaviour or response through repetitive action training. The Russian physiologist Ivan Petrovich Pavlov trained and conditioned dogs in responding in a predictable manner (Windholz 1995).

taboo conversational topic), and 68% in rigid and disengaged family systems. Likewise, a study conducted by Weinstein et al. (2015) provided preliminary evidence for an active link and a positive correlation between anxious and avoidant attachment[4] and sexual compulsivity. In order to design appropriate preventive intervention strategies, more studies are needed to investigate why some exposed to ACEs do not develop compulsive sexual behaviours.

24.2.5   *Shame*

Reid (2016) and Voon et al. (2014) noted that individuals with compulsive sexual behaviours might have more negative emotions such as self-hatred, shame and self-criticism that in turn, can maintain the behaviour. Other studies similarly found that high levels of shame further promote negative core beliefs and anxiety, and may thereby trigger the need to escape in order to reduce distress, which may further sustain conditions of SA and HD (Hall 2018; Weiss 2013). As Kaufman (1989) identified: 'shame disrupts the natural functioning of the self and is significant in the social control functioning context and if the inner emotions are being managed by addiction, then through the addiction, the primary feeling which is shame is being medicated' (p. 5). Finally, Carnes (1991) asserted that: 'shame emerges from addiction, shame causes addiction. Whichever way the shame is flowing, whether consequences or cause, it rests on one key personal assumption: somehow I am not measuring up' (p. 91). Carnes and Love (2017) and Cox and Howard (2007) agreed that sex addicts typically come from family systems or environments (i.e., rigid Christian upbringing) where shame has been prominent. According to Siemens (2015), 'Shame is an intense feeling or disposition that situates an individual in a state of unworthiness and lack of acceptance' (p. 21). Siemens further added that 'sexual dysfunction is directly linked to shame and can lead to a disconnection with oneself' (p. 24). The character of the individual is compromised by shame 'I am a bad person' (Siemens 2015, p. 21). Moreover, a person's perception of God could be directly linked to sexual shame (Wittstock 2009).

24.3   Synthesis of Key Findings and Discussion

As noted above, conditions of SA and HD are characterised by recurring and intense sexual fantasies and preoccupations, urges and behaviours that are distressing to the individual/s and result in psychosocial impairment and other negative consequences (Carnes 2015; Weiss 2013). As observed, the development and maintenance of SA/HD can be rather similar to substance and behavioural addictions (Voon

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[4]Attachment style describes the close emotional bond between the child and primary caregiver (Bowlby 2018).

et al. 2014). Important supporting factors include online pornography, neurological factors, early childhood trauma and abuse, and lastly, shame. These factors will be briefly recapitulated next. Thereafter, the remainder of this section will scrutinise the nexus between SA/HD and Christian discipleship and CE environments.

First, online pornography can negatively impact individuals and in particular young people. This chapter's first author has closely worked with individuals whose addictions were initiated at an early age and sustained or exacerbated by online and offline pornography use and almost all experienced serious negative bio-psycho-social and spiritual consequences. Some authors believe these negative consequences may comprise mental health disorders (Kohut et al. 2019), excessive sexual risk-taking and preoccupations, and dysfunctional and compulsive sexual behaviours (Peter and Valkenburg 2016; Owens et al. 2012). Ongoing debates persist regarding the addictive nature of compulsive sexual behaviour (Potenza 2014), but overwhelmingly, there seems to be a consensus among researchers that frequent pornography use and sexual behaviours, in general, are addictive (Brand et al. 2014; Garcia and Thibaut 2010; Kraus et al. 2016; Love et al. 2015; Weiss 2013). However, some disagreements persist over the addictive aspects of pornography use and its linkages to SA/HD, while others argue that they are strongly related and that compulsive pornography watching in itself constitutes a form of SA/HD (Garcia and Thibaut 2010; Kafka 2010). In consequence, the authors of this chapter synthesise that there remain significant knowledge gaps, which future purposeful research should aim to address.

Second, neurological factors have been identified as a key part of SA/HD due to the evidence that various behaviours, when repeated, can reinforce the reward, motivation and memory circuitry (Grant et al. 2010; Leeman and Potenza 2013; Voon et al. 2014). While several experts agree that SA/HD, substance and behavioural addictions share close neurological and behavioural similarities (Seok and Sohn 2015; Voon et al. 2014; Weiss 2013), others still disagree and request more empirical data to classify SA/HD as a mental disorder. In synthesis, until stronger scientific agreement can be reached in this area, the spiritual and psychological needs of sufferers and their families (e.g. freedom from guilt and shame) will continue to be inadequately met.

