



Common Ground Journal

Perspectives on the Church in the 21st Century

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Learning as Transformation: Implications for the Church in Mission to the World

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Common Ground Journal
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Executive Director: Linda M. Cannell
Journal & Web Design: Mark E. Simpson

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5250 Grand Avenue Suite 14-211
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Mission Statement

An Online, Open-Access, International Journal

Common Ground Journal (CGJ) is a publication of the CanDoSpirit Network, Inc. and is published twice annually as a resource for Christian congregations seeking to understand and faithfully live out their calling as the people of God in the world. The primary audience for CGJ is thoughtful Christians in congregations who are catalysts for growth within their own churches.

CGJ is devoted to the development of strong, faithful churches whose life and ministry grow out of the church's nature as the people of God. They are organized and led in a manner consistent with their nature and mission. They continually ask, "What does it mean to be a sign of the Kingdom of God in the world today?"

CGJ is a resource for congregational development. We invite scholars and thoughtful Christians in congregations around the world to stimulate inquiry, reflection, and action around issues central to the life and ministry of the gathered community of faith. We invite those who serve as leaders in congregations, mission agencies, parachurch organizations, relief and development work, higher education, and non-traditional leadership development to apply their scholarship and expertise in these fields to the context of the local church. We encourage members of congregations to address the broader church with insights grounded in a thoughtful examination of Scripture, and in their own experiences as part of communities of faith in the world.

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The *Common Ground Journal* welcomes articles from scholars and discerning Christians. Each issue will feature invited articles around a theme, as well as articles received through open submissions. Open submission articles are reviewed by members of the Editorial Review Committee who make recommendations to the editor regarding their publication.

General Guidelines

Common Ground Journal seeks to stimulate Christian Churches to thoughtful action around their calling to be the people of God in the world. All articles should be grounded both in theology and the life of the church. Writers are encouraged to write to and about their own cultures and contexts. CGJ invites submissions in the following categories:

- Articles that stimulate thinking and reflection on the nature of the Church
- Articles that link the nature of the Church to its life and work in the world
- Articles that explore the integration of theology and social sciences in relation to life and work of the Church
- Essays on truths gleaned from the interplay of theory and practice, theology and experience in the active life of faith

- Articles that present insights from congregations attempting to live out their identity as the people of God in world
- Articles based on responsible qualitative research designed to inform a local congregation's understanding of its life and ministry
- Articles that raise questions that the Christian community needs to explore in becoming the people of God in the world
- Reviews of books, journals, programs, web sites and related resources

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Articles should be approximately 2500 to 3500 words in length. Book reviews and essays should be shorter.

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Articles should be written in clear narrative prose. Readers can be expected to be familiar with the language of the Bible and theology, but will not necessarily have formal education in these fields. Please avoid academic language and discipline specific terms. Provide clear definitions and examples of important terms not familiar to a general audience. Use explanatory footnotes sparingly; explanations and examples in the text of articles are preferred.

The best articles are clear and focused, developing a single thesis with examples and application. The successful writer translates complex ideas into everyday language without talking down to the readers. All articles should use inclusive language.

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A "Bibliography" of works cited should be included at the end of the article. A "Recommended Reading" list or "For Further Study" list may also be included.

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- Do not underline text, as underlining is reserved for documenting hyperlinks—use bold or italic for emphasis
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Journal Editor: editor@commongroundjournal.org

Webmaster: webmaster@commongroundjournal.org

Mailing Address: Common Ground Journal
c/o Linda M. Cannell
5250 Grand Avenue Suite 14-211
Gurnee, IL 60031-1877 USA

From the Guest Editor

By Rhonda McEwen

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Learning As Transformation: Implications for the Church in Mission to the World

The number of articles which were submitted for this issue attests to the attention that learning as transformation has commanded among thoughtful leaders and scholars who serve in congregations, parachurch agencies, cross-cultural missions, higher education, and non-traditional leadership initiatives. In seeking to develop a clarified grasp of this concept and its implications for the church in mission to the world, the call for papers asked for contributions to address the following concerns: What are the implications of this notion for Christian congregations as they seek to understand and faithfully live out their calling as the people of God throughout the world? What does it mean for the church to be transformative in our contemporary multicultural global context? What is the contribution of transformative learning to our understanding and practice of ministry in the 21st century?

Transformative learning theory is clearly evolving. An increasing number of divergent views are appearing in response to contemporary social concerns, varieties in cultural contexts, as well as in response to further research. Yet, Mezirow himself encouraged us that, “The more interpretations of a belief available, the greater the likelihood of finding a more dependable interpretation or synthesis. We learn together by analyzing the related experiences of others to arrive at a common understanding that holds until new evidence or arguments present themselves.”¹ While the diversity within this collection of articles provides a range of perspectives and implications, it is hoped that these ideas would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of both personal and social transformation and the implications for our ministry in the world today.

¹ Mezirow, Jack. 1997. Transformative learning: Theory to practice. (*New directions for adult and continuing education* . In *New directions for adult and continuing education: Transformative learning in action: Insights from practice*, ed. P. Cranton. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass): 74: 5.

The submitted articles were organized around three contexts: transformative learning and the church, transformative learning in a global context, and transformative learning in higher education. Angus Gunn begins the collection with a call to recover a way of “teaching for learning”. Historical examples are described, with focused attention on the model of Jesus as Teacher and implications for the contemporary church. Mike Severe examines the role of identity formation in Christian maturity and suggests ways that transformative learning can contribute toward helping individuals develop a coherent and stable sense of self - particularly in the context of the local church. Mary Lederleitner completes the congregational focus by outlining a cross-cultural ministry design informed by transformational learning theory.

While much is made of “mission for transformation” in contemporary discussion, a clear understanding of transformative learning is often lacking. Dan Sheffield examines the varied perspectives of this notion, attempts to find points of congruence in the various views, and inquires as to whether Christian “communities of dissonance” can play a pivotal role in transformational ministry. Dennis Walker offers suggestions as to how to create a climate for transformative learning within a global mission organization and Faustin Ntamushobora explores ways in which transformative learning can be more intentionally applied in church and educational communities within an African context. Finally, Peter Cha discusses the implications of sociocultural context on how we read and interpret God’s Word. While this article does not explicitly mention “transformative learning”, intentional dialogue within the context of a multicultural learning community may lead to new and creative theological insights and categories - perhaps even resulting in a transformation of perspectives and assumptions.

The final set of articles applies the insights of transformative learning to higher education. Kent Eby and Marie-Claire Weinski examine transformative learning experiences among evangelical theological students, while Robert Kasper and Israel Lemos suggest alternate models for theological education in Latin America which seek to develop the whole person. Lastly, Don Ratcliff applies Loder’s transformative process to the question of insight and how this informs qualitative research.

About the Guest Editor



Rhonda McEwen serves as Director of Training at the Chalmers for Economic Development at Covenant College. Her background includes extensive experience in international development and cross-cultural mission, as well as both nonformal and formal education.

The Recovery of Transformative Learning

By Angus M. Gunn

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Abstract: A discussion of the ways in which teaching is effected when the focus is on learning—in particular, learning that is transformative. Historical examples are described, including the example of Jesus as Teacher. A brief discussion of recent brain research is included with implications for teaching.

In today's schools of education transformative learning is defined for us as experiencing a deep, structural shift in thought, feelings, and actions, one that alters our understanding of ourselves as well as our relationships with other humans and with our social and natural world. For the most part it appears in the curricula of adult education but the concept applies to any age level. The teacher, it is said, needs to create an environment that builds trust and care and facilitates the development of sensitive relationships among learners. The goal is the creation of a community of individuals who have learned to find meaning in their life experiences; and the teacher as a role model is crucial in the pursuit of this goal. It is a very different view of learning from the one we find in contemporary practice.

In its current form, this view of transformative learning is new but the goal is not. It is ancient. In Socrates it was psychological transformation of the person being interrogated as preparation for a future as a philosopher-ruler; in Confucius the development of moral excellence in order to correct the evils in society; and in Quintilian the creation of a highly ethical environment from birth to maturity in order that the future orator would be "A good man speaking well." With Jesus it was the total transformation of the lives of his disciples. The life he lived, the things he said and did, all became the method and the model for the changes he sought. This is the transformative learning that needs to be recovered. In all four of these teachers the goal was to change the individual so he or she would, in turn, be a model for the improvement of society.

In modern times, with the coming of the Industrial Revolution and its demands for literate and competent workers to operate the machines, the needs of society defined the work of the schools, not the needs of the learner. Mass education reinforced this trend

and the state, not the teacher, determined what had to be learned in the classroom. Transformative learning disappeared and in its place came a body of knowledge that was to be explained by the teacher, understood as well as they could by students, and their understanding periodically tested by examinations. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century there was little understanding of the nature of human learning so rarely was much attention paid to the emotions or interests of learners.² All that public authorities required from teachers were subject competence and good communication skills.

The ignorance of human learning within western countries can also be seen in the two-thousand-year history of the church. Socrates died as a disillusioned sophist because he thought that if only people knew what was right and true they would live in accordance with what they knew. Things do not happen that way. In like manner to the Greek traditions the church focused on the content of the gospels and other parts of the New Testament, and the great doctrinal statements, instead of the person behind the content. As a result, information about the truth, rather than the person who is the truth, became the method by which the church sought to carry on the transformative learning that Jesus had initiated. Only in the twentieth century was this discrepancy recognized. Even more recently, two thousand years later than was necessary, has there been recognition of the modeling role of Jesus as an inseparable part of his transformative learning.

Thoughtful writers have always recognized the inadequacy of an education that is based on the needs of society. A. N. Whitehead, in the 1920s, pointed out that young people are living organisms and the purpose of education should be to guide their self-development.³ He stressed that there is a natural way of learning which serves us well and it is only when we get involved in education that we forget about natural learning and seek to use more sophisticated methods that are far less effective. Whitehead's great illustration of good learning was a boy who wants to learn to ride a bicycle so he gets on, tries, falls off, gets back on, thinks a bit about it and maybe gets unsolicited advice about

² James Deese and Stewart H Hulse. 1958. *The Psychology of Learning*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company

³ A.N. Whitehead. 1929. *The Aims of Education and Other Essays*. New York: The Macmillan Company

what to do. He then gets back on again, finds out what works and discovers that he can stay on. He then becomes a cyclist and remains one.

Teacher as Model

We are all teachers in the sense that we influence others by what we do. Every choice we make is based on our values. We teach in these ways positively or negatively, consciously or unconsciously, whether awake or asleep, active or passive. If you think back to former days, images of particular people are remembered, stamped on the memory. These images are often quite unrelated to what happened or what you experienced; rather they belong to the impact of a person or persons. With a large part of our lives we influence the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of others. We do it at home, at our work, and in the various social contacts of our leisure hours. Professional teaching, from this point of view, is not different from other kinds of work and it follows that the life of an educator must be consistent. It must be the same outside of learning centers as in them. I found this to be well understood in Asian countries, even to the extent that it formed part of contracts for teaching in elementary and secondary schools.

It was recently discovered that newcomers to the teaching profession, in their early years of work, consistently taught in the styles that their professors had used, rather than, as expected, in the precepts that had been advocated. These new teachers were obviously more influenced by the example of their professors than by their ideas. For many, it came as a shock that the behavior they modeled was the dominant factor in the lives of their students. I suppose modeling will always be a challenge and we need exemplary models to guide us. One such appeared in a story published in the *Harvard Educational Review* (HER) in the 1970s.⁴

It concerned Miss Iole Appugliese, who had been a grade one teacher in a poor district of Montreal, Canada. For more than thirty years she taught the young beginners, and gradually, over the years, the successes in life of so many of her students began to catch the attention of observers. In the low socio-economic standards of the community in which she worked no one was expected to reach high levels of achievement in the

⁴ E. Pedersen, T.A. Faucher, and W.W. Eaton. 1978. A New Perspective on the Effects of First-grade Teachers on Children's Subsequent Adult Status. *Harvard Educational Review*, 48 (1): 1-31

wider community. However, in this case, when school records were examined, the findings regarding Miss Appugliese's students were startling. Intelligence quotients, those common measures of ability that normally change by small amounts in the course of the elementary years of schooling, had jumped by abnormally high percentages between grades one and six. One of her former students had become President of McGill University and it was he who had investigated the growth in IQs and had the results published in the *Harvard Educational Review*.