Third, childhood trauma and abuse, including sexual, physical, psychological (Carnes 2015; Cox and Howard 2007; Coleman 1992) and spiritual (Weiss 2013), can contribute to the development of compulsive sexual behaviours. As discussed above, 'CSB (Compulsive Sexual Behaviour) has been strongly linked to early childhood trauma or abuse, highly restricted environments regarding sexuality, dysfunctional attitudes about sex and intimacy, low self-esteem' (Coleman 1992, p. 320). According to biographical analysis, some sex addicts appear to have endured unresolved early childhood trauma and abuse. Testimonies and self-disclosures of sex addicts recurrently confirm that early childhood trauma seemingly spawned or supported their SA/HD. Some of these frank but painful biographies have been simultaneously overwhelming and confronting. However, studies reveal that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and the associated negative neurobiological impacts, which can lead to cycles of intergenerational trauma, may be resolved through healthy connections and interpersonal relationships in society (Brewer-Smyth and Koenig 2014). This holds

important implications for Christian communities and CE environments, which will be explored below.

Fourth, shame (conceived by Potter-Efron (2014) as the failure of being, or total self-condemnation), has been identified as another significant factor in the development and maintenance of SA/HD (Carnes 2015). According to Kafka (1997) and Weiss (2013), sexual behaviours become the primary way of coping and handling shame-induced difficulties. As such, shame may trigger a vicious cycle of more difficulties, more anxiety, and more shame. Finally, insecure attachment styles and restricted (i.e. religious/rigid) parenting have all been associated with the development of shame in children (Stuewig and McCloskey 2005; Carnes 2015). Furthermore, in adulthood 'shame can negatively impact the sexual relationship with an intimate partner' (Siemens 2015, p. 3). Mahoney (2008) claimed that 'silence and negative sex discourse in Western Christianity' maintain shame in both genders (as cited in Siemens, p. 14). Furthermore, some sex addicts suffer from comorbidity, such as poor mental health or related disorders (e.g. anxiety or depression) (Smith et al. 2014). Although, these individuals may often experience shame or guilt because of their behaviours, these experiences alone cannot be a reliable means to identify underlying conditions of SA or HD (Gilliland et al. 2011).

In summary, the review of the four key themes analysed in Sects. 24.2.2, 24.2.3, 24.2.4 and 24.2.5 and briefly recapitulated above supports the synthesis that SA/HD aetiology is underpinned by complex multicausality. On the other hand, these key themes constitute promising avenues for effective remedial responses to SA/HD. The remainder of this discussion will now focus attention specifically on the relevance of SA/HD to Christian discipleship and education. This nexus is important, as Siemens (2015) suggested that spiritual development in the life of a person may 'shift their experiences of sexuality, and vice versa' (p. 1). More specifically, this part of the discussion will now explore interrelationships between Christianity, sexuality and morality.

Many Christians report suffering from compulsive sexual behaviours due to the perceived availability, affordability, anonymity and uncomplicated exposure that advanced technology has provided (Foubert 2019). Barna group (2017) reported that while 93% of pastors consider compulsive sexual behaviours and pornography use increasingly problematic in the church, only 7% of pastors have plans to deal with it. According to Perry (2019), Christians might feel stuck, ashamed and judged in their communities while their relationships and family systems are being compromised and negatively affected.

Notwithstanding, healthy sexuality has been described as a gift and blessing from God. According to Lawrence (2007), the Song of Solomon 2:8-13 tells a beautiful, adoring and clean story of marriage and healthy sexuality. It is no coincidence that this book is included in the Bible. According to Kearney (2006, p. 312), the Song of Songs is a clear indication that desire, both for God and a lover, is sacred and God-ordained. However, the Bible also unblushingly addresses unhealthy sexual behaviours (1 Corinthians 5:1–5) while commanding compassion and non-judgmental understanding towards each other (Ephesians 4:32, Matthew 9:36, Psalm 78:38). Rohr (2003) warned that a fear/shame-based religion is only beneficial for

those in management, as it gives them more power to control others. Some argue that the level of religiosity in people is a predictor of the level of their rigidity or inflexibility to sexuality (Cowden and Bradshaw 2007, Gravel et al. 2011).

There has been a clear connection between some Christian perspectives on sexuality and shame. For instance, Barna group (2017) reported that approximately 87% of pastors who used pornography suffer from deep shame because of it. It has been noted by Sullivan (2006) that the association between shame and sexuality dates back to Augustine of Hippo (354-430), who linked 'copulation and semen with the transmission of original sin'[5] (p. 12), and that sexuality has often been a taboo subject for people of faith. This sentiment is echoed by Siemens (2015), who argued that in religious (e.g., Christian) communities, there has been a 'definite silence surrounding the topic of sexuality, in general' (p. 81). Given that faith-based communities may be highly influential and can play a nurturing and protective role that allows increased spiritual connectedness and a stronger bond with faith and God, this silence is surprising (Rew and Wong 2006). Could it be, that this silence is tacitly contributing to a confused and shame-based identity formation?

Sense of identity is shaped from the individual's wide range of beliefs, social expectations, perceptions and experiences (Smith, 2013 as cited in Hanna 2010). Rohr (2003) suggested: 'How we relate to one thing is probably how we relate to everything. How we relate sexually is probably a good teacher and indicator of how we relate to God (and how we relate to God is probably a good indicator of how we will relate to everything else)' (p. 136). This has been similarly noted by Jones and Hostler (2002), who emphasised that the sociocultural impacts from communities such as churches may contribute directly to the formation of a person's sexual identity. According to Poll and Smith (2003), a person does not solely construct social, emotional and intellectual and sexual identity but also spiritual identity. Poll and Smith (2003) further postulated that spiritual identity and growth also occur in relationship with God. Brewer-Smyth and Koenig (2014) indicated that although faith-based communities at times might impose shame and guilt, they can also promote hope, social support and comfort for their members. In this sense, and as noted above in the introduction, Christian stakeholders have been described as potentially forming part of both the solution (Cook 2004; Zimmerman and Maton 1992) *and* the problem (Heimlich 2011). While non-judgmental, honest and accepting attitudes (Rogers 2012) can lead to frank conversations that open doors to a compassionate understanding, all of which is a part of the solution, stigmatisation, shame, moralism and condemnation usher sufferers further into concealing their struggles, all of which forms part of the manifold problems.

According to Moore (1999) morality is not black or white and 'moral duplicity shows itself as a simultaneous flight from sex and an unusually intense preoccupation with it. It is fascinating that those who appear to be the most outraged about sexual morality also seem to have an unhealthy preoccupation with it' (p. 163). According

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[5]According to Augustine, 'original sin' in this context refers to Adam and Eve's rebellion in Eden and their disobedience in consuming the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3:1-7; Wyman 2005).

to Cook (2004) and Zimmerman and Maton (1992), faith (i.e. as expressed in Christianity) can act as a protective factor against addiction and may also be a significant tool in the recovery process (Avants et al. 2001; Flynn et al. 2003; Carter 1998). However, inversely, in some cases, faith may also precipitate addiction or maintenance of it through authoritarianism, isolation or separatism, or fear of sin (Heimlich 2011). This is supported in other research findings where negative impacts are associated with compulsive sexual behaviours (e.g. pornography use) and religious commitment (Perry and Hayward 2017; Short et al. 2015). Other studies, however, reflect inconsistent findings in this area (Baltazar et al. 2010).

CE has long been identified as a powerful influence on human behaviour because learning does not occur in an interpersonal vacuum (O'Brien 2010). Social Cognitive Theory proposes that individuals learn many things from the people around them, through observations and social interactions (Burton et al. 2015). Therefore, CE environments and other 'social influences can promote convergence or divergence in behaviour' (Hirshleifer and Hong Teoh 2003, p. 27). Neuroscience emphasises the need for management approaches that target groups, communities and social norms rather than only individuals (Cross 2013). Relatedly, this notion of human reconditioning and interactive learning of behavioural management within community illuminates the significance of interpersonal processes and relations (Burton et al. 2015) and the role of CE in reaching groups and communities.

O'Brien (2010) similarly noted that responding only to the behaviour will be unhelpful to sufferers and their families because behaviour happens in an emotional and social context. Additionally, O'Brien (2010) emphasised that dysfunctional sexual behaviours require collaborative and multi-agency approaches. Therefore, there may be a need for more collaboration between concerned stakeholders, including CE, government, medical professionals, counsellors, religious leaders, psychologists and church communities. Furthermore, strategies may benefit from the application of uniform guidelines, coupled with preventive and intervention measures to address pornography and SA on a holistic basis, which includes biopsychosocial and spiritual aspects.