At the same time as he published his findings, he contacted twenty of Miss Appugliese's former students (all now in their late twenties), and brought them to the school in a surprise visit. To them the teacher was always known as Apple Daisy because they could never pronounce her real name. The biggest surprise of the day, as they arrived, was that Apple Daisy was able to greet each one by his or her first name. Gradually there emerged a picture of a caring person who had loved her students into levels of self-respect, loyalty, and performance far beyond the average. One former student described her as laughing with them, gently scolding, wiping running noses, recovering lost mittens, providing money for lunches, and drying copious tears. Her exemplary performance had inspired parallel high achievements.

Jesus as Teacher

While working in Colorado in the 1960s as Assistant Director of a multi-million-dollar US National Science Foundation educational project (NSF), I found myself drawn again and again to the methods of teaching that Jesus employed. The NSF Project was investigating new ways of learning in order to raise levels of academic achievement in specific subject areas. Educational authorities felt that they had been focusing on the competence of teachers to the neglect of the conditions that facilitate learning. We had access to research findings from all over the world and repeatedly I found myself thinking about the teaching methods recorded in the first four books of the New Testament because these methods seemed to coincide with the best we were finding among the world's educational researchers.

One successful approach in our NSF project was the inquiry method, encouraging learners to find answers to the problems rather than have them ask a teacher for answers. We sought to persuade teachers to take a different role than the usual one of being an

expert in a subject field, dispensing content from that field as persuasively as possible so that learners could understand and remember it. We found that that particular traditional role was so embedded in teachers' sense of vocation that we tried to develop what we called teacher-proof learning materials, packages of data and exercises that could be given directly to students. Each teacher was asked simply to create a rich learning environment and to be ready to respond to learners' questions. That's the way it was in the past with the best teachers.

I noted that Jesus' style of questioning was almost a mirror image of what we were discovering as we tested out learning packages across the country in hundreds of classrooms. We found that when learners were given the task of finding a solution to a given problem, the questions they asked were numerous and the test results at the end were always better than when, in a parallel program, they were given answers by a teacher. In the four gospels of the New Testament I discovered that the majority of the questions that Jesus asked were response questions; that is to say they were replies to questions that had been asked of him. In later years, as I studied this aspect of Jesus' teaching more carefully, I found that these response questions of Jesus raised the original question to a higher level of thought in order to enrich the content of the inquiry and encourage continued searching for answers on the part of the original inquirer.

In discussions about inquiry learning with colleagues at my university I sometimes discovered a strong aversion to what they thought I was advocating—the rejection of the lecture method. They insisted that they were acquainted with examples of both modeling and monitoring by faculty members who always taught by lectures. Of course they were right. There are always wonderful professors whose impacts on students are profound no matter how they teach, just because of their human qualities and love of students. However, often the lecture method needs to be reassessed in particular settings. Again at my university, in response to new understanding of learning, the Department of History decided to change the entire first year offerings from general survey lectures to research projects, designed like post-graduate seminars.

A second very successful approach from our NSF research was the simulation. Instead of taking content from a particular subject we contrived an imaginary situation that had content similar to what would normally be taught. We then posed a problem for solution within the context of the simulation. The immediacy of having to tackle a real

life problem from today's world with all kinds of unknown conditions surrounding the problem proved to be a source of high interest among all students. They felt like explorers in a new land. If we think now, as I did at that time, of Jesus' characteristic mode of teaching, the parable, you have an ideal illustration of the simulation. There were other discoveries of learning approaches in our NSF project that matched those in the gospels but inquiry and simulation were sufficient to set me on a quest to discover all I could about Jesus as a teacher and his disciples as learners.

Brain Research Findings

In the 1970s and 1980s I wrote frequently about Jesus' mode of teaching in books and journal articles and in conversations with students. Now, as the twenty-first century opens up I find myself at a new beginning with regard to teaching and learning, particularly about learning. Over the last decade we have seen an explosion of new discoveries about the human brain, how it works, how learning takes place, why some things are remembered for a long time, and why some environments enhance learning while others inhibit it. It is no exaggeration to say that we have learned more about the human brain and human learning within these recent years than was known before that time in all of human history. With the aid of new technologies we can now observe in real time what is going on in the human brain as learning takes place. We thus know with certainty the conditions that lead to good learning and those that do not.⁵

Jesus' ways of teaching fit perfectly into all that we are finding out. His teaching is no longer just one good way of teaching. He, and all who teach in similar ways, now represent to a considerable degree the only way to teach for maximum learning. This emphasis on learning is now at the center of educational interest. At my own university, a few years ago, the President asked all departments to reconsider their teaching approaches with first and second year students, to make them more problem-oriented. Similar accounts of change have been coming from professional schools at several universities, urging a much closer relationship between class lectures and practitioners' problems. I am sure that theological seminaries will also be affected by our new understanding of the nature of learning at all ages and in all subjects.

⁵ P. Wolfe. 2001. *Brain Matters: Translating Research into Classroom Practice*. Alexandria, Virginia: ASCD

Implications for the Church in the World

The overriding implication for the church in every one of its teaching activities is the recovery of the wholeness of Jesus' ways of teaching for learning. We can all begin with his simple statement, "I am the Truth." The model humanity that Jesus lived out for now and eternity includes his teaching. We can no longer isolate the content he taught from the way he ensured its retention in the lives of his disciples. Transformative learning thus becomes, for the church, a new way for teachers to think and act. It helps to reorient our thinking if we reflect on what we know and what we are discovering about our brains. Many tend to treat them and its operations as if they were different from other organs of the body. The heart learns to beat and the lungs to exercise in quite a natural way and they only need attention when something goes wrong. In a similar way the brain carries out its thousands of tasks, including acquiring knowledge and tackling problems. For most of its activities we are unconscious of what is going on but its work is impaired if it is forced to operate in an unnatural way. One writer described problem solving as one of the natural activities of the brain when it is free from things that divert energy from the areas that deal with learning.

Take, as a simple example, the following story of the destructive influence on the brain's learning function when there is the slightest experience of fear. On a school playground a dog wandered into an area where young people were playing. It seemed to be quite friendly so everyone patted and stroked it. Suddenly, for some unknown reason, it became angry and began to growl and bite. No one was seriously injured in the course of all this but, as teachers took charge and brought everyone off the playground, they noticed that it took hours for the students to settle down and focus on their class work. Why did they fail to get on with their work? From our present knowledge of the brain we know exactly what happened. When the amygdala, the part of the brain that records emotional experiences, receives a negative emotional signal, it sets in motion a series of protective actions. Many hormones are involved in these actions, the main one being adrenalin, and blood flow is diverted from the part of the brain that deals with learning. All of these things occur unconsciously. They are the body's instinctive responses to danger, preparing the individual either to fight the new threat or to run away from it. The responses of the brain will be the same whether the threat is a difficult examination or an attacking dog. It is always the same kind of action whenever danger threatens because

our brains have been doing it for thousands of years and their structures have not changed significantly over long periods of time

Repeated experiments over recent years established a need for four conditions if the best results from learning are to be gained. All of them are challenges to teachers but all are part of the model that Jesus left us. Most of them are well known but for most of educational history teachers thought of them as matters of choice. Now we know that they are no longer optional if we want the best results. The four are (1) good relationships between teacher and student; (2) an environment of learning that is free from fear; (3) involvement of the learner in all aspects of learning; (4) indirect learning. This last condition is the most intriguing of all. It came to the West from Bulgaria in the 1960s and it relates to the unconscious accumulation of information by our brains about things that are happening around us. It is a survival strategy that dates back for thousands of years because our brains' main structures have not changed much in that time. We scan our environment now as in the past and retain all that is relevant to our lives. They happen to be the things that we remember for the longest time. Conversations or other interactions taking place nearby, completely independent of us, among people or things important to us, are all recorded unconsciously. They remain ready to be recalled when needed in the future. Much of the content in the gospels is of this kind.

Bernie Neville of Australia in a book titled, *Educating Psyche: Emotion, Imagination, and the Unconscious in Learning*,⁶ provides a simple and succinct summary of the fundamental difference between the activities that are regarded as effective learning in schools and post-secondary institutions today and transformative learning. He uses the term constructive to describe the usual understanding of learning, that is to say adding to what we already know so that we have more knowledge and skills than we had previously. People are certainly changed as a result of these experiences, he points out, but they do not appear to have changed as people. In contrast, transformative learning is the kind that changes the person.

⁶ Bernie Neville. 1989. *Educating Psyche: Emotion, Imagination, and the Unconscious in Learning*. North Blackburn, Victoria, Australia: CollinsDove

About the Author



Angus M. Gunn is Professor Emeritus, University of British Columbia, Canada, and a frequent writer on education, environmental science, and contemporary social issues. His latest book, written with two colleagues from US universities is titled, *Igniting Student Potential: Teaching with the Brain's Natural Learning Process* (Corwin Press, 2006).

Transformative Education and Identity Achievement in the Church

By Michael K. Severe

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Abstract: Christian identity is fundamental to the health of the Christian and the Church. How can a person be a Christian for decades and still be immature? Why do some short-term mission experiences prove absolutely vital to some, while in others, cross cultural experiences are as likely to reinforce stereotypes as transform them? This article addresses the need for coherence in identity and identity's relationship to transformative learning. Transformative learning will be presented as a viable avenue toward the promotion of identity achievement and fidelity.

To what extent does transformative learning foster identity formation or reformation of adults? It is possible that transformative education through the church can help adults develop a coherent and stable sense of self that can withstand a host of identity problems. This article suggests that identity is vital to the health and maturity of the Christian and that transformative learning provides a model for helping individuals grow toward a healthy identity.

Learning and Identity: The House

True learning affects one's identity because it changes the ways in which people project and perceive themselves; the ways in which they experience the world and how people engage their social setting (Cranton 1994, 160). Studies indicate that people who have gone through transformative experiences perceived themselves as different people (Mezirow 1991, 171-185).

Because "conceptions of the self inform everything we do as adult educators" (Clark and Dirkx 2000, 115), a vital issue for Christian education is the formation, coherence and stability of identity. This section will consider the nature of identity formation, setting the groundwork to describe the application of transformative learning to identity theory and identity problems

Essentially a child forms what could be seen as "rooms" of identity, each room a different element: explanations, behaviors and solutions. Explanations are in the category

of “Jonah was swallowed by a whale because he disobeyed God.” Behaviors are typically cause and effect: “When I do this, such and such always happens”; and solutions take the form of a formula such as $2+2=4$. Children furnish their rooms of explanations, behaviors and solutions with information, processes and concepts throughout childhood. They are, however, limited in their ability to sort, monitor, or exclude the “contents” of their rooms.

The teenage/young adult “house” is far more complex. Five new rooms are added to the original three. The rooms are “Who am I?”, “What if?”, “How will this affect my relationships?”, “Why?”, and “How does it fit together?” Adolescents add onto their house and attempt to make connections with preexisting structures (Elkind 1988, 69). Coping with the nature of their social-cultural context can lead teens to compartmentalize conflicting values, attitudes, behaviors, commitments, habits and rituals. They struggle to reconcile childhood explanations, behaviors, and solutions with the increasingly complex, difficult and fuzzy needs of adulthood and the adult world. A residual tendency to compartmentalization still exists in the lives of most adults.

Fidelity, faithfulness to obligations, and relationship that is driven by adherence to an ideology, provides necessary stability for action in the world (Stevens 1983, 50). These qualities form the doors or the bridges of meaning between the rooms. The successful “completion” of identity achievement provides a host of benefits to individuals and their social context. A significant portion of adults do not achieve identity fidelity and are in a one of several states described by Marcia (see Figure 1).

Identity Crisis

At the onset of puberty a teen must reconcile the fact that they are no longer who they once were and that the world functions in qualitatively different ways than they once experienced and expected. Abstract thinking, puberty, cultural norms and more collide to precipitate a redefinition of how teens see themselves. This time of uncertain, searching, experience-driven role experimentation precipitates a developmentally-driven identity crisis. This identity crisis is arguably the most significant development in becoming an adult.

Each adolescent progresses through a process of identity crisis in which the sometimes contradictory childish identifications are brought into tension with new self-definitions and role choices (Erikson 1987). The goal is the reconciliation of tensions and

achievement of a position of fidelity to self and society. Those individuals who succeed in navigating the adolescent identity crisis will be capable of fuller and further psychological and emotional development. Yet, the shifting world may require us to regularly redefine ourselves. "We are encouraged to think of ourselves as fluid, emergent, decentralized, multiplicitous, flexible, and ever in process" (Turkle 1997). So, adults are not "finished" with themselves nor will the cultural-societal context allow for their identities to rest unchallenged.

Benefits and Concerns of Identity

Adults are continually faced with questions of meaning, inner conflict, or conflicting assumptions that underlie their personhood. A non-integrated or compartmentalized position with regard to faith development and identity will potentially result in permanent immaturity or even psychological disorder (Elkind 1988, Erickson 1959, 1963, Marcia 1980). Compartmentalized thought is unable to transform the culture and social frame, has limited adaptability to change and is ineffective at collaboration and problem posing (Mezirow 1997, Freire 1970, 1973). Various types of childhood experiences are unevaluated, absorbed into the personal identity, inconsistent with our self-concept and become dysfunctional in adulthood (Mezirow 1991, 138).

The foundations of transformative learning: independence, critical thinking, awareness of perceptual "frames," and dialogue, all have the power to potentially help the adult grow in the above-mentioned areas. Further, changes in perception of oneself and one's social environment are necessary to create space for changes in ideas, attitudes, and behavior. (Johnson and Johnson 1991, Lewin 1951, Vella 1995). We will discuss below how transformative learning has the power to break through developmental delay, reduce internal conflict and achieve a coherent identity status and increased fidelity.

The Contribution of Transformative Learning

So far, we see people form identity out of patches that they sew into a quilt. These patches are what Mezirow identifies as meaning schemes. Meaning schemes are specific beliefs, attitudes, and emotions that frame how we interpret our experiences. Meaning schemes are contained within meaning perspectives. We can see these as the foundations of a worldview or a person's frame of reference toward life. If the patterns within various

meaning schemes are not integrated, then the adult faces a host of assumptions and dysfunctional behavior and attitudes that will limit their capability to act in a holistic manner. Transformative learning provides a mechanism to explain the formation of a coherent sense of self and identity out of the plethora of roles, expectations, and experimentation that presents itself to the adult. A person's view of self and engagement with the world may be based on distorted or invalid values, assumptions, and beliefs. Since these factors are part of the core of identity, any change to them will result in a change in meaning schemes or, in other words, views about their personal selves. Perspective transformation in transformative learning theory involves a change in a sense of self and in the way the new self interacts with the social and cultural environment (Reimer 2003). As adult learners become aware of and critically reflect upon underlying assumptions, they are challenging and investigating the assumptions that underlie their personal identity. It is much more than a simple problem solving exercise (see Cranton 2006).

Identity Status and Transformative Learning

One of the main differences between childhood identity and adult identity is that identity is given in childhood, absorbed from environment, and relationships. In contrast, adults have the ability to “manipulate their environment in order to bring about desired conditions” (Derr et al. 2002, 276). The fundamental principles of transformative learning such as dialogue, critical reflection and independent thinking address this issue (Mezirow. 1990, 1991, 1997, 2000). Adults have the capability and responsibility to critically assess their tacit assumptions (Mezirow 1997).

Transformative learning explicitly demonstrates vital elements of identity formation such as support and structure (Erikson 1987), dialogue, exemplar mentors and models (Geanellos 2002) and trying on of roles (Erikson 1959). Temple (1999) holds that transformative theory clearly explains the process involved in worldview shifts and conversion.

Aspects of Transformative Education Theory Concerning Identity

Transformative learning is valuable because it is a model that assists understanding of what leads to compartmentalization, authority dependence, and change in perspective—aspects of which are found in Christian conversion.

Conversion and Worldview Transformation

Conversion results in a significant perspective transformation radically affecting self identity (Temple 1999). The average American requires multiple exposures to the gospel and its representatives before making a commitment to Christ. Transformation of meaning schemes “implies development and progress within a taken-for-granted worldview” while transformation of meaning perspectives is “the exposure and deconstruction of a given worldview and its replacement by a new worldview” (Tennant 1993, 39).

It is possible that God may be transforming meaning schemes to pave the way for a perspective transformation, a total transformation of belief. Conversion, for some, is immediate while others hold the potential of a gradual, non-sudden awakening to faith (Munro 1956, Bushnell 1923). The transformation of meaning schemes that lead to transformation of meaning perspectives explains the possibility of a gradual conversion without denying the theological necessity of the moment of conversion. The transformative process can be helpful in preparing the way for conversion and addressing worldview issues within and without the church. Transformative learning does not assume that a single decision or piece of information will lead to conversion because the person has multiple competing frameworks that need to be addressed. Transformative learning will also address contrary worldview assumptions as the individual is coming to “make (or not) a decision for Christ.”

Fostering Identity Development Instead of Dependence on Outside Authority

Often adults do not move beyond the stage of needing authoritative opinion and approval—“they are confident, efficient, and satisfied only when others provide outside reinforcement” (Derr et al. 2002, 276). Many adults have foreclosed identities and past authoritative opinions can continue to shape their behavior and attitudes (Derr 2002).

Mezirow holds that transformative learning assists the process of interpretation and autonomous thinking (1997, 5). In this way transformative learning fosters development and healthy identity formation instead of authority dependence. The goal is a person that will “negotiate his or her own values, meanings, and purposes rather than to uncritically act on those of others” (Mezirow 1997, 11).

It is important to note that natural development will likely leave many assumptions gained during childhood unanalyzed (Tennant 1993, 39). These assumptions will often be in conflict with other assumptions, meaning schemes, and meaning perspectives, leading to compartmentalization within an individual. Four levels of learning (Mezirow 1991, Illeris 2002) highlight a process whereby assumptions are recognized, analyzed, and identity integration fostered:

- *Level one: Addition of information/expansion of a meaning scheme.* Information is directly under the assumptions and projection of previous experience.
- *Level two: Creation of new meaning schemes.* Information that does not fit into previous schemes forms new schemes.
- *Level three: Transformation of meaning schemes*
- *Level four: Transformation of meaning perspectives.*

Grabove (1997) holds that learning can no longer be viewed simply as behavior change, acquisition of knowledge, or skill development. Learning within incomplete, conflicting, non-integrated or invalid meaning schemes will only serve to reinforce the negative aspects.

Thus, in the metaphor of the house, the inner rooms of explanations, solutions, and behaviors can be contained within schemes that do not connect, integrate or challenge other newer meaning schemes. Each set of schemes is separate and become operative when the person enters various settings. This provides an explanation for hypocrisy, “Sunday only” Christians, and simplistic thinking.

The church desires to enable the formation of whole, healthy adults who are not only functioning as Christians in certain explicit circumstances (such as church). To accomplish this change, the many compartments (meaning schemes) and false assumptions inside meaning perspectives must be transformed.

Transformative Learning and the Church

Transformation of self could easily be a trauma beyond the capabilities of the person without some structure of support, sociological comfort and a trustworthy and capable guide. Most individuals will avoid challenging their assumptions unless challenged by circumstances and people. “Interaction with and support from others is probably most crucial if critical self-reflection is to continue” (Cranton 2006, 84). The church has been satisfied to assume that conversion is simply adding a new scheme (level two learning) and discipleship is adding information (level one learning) without considering the implications for identity, the need for support structures, and appropriate challenge. Three aspects become important: scaffolding, critical reflection, and dialogue.

Creating Scaffolding Through the Church’s Ministry

Recently a national chain built the largest warehouse of its kind in my hometown. The walls were mammoth single unit constructions that were put in place through the use of cranes and scaffolding. As one wall segment was in place the crane and scaffolding would be moved to set the next section. During the weeks of construction there was an unusually large amount of rain. One night the new and moving foundation gave way to the weight of the wall. Without the support of the scaffolding the wall crashed spectacularly to the ground. The vibrations woke people living over a mile away.

In the same way, people are without a solid foundation provided by either the social or cultural system. The constant exercise in fluid identity and the threat of reoccurring identity crises or permanent moratorium give rise to much concern. It is not enough to preach or provide experiences. “To challenge a student’s identity or give new self-knowledge and not give the time, and group within which to interact is paramount to aborting the identity affirming process” (Derr 2002, 274). There must be a community space within which a group of individuals dialogue. Scaffolding in the church can be built through at least three specific routes: Identity formation, consolation, and contribution.

Identity Formation

The church has the potential to offer stability, mirroring, and modeling. As people participate within the group and the group’s identity, it gives form to their need to express

themselves. *Group identity* then offers a place from which to explore and form their own identity instead of a completely open range of options. A *proper view of persons* is also necessary for a proper concept of self. A biblical view of personhood can then be integrated into the concept of self and provide an ideal for comparison during the formation of identity.

Contribution

Contribution allows one to explore identity through service for the good of the church body. As they get feedback from their service, qualities such as responsibility, compassion, praxis, and trust can be reinforced. The importance of contribution is not tied to the specific activity or role; but rather that the person has a distinct place within the church context.

The Church as Provider of Consolation

Consolation is the conscious, yet sometimes spontaneous, expression of love and care. A church's level of consolation is determined by the ability of its members to express love and to provide a support system. A smaller group of capable peers and facilitator/mentors, with the backing of the church in resources and prayer, creates the necessary structure to protect, grow and even rescue an adult within the context of their society.

Identify formation, contribution, and consolation, are often best provided within smaller groups spearheaded by a caring leader or educator who cares about the transformation of those in their group. According to transformative learning theory, both peers and mentors are necessary for this process (Mezirow 1990). Prolonged contact is significant since coming to understand, evaluate, and perhaps modify one's "meaning schemes and perspectives" takes time.

Fostering Critical Reflection and Dialogue

Two key responsibilities of the transformative educator are *to foster reflection on assumptions and to create an environment which encourages dialogue*. In order to *foster critical reflection*, the educator can wield significant influence and actually stimulate

crisis or critical reflection by their influence and moral standing (Bass and Avolio 1994). They can mirror the identity and assumptions of the learner to stimulate self reflection. The educator may also simply place “falsity tags” on certain assumptions. By branding an assumption, behavior or idea as invalid or incomplete, the educator challenges the learner to reevaluate their meaning scheme(s).

Dialogue is an effective way to facilitate transformative learning (Mezirow 1990, 2000, Weinski 2006). In carrying out its teaching functions, the church has focused on doctrine, words, and proposition. However, it is unlikely that significant learning will occur without intentional dialogue. “People have not been helped to understand the meaning of their own experiences or to bring these meanings into relationship with the meaning of the words used in preaching or formal teaching” (Howe 1965, 136-37). Effective dialogue requires a facilitator who is skilled at framing and asking questions. Dialogue unveils the meaning of experience and connects that experience with theology and instruction. Community transformation and individual transformation are interrelated (Todd 2005). A *community of dialogue* is often best formed through the relationship, influence, motivation, consideration and challenge of the educator.

The House Revisited: Confronting Compartmentalization

In the church, we teach children answers, behaviors and solutions appropriate to their age and development. Yet, we are confused by their transition to adulthood and their new found cognitive and questioning abilities. Most often when adolescents and young adults challenge “the answers” they are simply assessing their commitment to ideas and the relevance of those ideas to their newfound abilities or social setting. They are testing the boundaries of the “rooms” of explanations, behaviors and solutions—a normal and healthy process of identity formation. However, a parent or educator may “lock down” the rooms in order to protect the information that a person is challenging or trying to integrate. Locking down the rooms of the behaviors, solutions, and explanations of childhood, prevents dialogue and frustrates the tasks of evaluating and integrating experience and identity. Without movement toward a more coherent whole, identity can become diffuse and immature.

Often, pastors express frustration towards “Sunday only” Christians. However, it is likely that these Christians have not learned how to challenge and question

assumptions underlying typical Christian explanations, behaviors or solutions. In the language of transformative learning, there is a set of meaning schemes that are unevaluated and/or mostly unused while another meaning perspective functions over most of life. The church culture elicits vocabulary, attitude, and action that may not fit or work in any other setting, which creates the conditions for compartmentalization. Transformative learning, when done well, provides tools, direction, and opportunities for reflection and dialogue for the continued development of adult identity. Preaching and other common methods of education in the church, by themselves, may not provide sufficient impetus to evaluate and assist in the transformation of meaning schemes or perspectives. Preaching and other common methods of education may not challenge assumptions, or engage the individual in dialogue and discourse within the community. Similarly, their role in scaffolding is limited if they fail to focus on the issues of support, challenge, consolation and contribution that can be developed within the body.

Conclusion

Rooms containing the vital elements of our faith and action often become closed to the beneficial influence of questions that deal with identity and the rest of life. The application of transformative learning theory to identity formation fosters a viable way forward in undoing compartmentalization and helping people develop toward whole identities in Christ.