Through negative impacts on students' academic performance (Schiebener and brand 2015), their self-perception and struggles to reconcile their lived sexuality with Christian doctrine (Fairley 2018), SA/HD is highly relevant to CE (Barna Group 2017). For Christian institutes or CE providers, reaching out to youth is already a central mission. However, some Christian educators may still feel that involvement in countering SA/HD is best dealt with by others (e.g., Health Direct 2019). Could it be that this reticence arises from the fear of perhaps causing parishioners needless discomfort or conflict? Or could it be that some CE institutes or communities dread that being outspoken on sexuality or pornography issues may open them up to the risk of incurring losses in income or donations? Furthermore, some Christian leaders/educators may shy away from confronting the issue head-on as they do not wish to draw attention to their own struggles in this area or they may believe that acknowledging the prevalence of SA/HD is tantamount to admitting living 'in secrets' themselves. Nevertheless, it is clear that non-thematisation of both SA/HD and arising adverse impacts on intra- and interpersonal relationships have not served

Christian communities well, including CE providers. For instance, Grubbs et al. (2015) noted that there is an overwhelming presence of guilt and shame within faith-based youth communities for disregarding religious values that in turn may cause detachment from community, or from faith itself. Furthermore, according to Baltazar et al. (2010), 43% of males and 20% of females who struggle with SA/HD reported a deterioration in the quality of their relationship with GOD/Christ.

Studies have shown that healthy sexual behaviours and beliefs can be cultivated in children and adolescents through religious organisations (e.g. schools), media and family (Wilson et al. 2013), with parents and teachers having the most impact in conveying pertinent information (Donaldson et al. 2013). Moreover, in studies conducted by Ey et al. (2017) and Ey and McInnes (2017), the benefits of increased training and education to respond to dysfunctional sexual behaviours were expressed by the educators.

Finally, according to Quadara et al. (2015), schools, CE providers, professional and community services can all play an important part in the prevention of dysfunctional sexual behaviours. Studies of pornography viewing by children and adolescents have shown severe negative impacts on psychosocial integration, increased depression, higher criminality and antisocial activities (George et al. 2019). Educating children and adolescents by meeting them where they are at and 'speaking their language' may thus be a significant first step towards starting honest dialogues and implementing effective prevention strategies. This may be achieved through non-judgmental and open-minded approaches and non-threatening and non-moralising conversations (Rogers 2012). The educational ripple effects are likely to filter through to the rest of society, as has been noted throughout history: 'All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth' (Aristotle, as cited in Luetz and Sultana 2019, p. 618).

Regrettably, in Australia support for sufferers is limited to phone helplines[6] (Health Direct 2019) and selected Christian organisations and communities (Potter House Church 2019). Relatedly, there are suggestions that available services may lack adequate and effective resources to address compulsive sexual behaviours and their relevant root causes (Barna Group 2017).

In synthesis, stigmatisation, lack of productive dialogue and shame continue to buffet and aggrieve Christian sufferers and/or their families. Perhaps, CE institutions and church communities need to pay more attention to SA/HD instead of disregarding it because 'wherever there is morality without soul it leads to moralism' (Moore 1999, p. 165).

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[6]Blue Knot Foundation provides support and phone counselling services.

24.4 Knowledge Gaps, Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research

As noted, gathering data about the prevalence of SA/HD in Australia, and especially within Christian circles, remains a formidable challenge. In addition to lack of disclosure based on the secretive nature of SA, data collection may be additionally thwarted by the very denialism occasioned by childhood trauma or abuse, shame, and/or fear of social stigmatisation. Lack of accurate data in Australia may also be a reflection of the poor status of collaboration between concerned stakeholders, and there is a sense that more work needs to be done among Australian services that treat children or adolescents who display unhealthy sexual symptoms (Australian Institute of Family Studies 2019). In short, more structured, medical, theoretical and social research is needed to investigate the manifold impacts SA is having in the Australian population.

More specifically, future studies might investigate why/who/how some people are impacted severely and develop SA, and others are not? How, when and why childhood trauma can lead to SA/HD, but only in some people? How can faith precipitate SA in some cases, while in other cases, promote long-lasting recovery? In order to implement effective early prevention and treatment strategies, further research should also seek to clarify more specifically when and how people develop SA.

Areas of tolerance building and the relationship between the dopamine system and the severity or escalation of SA/HD also require further investigation. Moreover, additional studies may explore the possible psychopathological impacts of compulsive online and offline pornography use on sexual human behaviours in order to prevent probable harm to individuals, families and society. Relatedly, given that SA/HD impacts on multiple relationships concurrently, future studies should look at the biopsychosocial and spiritual impacts of this condition on families, partners and other relevant stakeholders.