Imagine a basket. We each have a basket that contains pieces to a puzzle that represents who we are. People and experiences add pieces to our basket as we grow. Often these pieces are unevaluated and do not fit together. This creates developmental, psychological, and faith issues for each adult in our congregations. The role of the church is to help people put together their puzzle toward a coherent and whole identity in Christ. This cannot be done without examining and assembling the pieces. Transformative learning not only helps to explain the presence of disparate pieces, but provides a model to identify, examine, and assist in the transformation of peoples' underlying assumptions and worldviews.

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About the Author



Michael K. Severe is Director of Youth and Family Ministries at First Presbyterian Church in Ottawa, IL. He has been in full time youth ministry for over ten years and is completing his Ph.D. in Education at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Mike currently teaches as a visiting professor at North Park University and Trinity International University.

Perspective Transformation: Application for Mission Curriculum in Churches

By Mary Mallon Lederleitner

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Abstract: This article explores the application of transformational learning theory in the development of a mission curriculum to help members of congregations enhance awareness of and practice in cross-cultural ministry.

One of the reasons I deeply enjoy cross-cultural work and cross-cultural training is the way it causes people to genuinely examine core assumptions and values that often hide below the surface of human awareness. Because these beliefs are so deeply and implicitly ingrained, they are rarely examined critically. However, these core assumptions and beliefs yield profound power on human behavior. They often lie at the heart of the most intense and disturbing failures and conflicts in missionary endeavors. Jack Mezirow's Transformation Theory provides incredible insights for mission pastors. I believe his theory, as well as constructive feedback from his critics, provide tools that can be used to design transformational mission curriculum for lay people seeking to be more effective in cross-cultural ministry.

Transformational Learning Theory

How human beings determine or make meaning has a profound impact on adult learning. Innate in all humans is a need to understand and make meaning from experiences (Mezirow 1991). Meaning is determined by an inherent set of assumptions and beliefs formed throughout a person's life experience. The constructive meaning, be it good or bad, and the resulting interpretation are unique and can vary greatly from person to person. Therefore, it is the meaning assigned to experiences, not the experiences themselves, which determine if they will be transforming or deforming influences for adult learners.

Ten Phases of Transformation

In Mezirow's initial research, he observed ten distinct phases that seemed to predicate genuine adult transformation. These stages are:

1. Experience or a disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination with feelings of guilt and shame
3. A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
6. Planning a course of action
7. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
8. Provisional trying of new roles
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships; and
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective. (Mezirow 1991, 168-169)

Mezirow explains that "perspective transformation is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective; and, finally, making choices or otherwise acting on these new understandings" (Mezirow 1991, 167). Adults tend to experience the greatest difficulty in the steps relating to critical reflection and planning a course of action (Mezirow 1991; Weinski 2006). These difficulties, if not addressed, can thwart adult growth and transformation (Mezirow 1991).

Perspective transformation can occur in a variety of ways. It might be epochal, occurring in a sudden and dramatic fashion; or, incremental, transpiring almost without notice over time (Mezirow 2000). Although there are ten phases to Mezirow's transformative learning process, four broad categories are usually referenced in literature. They are: experience (also referred to as the "disorienting event"), critical reflection of

core assumptions, reflective discourse to determine if critical reflection is valid, and action (Merriam et al. 2007; Mezirow 1997).

Constructive Criticism

A number of writers critique Mezirow's theory for not going further into the area of social action. To some, Mezirow's view of perspective transformation stops short of empowering and equipping adults to confront and dismantle unjust social structures and institutions (Collard and Law 1989; Hart 1990; Brookfield 2000). Others believe Mezirow's theory does not adequately address the role of context in learning. He never critically examined the historical or cultural realities of the people he initially studied. However, he "extrapolates from the experience of particular individuals within a particular context to all adults in any context" (Clark and Wilson 1991, 78). Clark and Wilson criticize Mezirow's theory for eliminating context which is the "very element which brings meaning to experience" (Clark and Wilson 1991, 76). They add that he seems unaware of his own "American values of individualism, rationality, and autonomy" (Clark and Wilson 1991, 80); yet these values seem to be integrated into the theory without any critical reflection of their presence.

Mezirow's theory is also based on a logical "movement through cognitive structures by identifying and judging presuppositions" (Mezirow 1991, 5). As such, critics believe it largely disregards feelings or, for practical purposes, views them as a secondary issue. However, emotions and feelings and intuition are "central to critical thinking in adult life. In particular, the ability to imagine alternatives to one's current ways of thinking and living is one that often entails a deliberate break with rational modes of thought in order to prompt forward leaps in creativity" (Brookfield 1987, 12). Recent research indicates that emotions are in fact necessary "for rationality to occur" (Taylor 2001, 218). Without emotions people lose the ability to categorize and value priorities. "Feelings and rationality need to be placed on equal footing, recognizing their interdependent relationship" (Taylor 2001, 233).

In addition to minimizing the role of emotions, transformative learning theory largely discounts other ways of knowing as well. There is too great an emphasis on the rational ways of knowing with little or inadequate attention given to unconscious processes, and processes of the soul and spirit (Taylor 2001) or relational ways of

knowing (Taylor 1997). In a study of evangelical theological students in Germany, it was noted that “transformative learning proved to be a complex personal change process where cognitive, emotional, evaluative, social, and spiritual processes worked together” (Weinski 2006, 5). Others such as Cranton, who generally agree with Mezirow’s theory have broadened their understanding and practice of transformative learning by incorporating insights gained from these types of critiques (Cranton 2006).

Is This Theory Applicable To The Church?

In many instances, the church is able to absorb ways of doing ministry that are neither godly nor congruent with Scripture. Before any social science or educational theory is integrated into church practice and programs, it should first be examined in light of Scripture. To what extent is Jack Mezirow’s theory congruent with Christian teaching?

Does Transformation Theory Align With Scripture?

Numerous passages in Scripture coincide with the broad categories of perspective transformation. The biblical narrative reflects countless people and groups encountering disorienting events as a gateway to personal growth and transformation. The story of Job, the children of Israel entering the Promised Land, and the conversion of Paul are just a few (Job 1-42; Exodus-Joshua; Acts 9:4-5). Christianity exhorts people to make new meanings out of their experiences and to see circumstances from God’s perspective (James 1:2-5; Matt 5:1-12; Matt 6:1-24; John 9:1-3). The end result of these exhortations seems to be a hope that people will seek God and not go through life without critically examining core beliefs and assumptions.

The church body is also a critical part of God’s plan for transformation. The metaphor “iron sharpens iron, so one [person] sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17) promotes the transforming power of discourse through relationships. Other passages also adhere to this principle, “without consultation, plans are frustrated; but with many counselors they succeed” (Proverbs 15:22). The story of the Council at Jerusalem is a potent illustration of the power of discourse in perspective transformation (Acts 15). Through great debate core beliefs were examined and new perspectives emerged that would change the practices and appearance of the church for all generations.

Mezirow's theory ends with action and that, too, is synonymous with Christian teaching. Jesus was appalled and disgusted with leaders having head knowledge about God but untransformed lives. He called Pharisees "white washed tombs" (Matt 23:27). He condemned them for knowing the truth but not applying it. James denounced knowledge without action for "even the demons believe" (Jas 2:19). Christianity was never meant to be a faith of head knowledge without corresponding action.

Scripture also reveals that God uses means other than mere rationality to bring transformation. For instance, he has used dreams (Matt 1:18-25) and trances (Acts 10:10). As well, through the power of the Holy Spirit he convicts people of sin and strikes at the very core of the human heart and soul (John 16:7-15).

How Can Transformation Theory Influence Cross-Cultural Mission Curriculum?

Some mission pastors may not want to create mission curriculum because they feel they do not have enough knowledge. They may accept the false belief that they need to have an answer for every possible question or they will be viewed as inadequate by the congregation. Knowing that it is impossible to know everything, the mission pastor who works effectively across cultures maintains an attitude of humility and is willing to learn from others. Establishing "learning communities" is one way to facilitate this dynamic within a congregation. A learning community is a safe place where believers can encourage one another to grow in new and diverse ways. By establishing learning communities a mission pastor can actually model humility in a congregation, preparing lay people for far greater effectiveness in ministry.

Where to Start?

Transformation theory reflects a process that requires risk, the presence of community, dialogue with others, and a supportive environment. For this reason it coincides well with a "Transformational Mission Journey" course, although a different name can be used. Such a course can be designed to fit within a typical school term allowing for a month off at the holiday season. Each member in the learning community chooses an area of interest in cross-cultural ministry. This area of ministry interest is not

“assigned” by the church or mission pastor. The key is to engage the heart. We can confidently know that God has put dreams in the hearts of our lay people because of the priesthood of all believers. This course is designed to help lay people fulfill those God inspired and God ordained dreams. The ministry areas will likely be diverse and some will be in areas where the mission pastor has very limited knowledge. This is fine. The ministry area of focus for each person will serve as his or her area of self-directed study. The more diverse the ministry areas, the more interesting the course will be for everyone involved!

At the beginning of the course, explain the unique concept. As the mission pastor you are not there to do the ministry for them, but to act as a coach and fellow learner in the journey. Tell participants that you will teach every other week, but on the alternate weeks lay participants are to come prepared to share what they are learning as they actively seek to experience and grow in effectiveness in each of their unique areas. Members of the learning community encourage, support, and challenge one another so that by the end of the course each will have seen both personal growth and growth in ministry skills.

First Month

At the first meeting, explain that the vision of the course is to develop a learning community. Everyone is expected to share what they are learning, to be willing to learn from others, and to encourage and support one another. Explain that the core structures of the course are to seek transformation through experience and disorienting dilemmas, critical reflection, discourse and action. Explain that the group will be a place where participants can make meaning of what they are experiencing in ministry. For homework, ask participants to think about their ministry dreams and the area of ministry they will focus on for the next nine months.

At the second meeting, ask everyone to share their ministry dreams. If the group is large, break into smaller groups so everyone has a chance to participate. Have one person from each table recap what each person expressed. End by praying and committing these dreams to the Lord.

At the third meeting, share how people can make a plan to grow in ministry competence. Provide a list of possible activities they can incorporate into an overall plan

for the year. Possible examples might include inviting people from another ethnicity to dinner, going to foreign restaurants, viewing cultural films, reading books, visiting a library, going to a museum to learn about history, doing web searches together, learning new recipes, hosting a refugee family and so forth. Brainstorm with participants creative ideas and activities that can help someone build awareness, understanding and skills for cross-cultural ministry. Express ideas and ways for participants to incorporate their families and friends so it becomes a natural part of their lives. For homework, ask each member of the class to think through a “draft” plan for the year, listing on a weekly or monthly basis what activities will comprise their self-directed project. Encourage them to include as many inter-personal opportunities as possible and to bring a copy for everyone.

At the fourth meeting, have everyone share a “draft” of their plan for the school year. As a group, discuss any possible pitfalls or obstacles they might see in each plan (e.g., time constraints) and offer possible ways to get around these. If the group is large, break into small groups for this process. For homework, have participants adapt their plans based on helpful insights and advice from the group. Ask them to make a copy of their revised plan next week for each member of the learning community so participants can pray and encourage each other to stay on track.

Second Month

Discuss the nature of “experiences” and “disorientation” and the bridge these can be to personal growth. Help people to see disorienting events in Scripture. Ask why we try to avoid a sense of disorientation. Discuss issues surrounding control and how it can limit our growth if we choose to let it rule our lives. On alternate weeks, have people share specific things they are experiencing and learning in their self-directed ministry programs as well as obstacles they are facing. Let others in the group give help and insight as to how to overcome these obstacles. Invite different lay people to facilitate on alternate weeks so they can build confidence in leading the community. Always end these times in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to transform, teach, and guide these efforts.

Third Month

Discuss critical reflection and group discourse and stress their importance to spiritual and personal growth. Explain that if we never build reflection into our daily lives, we will often repeat the same mistakes instead of learning from them. Show Scriptures where God exhorts us to reflect. Also, explain the impact of speaking the truth in love. Work out agreed upon guidelines for the learning community on issues such as confidentiality, interrupting, giving input but not dominating conversations, and so forth. Explain how the role of meaning can transform or deform us as we work in ministry. On alternate weeks have lay people continue to lead as outlined in the second month. These alternate weeks are when participants can work together through many of the steps of the transformation process noted earlier.

Fourth through Sixth Months

Have everyone purchase a copy of *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships* by Sherwood Lingenfelter and Marvin Mayers or the book *Cross-Cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry* by Duane Elmer. Either one of these books is an excellent resource to learn more about cross-cultural relationships. If participants in the learning community have already purchased these books, you will be able to teach the material without violating copyright laws. Choose different chapters to highlight each week. Keep using the alternative weeks for participants to share their joys and struggles for group input. Close sessions in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to teach and transform each person.

Seventh Month

Discuss the necessity of action in transformation. Share Scripture passages which teach the importance of acting on what is being learned. Ask participants to think of longer-term action plans and any obstacles they might face as they pursue their ministry dreams. On alternative weeks, talk through the obstacles of implementing what has been learned in the course and discuss various ways to deal with these issues.

Eighth Month:

Review the key components for adult transformation. Recall how we “make meaning” and its influence in transforming or deforming us in our walk with Christ, with

others, and in our ministries. Discuss any impact this journey has had on those who have participated. Ask for feedback about how the course could be made even more effective if repeated the next school year. If participants want to repeat the course, simply use a different text in months four through six to keep it fresh. Invite participants to serve as ministry coaches next year! Some participants might have the willingness and skill set to facilitate this type of learning community in the future. Others might be willing to spend time encouraging future participants who need extra support and courage to step out in new ways.

How Transformative Learning Informs Mission Curriculum

The biggest fallacy you can perpetuate in your congregation as a mission pastor is that you are the expert and you have all the answers. If you act and behave that way, members in your congregation will also erroneously believe they must have all the answers and be experts before they can be effectively engaged in cross-cultural ministry. God wants us to be wise and learn from the resources he has given to the church. However, the best way for mission pastors to prepare their congregations to be effective in cross-cultural ministry is by modeling humility themselves. They can do this by demonstrating the ability to learn from anyone at any time. A course such as the one described in this article will not only integrate the best of social science theory for adult transformation, but will model qualities and characteristics to help lay people succeed in cross-cultural ministry. May God use you immensely as you help others to do great things for His Kingdom!

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About the Author



Mary Mallon Lederleitner served as program staff in Singles Ministry at College Hill Presbyterian Church and Christ Church of Oak Brook in the early and mid 1990's. She then completed a Masters Degree in Missions and Intercultural Studies from Wheaton College and has served full time with Wycliffe Bible Translators International for the last decade. She is working on a PhD in Educational Studies from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Her ministry is focused on research, consulting and training for best practices in cross-cultural ministry partnerships and she is also focused on developing engaging and transformational church mission curriculum. She can be reached at the following email address: mary_lederleitner@wycliffe.org.

Encountering the Other: Mission and Transformation

By Dan Sheffield

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Abstract: Transformative learning theory has something to offer the current discussion regarding “mission as transformation.” This article addresses the problem of confusing language and meanings in the use of “transformation.” Notions of transformation in Jack Mezirow’s transformative learning theory and in Mezirow’s theory as applied to the development of intercultural competence in the work of E.W. Taylor and Milton Bennett are examined. “Mission as transformation” explanations are compared with biblical language and transformative learning theory in regard to “the encounter with the Other” as a precursor to transformation. The article asks whether missional communities of Christian believers can function as “communities of dissonance” –places of encountering the Other–and, therefore, serve as the pivotal agent in “mission as transformation?” From this perspective perhaps more attention needs to be given to creating intentional (missional?) communities of dissonance, than to proactive, overt attempts to “transform” society at large.

We are glutted with the language of *transformation*. Everywhere we turn, something is being “transformed” –society, neighbourhoods, cities, education, individual lives. One wonders, with so much “transformation” going on, why the world seems to be still doing business as usual?

Some basic definitions from different disciplines offer a beginning point. Biology tells us that transformation is *change that alters the general character and mode of life*, as in an egg becoming an embryo, an embryo a fetus, larvae into an insect, and so on. Physiology speaks of the *change of one form of material into another*, as in food being metabolized by our bodies into appropriate nutrients. In mathematics, transformation is the change of an equation or quantity, *into another form* without altering the value. In theology we are told transformation is a *change in disposition, heart or character*, as in conversion.

In education, we are all “educating for transformation,” but for some this is just the new rhetorical language. It sounds good in a policy paper or as a slogan without any meaning or significance. For other educationists there is precise meaning and associated practices for transformative learning. Tisdell and Tolliver (2003) put the challenge this way:

There are many discussions of how to teach for transformation in the adult education literature, though these discussions are based on different theoretical premises and seem to have different working definitions of “transformation” and how it happens.ⁱ

Christian Scripture tells us that we all are “being *transformed* into his (Jesus’) image with ever-increasing glory” (2 Corinthians 3:18). The Scripture also tells us that this transformation is enabled by the removal of the veil that covers our hearts and dulls our minds (2 Corinthians 3:14-16) and is accomplished “by the renewing of your mind” (Rom 12:2). The Christian tradition employs this language of transformation, but is it to be understood in the same way education theorists, and others, are using it? Where are the points of congruence and departure? How does the encounter with the Other enable us to recognize our own assumptions and expectations which may need to change, or at least to identify difference as an opportunity for forward movement?

I believe that our personal encounter with Jesus challenges our socially constructed meaning systems, creating dissonance in regard to our existing beliefs, assumptions, values, expectations, and behaviours. This encounter with Someone so “other” initiates a process both spiritual and rational that transforms mind, spirit, and body.

We call a collection of these “transforming persons” an *ekklesia*, a group of called-out persons who are seeking to become more and more like Jesus. The collective process of engaging with these other transforming persons continues to shape and mold our responses to the world around us (cf. Heb 10:24, 25).

Our called-out communities of transforming persons become a source of dissonance in the neighbourhoods in which we live. We serve as stumbling blocks to people with worldviews not centred around Jesus. It is in this sense then that the “church is on mission;” that is, groupings of transformed persons function as points of disequilibrium to those who have not yet encountered the good news of Jesus.

This essay discusses several streams that employ the language of transformation as a means to discover common ground in meaning and practice, and perhaps to flesh out helpful understandings from the education and intercultural communications spheres that speak to the use of transformation in the Christian tradition.

Examining Several Transformation Frameworks

To start the discussion we will acknowledge that Jack Mezirow's model of transformative learning demands a leading place.

Transformative Learning

In Mezirow's model the goal of adult education is to enable people to make their own interpretations of their experiences rather than acting upon the purposes, beliefs, judgments and feelings of others. Mezirow introduced the concept of *transformative learning* in 1978 and since then this model has been the topic of significant research and theory development.

Transformative learning focuses on the centrality of experience, critical reflection and rational discourse. Learners begin to change their "meaning schemes (specific beliefs, attitudes, and emotional reactions)" as they engage in critical reflection upon their experiences. This leads, in turn, to a transformation of perspective, a realignment of one's "meaning structure," or worldview.ⁱⁱ Transformation, says Mezirow, includes

the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrating perspective; and finally, making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings.ⁱⁱⁱ

The beliefs, attitudes and emotional reactions that make up an individual's micro meaning schemes are constantly being adjusted and transformed through normal learning processes. People change through their life experiences. These small adjustments to beliefs, attitudes and reactions, however, are set within a meaning structure, or frame of reference, that inevitably limits the degree of transformation possible. Mezirow suggests that these micro-adjustments seldom affect our worldview, or in his terms, our meaning structure.

A transformation of perspective, that upsets the existing, macro, meaning structure, happens infrequently. But it is this experience of “disturbance” in wider meaning structures that leads to transformative learning. Mezirow believes that transformation is usually the result of a “disorienting dilemma” that is triggered by a life crisis or a major life transition, although it may result from an accumulation of changes in meaning schemes over a period of time.^{iv} *Transformative learning, therefore, occurs when individuals change their frames of reference (meaning structures) by critically reflecting on their assumptions and beliefs and by implementing plans that bring about new ways of defining their worlds.*

Mezirow suggests that transformative learning happens through a series of phases that begin with the disorienting dilemma. Succeeding phases include self-examination, critical assessment of assumptions, and recognition that others have shared similar transformations. People explore new roles or actions, develop a plan for action, acquire knowledge and skills for implementing the plan, and then try out the plan. Individuals develop competence and self-confidence in their new roles, and seek to integrate these new perspectives into their lifestyle.^v

The most important critique of Mezirow’s transformative learning has been related to its emphasis on rationality. Despite many empirical studies that support Mezirow’s contention that critical reflection is central to transformative learning, others have concluded that he gives “undue emphasis to rationality.”^{vi} In a modification put forward by Robert Boyd, the process of discernment is central to transformation. Discernment requires non-rational sources such as symbols, images, and archetypes to assist in creating personal meaning.^{vii} In fact, the discernment process allows for the exploration of both rational and non-rational input. In Boyd’s model, grieving is the most critical phase of the discernment process. Grieving involves both cognitive and affective elements of change. Grieving occurs when an individual begins to realize that old patterns and ways of perceiving are no longer relevant and moves to adopt or establish new ways, integrating old and new patterns.^{viii} Understanding that both cognition and affect are involved in the transformative learning process reflects a more wholistic perspective.

Intercultural Development as transformation

In an interesting look at the relationship between transformative learning theory and intercultural competence theory, educationist E.W. Taylor inserts the phenomenon of “culture shock” as the “disorienting dilemma” in Mezirow.^{ix} [Taylor uses the term, “cultural disequilibrium.”]^x He mentions Peter Adler’s work which has helped to focus attention on the transformation of a stranger’s cognitive, affective and behavioural being in the process of becoming interculturally competent.^{xi} Taylor further cites Kim and Ruben’s work in which acquiring intercultural competency is seen as a transformational learning process where “the stranger’s “old” person breaks up, and the intercultural knowledge, attitudes and behavioural capacities construct a “new” person at a higher level of integration.”^{xii}

Taylor seeks to lay a model alongside Mezirow’s phases.^{xiii} He begins with a component called, “learning readiness;” that is, former critical events, personal goals, training, and experience that set the stage for a transformational process. This component is not alluded to in the Mezirow model. Learning readiness is followed by “cultural disequilibrium” or periods of dissonance causing stress and intense emotions. In response to disequilibrium, learners will utilize different “cognitive orientations” –reflective or nonreflective. A cognitive orientation will enable learners to employ “behavioural learning strategies” to balance their cultural disequilibrium. The final component in Taylor’s model is “evolving cultural identity,” that is, an ongoing process where the learner’s “cultural identity is no longer linked to one culture, in that they are able to identify and understand the perspectives of the host culture.”^{xiv}

Becoming interculturally competent, says Taylor, consists of changing values, greater self-confidence, and a change in perspective.^{xv} In conclusion Taylor would suggest that the outcome of an intercultural engagement process “emulates” Mezirow’s transformed perspective – “a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective” – even if the process to arrive there does not correspond completely to Mezirow’s model.^{xvi}

Taylor’s helpful comparison of intercultural competency theory and transformation learning theory in 1994, unfortunately just missed the chance to interact with the primary introduction of Milton Bennett’s work on intercultural development theory (1993). In fact, Taylor indicates that the body of intercultural literature he had to

work with “tells us little of the learning process about how one becomes interculturally competent.”^{xvii}

In Bennett’s *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*, the learner interacts with the meaning of difference. Differentiation is understood in two senses; “first, that people differentiate phenomena in a variety of ways, and second, cultures differ fundamentally from one another in the way they maintain patterns of differentiation, or worldviews.”^{xviii}

Bennett’s model leads the learner along a continuum from ethnocentrism, where the world is observed through one’s unconsciously held worldview, to ethnorelativism, where one’s worldview is consciously understood to be just one among many legitimate possibilities. Learners pass from Denial of difference, to Defense against difference, to Minimization of difference (the stages of movement through ethnocentrism). Ethnorelative stages are Acceptance of difference, Adaptation to difference and finally to Integration of difference.^{xix}

For Bennett, the experience of cultural difference and how one construes that experience are the keys to intercultural development. “As noted earlier, the idea of culture itself refers to patterns of differentiation. These patterns form the constructs that provide us with interpretations of phenomena. To become aware of one’s own worldview is to realize that one is construing in a particular cultural way. It is to find one’s own “meaning-making” meaningful, an activity that exists on a metalevel, above the basic differentiation of cultural categories.”^{xx}

While we can recognize elements of commonality with Mezirow’s transformative learning, Bennett is careful to suggest that his model is not dependent upon “transformative” crisis moments such as the “disorienting dilemma” or “cultural disequilibrium.”^{xxi} Bennett places himself in the “constructivist” camp with authors such as George Kelly, Peter Berger, Gregory Bateson, Benjamin Whorf and Dean Barnlund. *Cognitive constructivism* suggests that we do not perceive events directly, that events are perceived through the received templates, or categories, of our cultural framework. These frames organize our perception of various phenomena; “more cognitively complex individuals are able to organize their perceptions of events into more differentiated categories.”^{xxii} *Experiential constructivism* “refers to how we “co-create” our experience

through our corporal, linguistic, and emotional interaction with natural and human (including conceptual) environments.”^{xxiii}

In this model, Bennett “supposes that contact with cultural difference generates pressure for change in one’s worldview. This happens because the “default” ethnocentric world view, while sufficient for managing relations within one’s own culture, is inadequate to the task of developing and maintaining social relations across cultural boundaries.”^{xxiv} While Bennett may not want to use Mezirow’s transformative learning paradigm, the notion that “cultural difference generates pressure for change” sounds very familiar.