This study also points to the distinct lack of clarity in the area of terminology, conceptualisation and diagnosis of SA/HD, which has led to a proliferation of conceptual approaches and definitional discourses. Given that there is no consensus definition regarding what precisely constitutes SA has prolonged confusion and differences in descriptions, thus hindering preventions and intervention strategies. In view of the likely benefits that will arise from 'speaking the same language' about SA, there is room for theoretical research to build this field of investigation.

Furthermore, future studies might also scrutinise SA/HD in the context of diverse religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, which may benefit understanding through multicultural and gendered perspectives. Further, SA/HD usually co-exists with other addictions, for instance, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), gambling, etc., thus requiring holistic longitudinal social research suited to complex multicausal analyses. Given the interplay between social, psychological, neurological and spiritual domains and the observation that negative consequences typically affect not only the

individuals themselves but also society as a whole, future research opportunities are evidently multidimensional and seemingly unlimited.

Finally, research is needed to study various recovery programs and their effectiveness. As a first step, a 12-week program has been conceptually designed by this chapter's first author, which will employ systematic empirical data collection over the course of multiple years—in progress. This program leans on a mixed-methods study design, which is aimed at supporting the sobriety and healing of partners and family members through testing adequate prevention strategies across larger samples. This is a crucial area for future research to explore, given that addicts may cause significant problems for their partners and families in their behaviour, long before pastors and/or other concerned stakeholders ever find out about the underlying SA/HD problems. As such addicts do present some substantial risk to family and community members as a result of their behaviour, including in terms of possible sex offence perpetration, risk of neglect of children and family members, losing jobs through consuming pornography at work, and/or other possibly destructive behaviours that may significantly impact on those around them. While this review has deliberated issues of SA/HD primarily from the vantage point of the addicts themselves, it is the countless peripheral or secondary flow-on impacts that remain most critically understudied and in need of scholarly attention. Importantly, it is in this area of derivative social impacts where Christian communities will most typically intersect with the effects of SA/HD through assistance to affected family members. While a condemning approach is not going to help anyone in terms of actually getting real help and remedy to addicts, this chapter does not wish to be misunderstood as naïvely arguing for libertarian 'harm minimisation' approaches that risk letting social problems go unaddressed at their root.

24.5   Concluding Reflections

This review provides support for the notion that SA/HD and related compulsive sexual behaviours share features with other behavioural/substance addictions and are hard to break. Furthermore, societal shame, stigma, lack of professional and spiritual support and education make the treatment-seeking process for sufferers and their families challenging. Relatedly, lack of support and information about SA/HD can be harmful and may cause some sufferers to remain oblivious to the seriousness of the condition while they continue to exert extreme efforts to conceal their behaviour/s while remaining burdened with an increased sense of shame, worthlessness and powerlessness to 'break free', thus prolonging the manifold adverse impacts and negative consequences on society.

The notable absence of purposeful and scientific data has led to a diversity of proposals to describe SA/HD, which is commonly linked to intense distress, significant shame and psychosocial impairment. This research concludes that, similar to most addictions, SA/HD is not limited solely to behavioural analysis, but rather may continue to evolve into a chemical addiction in the brain. Elements such as online

pornography, neurological factors, early childhood trauma, abuse and shame are relevant keys to comprehending SA/HD development and maintenance. Given the widespread offline and online accessibility, acceptability and availability of sexually explicit materials—that may typically be accessed anonymously—makes the condition especially hard to break. Further, difficulties are reinforced by shame and the need for covertness in social settings. Notwithstanding, CE stakeholders have significant responsibility and influence, in collaboration with other educators and health professionals, to put forward holistic biopsychosocial-spiritual approaches for understanding and combating this shame-based condition. Through educating people about the condition, including its aetiology, prevalence, maintenance and treatments, CE providers and other stakeholders can promote wellness and happiness as well as benefit humanity and instigate or support social behaviour change. There is strong support in the literature that human behaviour change needs two legs to stand on: (1) cognitive learning through the acquisition of information through teaching and self-study and (2) social learning and support in group settings (Segar 2015; Luetz et al. 2020). CE stakeholders are well placed to play a leading role in both areas. By confronting and thematising the issue instead of disregarding it as being situated on the fringes of the Missio Dei, they may impact communities by courageously and proactively leading from the front.[7] Consequently, individual and societal healing, wholeness and transformation can occur.

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[7]The important role of Christian leadership is noted in Nelson and Luetz (2018): 'Influencing change-resistant environments succeeds best if the messenger owns, exemplifies, personifies or even becomes the living message' (p. 519).

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