Mission as Transformation

In the evangelical church community, the term “transformation” is a current watchword. Many in churches, denominations, mission agencies, desire their movements to be agents of transformation. As presently used, the term no longer seems to refer to the sanctification process of the individual believer. Rather, it refers to a planned, systemic renovation of the global church, including the “transformation” of cultures, societies, cities, economic structures, and more.

Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden’s *Mission as Transformation* (2000) brought together the streams of support for this model. They say “Christ’s followers, therefore, are called in one way or another, not to conform to the values of society but to transform them” (Ro. 12:1-2; Eph. 5:8-14).^{xxv} Samuel and Sugden then define transformation as

the change from a condition of human existence contrary to God’s purpose to one in which people are able to enjoy fullness in harmony with God. This transformation can only take place through the obedience of individuals and communities to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, whose power changes the lives of men and women by releasing them from the guilt, power and consequences of sin, enabling them to respond with love toward God and towards others (Rom. 5:5), and making them ‘new creatures in Christ’ (2 Cor. 5:17).^{xxvi}

These authors identify key components for the idea of mission as transformation:

- 1) An integral relationship exists between evangelism and social change; that is, the two cannot be separated or one given priority over the other.
- 2) Mission is not an act of judgment but rather, a journey with people and communities toward God's intention; that is, "we are going in this direction, why don't you come with us?"
- 3) Mission exists in a context—mission should demonstrate that the Christian faith is translatable; that is, mission will change the way we read the Bible.
- 4) Mission requires praxis; that is, commitment to change the world in the direction of abundant life, equity and love.
- 5) Mission engages with local context; that is, theology will engage with the issues of a community in particular, not in general.
- 6) Mission enables freedom and empowerment; that is, mission will engage with the oppressed and the marginalized, those who need the gospel most.
- 7) Mission facilitates reconciliation; that is, reconciliation between God and humans, as well as among humans themselves, is one of the most powerful demonstrations of the gospel.
- 8) Mission is rooted in communities of change; that is, the primary agent of transformation is local Bodies of Christ.^{xxvii}

Luis Bush, one of the primary shapers of the transformation document from the 2004 Forum for World Evangelization observes that,

As we begin the twenty-first century, mission as transformation has emerged as a new paradigm. This paradigm builds on the foundational vision of 'the whole church taking the whole Gospel to the whole world'. In this view of mission, the focus is on the intended impact of mission related ministries—the transformation of individuals, communities and nations—and on the ways in which specific ministry activities can support this process.^{xxviii}

In a key document from this movement, in a section entitled, "A Biblical Perspective on Transformation," Bush and others state that,

Transformation is the progressive, ongoing, measurable, supernatural impact of the presence and power of God working in, through, and apart from the Church on human society and structures. It involves seeking

positive change in the whole of human life materially, socially, and spiritually, as we recover our true identity as human beings created in the image of God and discover our true vocation as productive stewards, faithfully caring for our world and its people.^{xxix}

They go on to suggest that “through the Church this is characterized by accelerated conversion growth, mobilization of gifts and callings, and an increased relevance to and participation in greater society.”^{xxx} An Anglican document reflects a similar understanding:

Christianity is not simply a religion. The first Christians were called ‘followers of the Way’. They were a transforming force in apostolic times. Their concern was not only to ‘talk the talk’, but to ‘walk the walk’. Transformation in this light means action to establish conditions where wholeness of life may be enjoyed.^{xxxi}

Transformation language – Making Connections and Correlations

As with Taylor’s critique of the early intercultural competency literature, there seems to be little explanation of the learning process that will enable the church, or individual believers, to “become” agents of transformation. Outcomes of mission as transformation are communicated, but not the means by which transformation is realized. It is precisely at this point that insights from cognition studies, developmental psychology and constructivist social theory can help put some flesh on the somewhat nebulous (spiritualized?) descriptions of mission as transformation.

We should start with closer consideration of the biblical language of transformation. A key verse is Romans 12:2, “do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be *transformed* by the renewing of your mind.” *Metamorphoo* refers to “a complete change which, under the power of God, will find expression in character and conduct; *morphe* lays stress on the inward change; the present continuous tenses indicate a process.”^{xxxii} In this passage transformation is enabled by the *renewing* of the mind. *Anakainosis* is “the adjustment of the moral and spiritual vision and thinking to the mind of God, which is designed to have a transforming effect upon life.”^{xxxiii} In 2 Corinthians

3:18 transformation into the image of Christ, that is, an ongoing adjustment toward Christlikeness, is enabled by encounter with the Lord's glory.

A simple reframing of these thoughts might suggest that transformation is sparked by encounter and relationship with the living God which enables or sustains a process of adjusting moral and spiritual assumptions and cognitive constructions so that we progressively think, feel, create, act, serve, more like Jesus.

When we pause to reflect on Mezirow and Taylor, we can see that they are suggesting that the encounter with difference, whether in the "disorienting dilemma" or "the stranger" from another culture, opens an opportunity for transformation in our lives. We have the opportunity to examine assumptions and renegotiate how we perceive reality. At this point there seems to be congruence with the simple notion of transformation we find in Scripture. The authentic encounter with the Other—in this case God—pushes us to consider ourselves in ways that "life as always" cannot.

Stephen Brookfield concurs that this consideration and examination, or critical reflection, is central to transformation: "An act of learning can be called transformative only if it involves a fundamental questioning and reordering of how one thinks or acts."^{xxxiv}

Emmanuel Levinas suggests that the encounter with Other challenges us to see the unexplainable beyond ourselves, and calls into question everything we have previously understood or constructed.^{xxxv} Our own selves are called into question when we meet God and we realize our limitations and how we have been constrained.

If our encounter with the Lord's glory is just assimilated (conformed?) into our current pattern of moral and spiritual assumptions, then transformation has not happened. The encounter should point us forward to renewing—to self-examination and critical reflection upon our values, assumptions, and cognitive constructions; to acknowledge other frames of meaning (a kingdom worldview); to identify new courses of action and behaviours which are gradually integrated into a new, Jesus-centred perspective, or way of seeing, being and acting. Miroslav Volf, as an educator of Christian leaders and theologians has said,

I am a guardian of the Christian tradition's alterity, its otherness. I must teach students not to occlude its opacity, not distort it by squeezing it into

their own cognitive frameworks and by pressing it into their predetermined life projects, like some missing piece of a puzzle. . . . Critical engagement will be encouraged and angry rejection respected, but domestication will not be tolerated. With alterity lost, teachers and students of theology remain incarcerated within the circle of their own familiarity, incapable of hearing anything but echoes of their own voices.^{xxxvi}

In what way, then, are we to understand mission as transformation? The current discussion suggests that the actions of Christians should have a “transformative effect” in neighbourhoods and societies. It involves “seeking positive change in the whole of human life.” But if transformation results from critical reflection upon the encounter with difference and the reframing of perspective, where do these activities appear in the “mission as transformation” model?

In many ways Western mission engagement in societies all around the world has appeared as “other” –in many cases resulting in perspective change. Those transformations have often been in the move from an indigenous social system to a Western-oriented social system, the introduction of modernization, as well as variations on Western Christianity as civil religion. But also, many people in these cultures have had real encounters with the Living God and been transformed through the renewing of their minds.

Mission encounter with “other” cultures and faith systems has also resulted in transformation among the sent. From new appreciation of other worldviews and their contribution to understanding the multi-faceted nature of God, to reconfigurations of Christian theology seeking to find a universalist way to include all humanity in God’s salvation.

It is doubtful, however, that these are the meanings associated with the notion of “mission as transformation.” What, then, can our understanding of transformation gain from inserting the idea of disequilibrium, or encounter with difference, into the conversation?

Is the church, Other? Do we create “dissonance” in the communities in which we live and conduct sacred worship? Do people and communities transform because of the encounter with the Other in us?

If Jesus was/is “a stumbling block” and the church is the continuing body/presence of Jesus in the world, in what way is a grace-filled, loving community of “transforming” Jesus-followers (*ekklesia*) “a stumbling block” to the neighbourhood in which they live out grace and love? Can the church serve as “dissonance” to the world around us? In what way, then, is the church an agent of change? Are we called to be communities of shalom? Upon which our neighbours “stumble” and ask the reason for the hope that is within us? If we understand our faith communities as “sent,” as missional, then *being* communities of dissonance may be the pivotal activity in mission as transformation.

Conclusion

As I follow my own particular thread of ministry expression, I find myself continually interacting with these diverse streams: education, theology, mission, intercultural communications, ecclesiology, philosophy, and so on. This article has been a simple exercise to try to relate them together in a manner that helps to discern points of congruence. Chris Sugden suggests that transformation “has been used as a strategy—as a way of attending to the whole person in the whole of their relationships. But it had no worked out theory. It has been more of a narrative, a framework, a way of thinking about what Christians believe should happen rather than what actually happens, explaining causality as a basis for problem-solving action.”^{xxxvii} Perhaps adult transformative learning theory and intercultural development studies, with their notion of a transformative encounter with the Other—with radical difference—can help us explain some of the causality in “mission as transformation.”

About the Author



Dan Sheffield is Director of Global and Intercultural Ministries for The Free Methodist Church in Canada. He has a master’s degree in Religious Education from McMaster University. He has served as a missionary in Egypt and South Africa, where he was involved in planting a city-centre, multicultural church in the post-apartheid, reconstruction era. Dan currently provides urban ministry training and strategic planning resources for Free Methodist leaders in cities as diverse as Toronto, Mexico City, Hyderabad and Accra.

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Embracing and Embodying Transformative Learning in Global Mission Organizations

By Dennis Nyamieh Walker

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Abstract: This article explores implications of Mezirow's theory of transformative learning for global mission organizations. Suggestions are offered as to how to create a climate for transformative learning in order to affect communication, relationships, and decision-making within the organization.

“What is the contribution of transformative learning to our understanding and practice of ministry in the 21st century?” As Director of Global Learning at HCJB Global (formerly HCJB World Radio) one of my responsibilities was to identify the learning needs of the mission's staff (both local and global) by means of a mission-wide needs assessment. Mission leadership wanted to see learning practices established that would help achieve set goals, and they consistently used the word “transformation” in our discussions. One of the first things I did was to craft a conceptual description of learning.¹

As I reflect on years of interaction with personnel in a variety of evangelical mission organizations, my impression is that many are eager to see transformation take place through learning platforms. While this is a commendable goal, it seems that teaching and learning for transformation (often referred to as training, which may suggest that the term transformation is not fully understood) are often more directed at those mission personnel serve through outreach programs. Although transformative learning is often embraced as a key strategy by mission organizations for nurturing the saved and

¹ Describing learning is a formidable challenge, and therefore my conceptual description of learning was primarily intended to function as a launching point for ongoing discussion, dialogue and reflection. Learning as a complex phenomenon takes place at multiple levels and should be transformative, active, interactive and measurable. It should lead to new ways of thinking, behaving and seeing our world, helping the learner make meaning of his or her world through experiences, knowledge and skill acquisition. In this regard, transformative learning takes place at different rates and different ways for individual learners. Further, in one way or another, learning should affect those connected to the learner's environment.

developing indigenous leadership, transformative learning within the organization itself seems to be lacking.²

Transformation of assumptions, values and, consequently their lives and how they do ministry, may be experienced only at the higher echelon of an organization if they create opportunities to deliberate (dialogue and discuss) over issues. The leadership, then, announces the breakthroughs they experienced in their meetings, assuming everyone else will grasp the implications for ministry outreach practices and will support them. Unfortunately, many staff members within the organization may not understand or embrace these new concepts which will now affect their ministry. Typically questions emerge such as “How are we going to do that in my region?” or “How will that idea effect us and the lives of those among whom we serve?” or “Do you understand what the Director was talking about for our work in [country name]?” or “Why do they think that will work?” System wide learning is clearly preferable in the decision making processes of an organization; however, the reality is often as described above. But, if thoughts and questions are communicated to the leadership they could provide the basis for executives to engage members of the organization in learning experiences, enabling those who are affected by announcements to reflect critically on decisions made. One of the problems with uncritical engagement of announced concepts or decisions is potential varying interpretations, shaped by the prior and present beliefs and feelings of each individual.

If transformative learning is viewed as something that happens only to those outside the mission organization, how can we help global communities experience transformation when we ourselves are not grappling with learning experiences that allow the for the possibility of transformation in the organization? One cannot give what one does not have. Transformative learning, when engaged and utilized within an organization, can be the catalyst for nurturing and developing a generation of reflective thinkers able to lead ministries in the 21st century and beyond.

My own learning journey is an example of the transforming power of critical reflection. During my pre-doctoral education days, I firmly believed that the best way to learn was through a teacher-dominated mode—the teacher lectures and provides the notes

² The intentional proactive practice of a belief, idea or value that has been created by an avid understanding of theory for the purpose of affecting transformation. Embodiment of transformative learning should be embedded in the culture of an organization so that when it is practiced outside of the organization, it is conducted from the vantage point of healthy prior experience.

and even the correct conclusions concerning the ideas taught. During tests or exams, the learner regurgitates the information supplied by the professor. Memorization and regurgitation of content were heralded as the epitome of learning outcomes. Asking questions or probing the positions of the teacher was not encouraged. Even though I harbored my own philosophical positions and opinions, I was not encouraged to voice them; and so they were never explored in a healthy environment of challenge and learning. This changed drastically when I entered the PhD in Educational Studies at Trinity International University and interacted with and engaged my professors and colleagues. As I was exposed to learning theorists such as Freire, Mezirow and others, I experienced disequilibrium and encountered my own “disorienting dilemmas” (Mezirow 1991).

I realized that learning would be more meaningful if I could engage in critical reflection of the knowledge. Learning was not just about methodology. It was about an entire philosophical system that informs and allows me to explore processes of conceptual change and to engage in reflection that relates to the ways in which meaning and life are transformed. The key element in this revelation was my new collaborative/cooperative learning environment. My assumptions of the nature of knowledge, my understanding of the teaching-learning process, the nature of authority were all challenged during my academic journey with my learning colleagues. Now, as I interact with learning within a parachurch organization, I do so with a desire to understand more fully how meaning is constructed there, and I strive to facilitate this process of perspective formation and transformation in our ministry in Sub-Saharan Africa (the region for which I am now responsible) so that we can be better servants of God in our global community.

While I fully understand that not all learning situations lend themselves to transformative learning,³ my primary goal is to view transformative learning as a viable option for developing an organizational culture that contributes to the understanding and practice of global ministry.

³ Not all persons are inclined to engage in transformative learning. Many leaders may not feel comfortable with interacting with the nuances of transformative learning, and certain situations within global mission organizations may not prevent them from promoting transformative learning. The crucial element is that anyone who desires to engage transformative learning must understand the variables of their own context.

Transformative Learning

Jack Mezirow describes transformative learning as “the way learners interpret and reinterpret their sense experience” and that this is “central to making meaning and hence learning” (Mezirow 1994, 222). He posits that disorienting dilemmas can trigger critical reflection leading to the crafting of new ways of constructing knowledge and interpreting experiences. He suggests that learning “may assume any of the following four forms: learning through existing meaning schemes, learning new meaning schemes, learning through the transformation of meaning schemes, and learning through the transformation of meaning perspective” (Mezirow 1991, 97-98). He adds that though “the transformation of meaning schemes (specific beliefs, attitudes, and emotional reactions) through reflection is an everyday occurrence, it does not necessarily involve self-reflection” (Mezirow 1991, 167) and further discusses meaning schemes as meaning structures that are “the constellation of concept, belief, judgment, and feelings which shapes a particular interpretation” (Mezirow 1994, 223). The glue that holds all four forms together is problem solving (Mezirow 1991, 94).

Variables such as the learning context and differences in learners mean that there can be no single approach to engaging in transformative learning. It takes a skilled and passionate facilitator to promote self-reflection through meaningful problem solving. However, for those who understand and embrace transformative learning, the question of how it is embodied must be addressed. There are many ways to foster transformative learning within an organization, but one especially productive way is the collaborative learning process.

Collaborative Approach to Transformative Learning

Research has shown that learners get the most from their learning experience when they are actively involved in the process; and it also appears from the research that learners gain more insights and retain more concepts when they are in collaborative learning environments (Brookfield 1986; Bruffee 1999; Collier 1980; Foster and Gibbons 2007; Johnson and Johnson 2000; Johnson and Johnson 2004; Kohn 1986; McKeachie, Pintrich, Lin and Smith 1986; Regan 2002; Hutchings and Shulman 1999).

Collaborative learning involves groups of learners working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product. This usually happens through active

communication, for it is through a wide range of communication modes that learning takes place. Gerlach sees collaborative learning as a framework that allows natural social interactions among participants in a group (Gerlach 1994). The collaborative learning environment allows those involved in the learning process to share and defend ideas and values, question conceptual frameworks and thereby unearth their own potential and satisfaction in the learning process. It is a form of group activity in which members of each group “concentrate on solving or dealing with formidable problems . . . group members distribute knowledge and authority among themselves, taking it upon themselves to help one another in times of threat and calamity” (Bruffee 1999, 9). When handled skillfully by the facilitator, collaborative learning can produce higher-level learning and can cultivate what Mezirow (1991) refers to as critical reflection. The goal is to move learning from a teacher/facilitator-*dominated* process to a participant-centered or involved process. Learning that is transformative is viewed as a lifelong activity and should take place in contexts where learning from interaction with others is encouraged.

Collaborative learning can involve a variety of processes that stimulate reflection and critical analysis. Two such processes are dialogue and discussion.

Dialogue

This process in the learning environment is opposed to the prevalent monological approach. Dialogue requires the view that knowledge does not reside in just one person. Dialogue involves mutual respect and serving each other as priests. In order to attain this consciousness of mutuality, which is “both challenging and transforming, critical dialogue, talk, and experience of living together are necessary” (Gadotti 1994, 49). Even though in certain contexts it may be difficult for the learner to manifest this perspective, the facilitator must try to accomplish the dialogue as among equals and as “a joint process of inquiry and learning” (Kolb 1984, 29).

Gudykunst presents dialogue as a communication form that exists among individuals and aims “not to change strangers, but to understand them.” It is the key to developing a viable and healthy community because it provides the mutuality that respects the dignity of people and their views (Gudykunst 2003, 301). In dialogue, one or more present their perspectives, share experience and/or knowledge while others actively listen with the purpose to understand and then to engage. In dialogue, one’s own agenda

or bias may exist, but it is suspended. Gudykunst observes that “In a dialogue, each participant’s feeling of control and ownership is minimized; each participant confirms the other, even when conflict occurs. It is the mutual confirmation that occurs in dialogues that allows us to feel human” (Gudykunst 2003, 302).

In the context of organizational team learning, Peter Senge describes dialogue as “the capacity of members of a team to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine ‘thinking together’ ” (Senge 1990, 10). Concerning the power and importance of dialogue, he states:

The discipline of dialogue also involves learning how to recognize the patterns of interaction . . . that undermine learning. The patterns of defensiveness are often deeply engrained in how a team operates. If unrecognized, they undermine learning. If recognized and surfaced creatively, they can actually accelerate learning (Senge 1990, 10).

Discussion

Senge makes a distinction between dialogue and discussion. As opposed to dialogue, where there is a mutual thinking together for the purpose of discovering a new view, in a discussion different points of view are presented with the aim of defending these views. This should not be understood as being *defensive*, but rather as an opportunity to provide opposing views that either help cement a person’s point of view or provide a venue in which one’s position could be changed. Senge argues that this practice is useful in analyzing “a whole situation” (Senge 1990, 247).

Positive Interdependence

Many have journeyed through educational systems that underscore memorization of content and promote individualism through competition. We, therefore, often bring with us into organizations a spirit of competition, and a desire to celebrate our individual accomplishments. While I am confident that competition has its place within organizations, it must be engaged cautiously in order to provide consensual productivity. Unfortunately, competition can become an individualistic approach that creates a problem since it is likely that few will change their outlook on learning unless they are

exposed to and come to embrace alternative learning philosophies and approaches. Many (especially those in positions of authority) are accustomed to crafting ideas from the comfort of their offices, and then seek ways to communicate those ideas and wide-ranging decisions with the expectation that they will be accepted uncritically.

As a result of this assumption, collaborative learning processes are seldom engaged. Among reasons for this way of communicating is the fear of having our assumptions challenged. To counter negative organizational practices, Nico Wiersema suggests “positive independence” as a key element in collaborative learning. When we engage in collaborative learning, we do so with the passionate belief that we are “linked with others in a way that ensures that they all succeed together. Each participant may have a different role, but that role must be crucial to the group process.” Positive interdependence is intentional “to teach each other and learn from each other” (Wiersema 2000, 2). It would seem that Christians should be open to teaching and learning from one another so that we are better poised to experience transformation in our ministry.

In my experience, collaborative learning fostered problem-solving and the development of critical thinking through healthy problem-based dialogue and discussion. It has helped me to clarify and evaluate ideas (both mine and others’). For those whose cultural orientation is focused on independence, collaborative learning can seem a Herculean task since it is not part of their experience. However, collaborative learning does not negate individual performance; rather it celebrates it within healthy heterogeneous groups. Awareness of group dynamics is vital since problems arise when individual biases are allowed to overwhelm group goals. Much of what I have learned in my faith journey have come from positive interdependence—from the position that respects others as people created in God’s image.

Moving Forward

A clear comprehension of transformative and collaborative learning is a good place to begin, but for transformative learning to be embraced and then embodied, several intentional steps must be taken. Issues exist in many global mission organizations that will affect the learning culture. These include differences in educational background, ethnicity, learning style background and a predisposition (or not) for learning. Good practice promotes success in transformative learning efforts. The following suggestions

are offered as ways to encourage the embodiment of transformative learning within the organizational culture.

1. Appoint a key person as the one who champions a culture of learning within the organization. This person must be passionate about the learning process and be aware of cross-cultural issues.
2. Align learning activities with overall organizational goals.
3. Plan for each stage of the process. Where necessary, develop curriculum that provides a framework for engaging transformative issues. In the curriculum, intentionally design opportunities for collaborative tasks to enhance transformative learning.
4. Identify and train facilitators who are interested in the learning process and understand that their role is to be a catalyst for learning. (See “Role of the Facilitator/Leader” below for more details.)
5. Organize learning groups. A natural way to begin is within departments and then moving on to groups that include multiple departments. Always be cognizant of the composition of the group and its size. The groups will be organized around interests (personal and organizational).
6. Ensure that selected dialogue and discussion topics are relevant to those involved in the groups in particular and the organization in general.
7. Develop ways to evaluate the process. Group members should be given opportunities to establish criteria that are used to evaluate the progress or effectiveness of their group.

Role of the Facilitator/Leader

Mission organizations who engage in the process of embracing and embodying transformative learning should have qualified and passionate facilitators who can encourage learners within their organizations to do the following:

1. Describe and examine their assumptions about what they believe, how they feel and how they normally respond; and to be as vulnerable as possible. These

behaviors will require a certain degree of openness to the views of others without being protective or defensive.

2. Investigate the potential ramifications of participants' assumptions so that they are prepared to face the realities of their observations.
3. Provide a healthy environment for dialogue in which others' assumptions can be acknowledged and even challenged in a non-threatening setting (See Senge 1990).
4. Ensure that as new or revised sets of common assumptions are developed, they are communicated to others in comprehensible ways. This process allows for a meaningful cognitive engagement as existing frames of reference are extended (see Merriam 2004).

Some Benefits of Transformative Learning

Encouraging transformative learning processes within an organization can lead to direct or indirect benefits such as the following:

1. Allows active engagement of the mind in both personal and corporate renewal (Romans 12:1, 2). Learning can take place by transforming habits of the mind. One of the ways we put our faith into action is by daily engaging in critical reflective practices (Clare 2006). We have been called to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength (Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27).
2. Fosters faith within a community of intentional learners. Engagement in transformative learning practices has allowed me to evaluate, transform and extend my meaning schemes, perspectives and values (Mezirow 1991, 212).
3. Builds confidence and develop trust within groups. As we engage in transformative learning practices, we learn how to “negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others” (Mezirow 2000).
4. Develops knowledge and skills that enhance the doing of ministry locally and globally. Some of these skills include asking good questions, active listening, functioning in a group environment (especially one focused on problem solving), documenting and communicating key rational and cognitive findings.

5. Promotes the development of mission personnel who are dedicated to learning for transformation in our ministries.

Conclusion

Multiple learning contexts will always exist concurrently within any organization. Although not all situations within global mission organizations will lend themselves to transformative learning, many contexts could profit from the process. How learning currently takes place within global mission organizations will no doubt affect the ease with which they will embrace and eventually embody transformative learning as part of their organizational culture.

Those concerned with and committed to learning within global mission organizations must ensure that structures and approaches are intentionally chosen and implemented in order for change to take place. Careful and critical examination of factors that affect the present learning culture must be adequately understood in order for new and appropriate processes to be instituted. Not all groups are cooperative, and disharmony hinders the collaborative process, so transformative learning should not be forced on those who are not ready to critically reflect on the assumptions of their specific beliefs, attitudes and emotions that could result in “disorienting dilemmas”. However, there must be a starting point, especially if a mission organization embraces the theory of transformative learning and desires to develop an intentional community of learners. Mission leaders must inquire into ways in which the challenges of learning can be turned into opportunities for embracing and embodying transformative learning.

Since learning is a process, my prayer is that this article will spark interest so that we can engage in further dialogue and discussion about the issues which have potential to transform us and our ministries.

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About the Author



Dennis Nyamieh Walker is a native of Liberia, West Africa, and currently serves as the Executive Director of Sub-Saharan Africa with HCJB Global (<http://www.hcjbglobal.org/>). He is focused on launching HCJB Global's new initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa. This initiative seeks to intentionally integrate media, healthcare and leadership development ministries to transform communities across the continent. Dr. Walker has served as adjunct faculty at two American universities, and visiting assistant professor at Trinity College of Trinity International University. His ministry interests include organizational leadership, mentoring, evangelism, discipleship, learning organizations. He, his wife Bendu Famatta, and their three children Denise Korpo Sio, Emmanuel Nagbe, and Joel Nyamieh are based in Colorado Springs, CO.

Toward an Understanding and Practice of Transformative Learning in Africa

By Faustin Ntamushobora

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Abstract: This article explores transformative learning in the African context. Lack of contextualized education in Africa, inaccessibility to education, a high rate of illiteracy among Africans, and limited forms and approaches in discipleship and leadership development are all factors that have hindered transformation in the church and communities in Africa. The article suggests that transformative learning is most effectively developed in relation to a Christian education philosophical perspective, and calls for the church and theological institutions to contextualize their curricula and integrate theology with other relevant disciplines to nurture transformation in the lives of Christians and their communities.

Introduction

“Learning as transformation” reflects the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ who taught his disciples in a transformative way and then commanded them to go and “make disciples” of all the nations (Matthew 28:19-20). The making of disciples is a process that begins with hearing the Word of God which transforms the intellect, the emotions, and the will, so that the hearer makes an informed decision to accept Christ as Savior and Lord (Acts 2:22-41). Once the decision is made, the journey of transformation has begun, and the transformation influences not only the person, but also his or her community and environment.

Is all learning transformative? The Jews who followed Jesus in John 8:31-41 knew the Scripture of the Old Testament but they were not transformed. No wonder Jesus would tell them that they belonged to their father, the devil (John 8:44). When Guthrie described the situation in Rwanda after the slaughter of as many half a million people during the genocide of 1994, he asked the question, “How can we explain such a bile in a land where, according to the 1991 census, 80% of the 8.2 million people were Catholic or Protestant?” (Guthrie 1994, 144). The so-called Christians who killed others in Rwanda at that time had knowledge about Christ but they had not been transformed.

This article explores transformative learning in the context of Africa. The nature of transformative learning is discussed and then critical issues that have hindered transformation in Africa are addressed. Recommendations for the African context conclude the article.

What is Transformative Learning?

In the 1970s, Jack Mezirow defined transformational learning as "...the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mindsets) 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" (Mercer 2006, 4). Mercer, commenting on Mezirow's theory of transformational learning, states that

Mezirow often describes transformational learning theory apart from any particular learning context, further opening him to charges of producing a universalizing meta-narrative. Additionally, emphasis on the cognitive processes of transformation leads him to overvalue rational-cognitive activity and to locate learning in the rational capacities of individuals, while ignoring dimensions of learning such as the imaginal, affective, aesthetic, and the socio-communal situating of learning. (Mercer 2006, 6)

Merriam (2004) challenged Mezirow to substantially expand the theory of transformational learning to include more "connected," affective, and intuitive dimensions on an equal footing with the cognitive and rational components. She refers to incidents of transformational learning that occurred without conscious critical reflection, such as Freire's (1973) work with illiterate peasants, Taylor's study (1994) of adults who had lived and worked in a culture of different from their own, and McDonald (1998) who investigated how people became Vegans and transformed their perspective without being aware of the change process. Since the 1970s, Mezirow's theory of perspective transformation has been challenged, elaborated upon, and nuanced by multicultural contributions. While a Christian perspective on Mezirow's work has not been lacking,

this article presents a Christian perspective with a view to application to an African context.

What then is a Christian Understanding of Transformational Learning?

Mezirow established a foundation for thinking and further research about transformational learning. Christian educators could expand Mezirow's theory to learning domains other than the cognitive, seeking to add insight from a faith perspective. For example, the Greek word "*metanoeo*" used in Scripture describes the process of transformation. It is a total change that affects the mind, heart, and the entire body. We can, therefore, define transformative learning as learning that brings transformation in the whole life of the learner: intellect, affections, will, body, relationships and environment. This definition questions any notion of transformative learning that emphasizes partial change in the life of the learner. In my view, the most complete expression of transformative learning is found in a Christian worldview. Through the Word of God, the believer accepts Jesus Christ and is transformed in his or her thinking, affections, will, and actions. When Paul speaks about transformation in Romans 12:1-2, he refers to the relationship of believers with Christ who has justified them (Romans 1-11); and then calls them to a dynamic, continuous relationship with Christ which leads to lasting change and which affects their relationships with others. The church has the mandate to nurture the possibility of transformation in individuals and communities by teaching believers in a transformative way. To what extent has teaching in Africa encouraged transformation?

While I appreciate the work of the church in Africa, in my judgment teaching practices in the church have not contributed effectively to the transformation of individuals and their communities. How do we explain the wars that ravage the continent—wars that are often between people's who call themselves Christian? How do we explain the daily spread of HIV/AIDS? How do we explain corruption in countries where Christianity is dominant? How do we explain leadership practices, even in the church, that are oppressive? How do we explain Africa's failure to use its vast resources for the development of people and the continent for good? In this respect, Adeyemo lamented,

It is said that Africa is the richest of the seven continents in natural resources and yet people are the poorest. Africa is probably the first home of the human race and yet it is the last to be developed. Africa and Africans have made many nations and people great, yet their own vineyards remain unkempt. How do you explain such a set of contradictions? (Adeyemo 2001, 31)

What Went Wrong in Africa?

Many explanations have been suggested for the persistent lack of transformation in Africa: bad governance, lack of democracy, corruption, colonialism and neo-colonialism. One issue that has been little explored as a contributor to failed development goals is the nature of education in schools across the continent. African educational systems have not been effective in fostering learning that is transformative of the whole person, in ways that foster dignity and freedom of mind and spirit, and that equips them with skills for the transformation of their society. Unfortunately, the church and theological institutions have assumed most of the ineffective practices of the educational system!

The view of education in Africa is limited and inadequate and has as a result not brought about constructive change. From the time Africa was colonized, education became confused with schooling, thus neglecting the informal and non-formal educational systems that are of paramount importance in fostering transformation in the life of individuals. Colonizers sought to train an elite class of Africans through whom they would govern; and when missionaries began theological schools in Africa they also sought to train the experts in the church through the same programs they had gone through. Though the missionaries had good intentions, they paid little attention to the non-formal and informal methods to which Africans were accustomed and which were, in many instances, transformative. David and Gregory recognized that “schools might well serve purposes that owe little to education and its aims” (David and Gregory 2002, 4). They rightly pointed out that “the main purpose of education is to contribute to the improvement of wider society” (David and Gregory 2002, 113).

Comparing the traditional Kikuyu system in Kenya (representative of African education) with the European system, Kenyatta once observed that

The striking thing in Kikuyu system of education and the feature which most sharply distinguishes it from the European System of Education is the primary place given to personal relations. Each official statement of educational policy repeats this well-worn declaration that the aim of education must be building of character and not the mere acquisition of knowledge, but the European practice falls short of this principle... While the Westerner asserts that character formation is the chief thing, he forgets that character is formed primarily through relations with other people, and that there is really no other way in which it can grow. (Kenyatta 1984, 121)

In the African traditional setting, education was less taught than shown, less told than lived. It was presented less in a form of knowledge than in a form of character-building. The instructor was more a model than a teacher in the formal sense. Togetherness and learning-by-doing were the most used methods in training young people. This does not mean that Africans do not need academic knowledge; they do, but with culturally adapted methods. Education should refine the learners' capabilities, enlarge areas of their lives over which the writ of reason-giving runs, and give them a greater measure of control over their own lives (David and Gregory 2002, 12).

This does not mean that the Western formal education is without value in the African context. This is the form of education I myself have gone through. A problem has been the failure to integrate African traditional learning styles with Western forms. The Western education system should equip Africans with capacity to be able to formulate their own educational system, through careful research in Africa, so that African scholars are able to create a framework fit for their own milieu. That calls for contextualization of principles that apply in the West but which do not necessarily apply in Africa. So, Africa still needs Western education that can then be adapted to African realities. We saw some of this adaptation when Western educated Africans used their knowledge to conscientize the masses to attain political ends during the struggle for independence in Africa.

Is Education Needed in Africa?

While noting that the *form* of education as schooling has been problematic, what has contributed to lack of change in Africa is inaccessibility to education and a high rate

of illiteracy. It is estimated that at least half the African population is illiterate. David and Gregory do not mince their words when they write that “Denying people education stunts their development; denying them education prevents them flourishing in ways they might otherwise flourish. Human beings are born with all kinds of talents, dispositions, propensities, inclinations. Education can, in a benign way, aid in the development of those potentialities” (David and Gregory 2002, 12).

The UNESCO Report on Education for All states that “Literacy should be understood within a right-based approach and among principles of inclusion for human development” (UNESCO Report 2006, 136). This report places Sub-Saharan Africa second to last in rates of literacy in the period between 2000 and 2004 (49%), after South and West Asia (47.5%). Data are reported that in Sub-Saharan Africa the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) is below 10% compared to Arab States (18%), Central Asia (29%) and South and West Asia (32%) (UNESCO Report 2006, 39).

It has been noted that in Africa, enrollment in and completion of school are two different issues, which actually could be illustrated by a pyramid, with the primary school at the base, secondary education in the middle, and the tertiary or ‘higher’ education at the top. Some of the reasons for this pyramid representation are cultural, financial and political. For instance, reports indicate that in Kenya at the primary level, enrollment of girls was 49.4 percent in 1995, an increase from 34.2 percent in 1963. In the same period, women’s percentage enrollment in secondary school had risen to 45.1 percent from 31 percent. The situation is worse at the tertiary level. For example, in the 1996-1997 academic year, girls accounted for 28.8 percent of the total registered students in public universities (Government of Kenya, 1997). The situation is even worse for other Sub-Saharan countries such as Chad, Ethiopia, Guinea, Benin, Niger, Mali Mozambique (UNESCO Report 2006, 50).

These enrollment differences between boys and girls in Africa are exacerbated by political, economic, socio-cultural and schooling factors. In Kenya, for example, most parents from nomadic communities take children to secondary and university schools on the basis of their sex. Males are given more priority than girls, while girls are encouraged to be married so that parents get cows in return. Yet in Africa, women’s education is essential in achieving goals such as eradication of poverty, promotion of a sustainable livelihood as well as environmental protection and regeneration (Psacharopoulos and

Woodball 1985; Davison and Kanyuka 1990). A significant proverb states that educating a man is educating an individual, but educating a woman is educating the nation. But other parents fail to educate their children in secondary and university schools for lack of financial means.

The same problem is experienced in the church. The church in Africa, with a few exceptions, has generally not taught the majority of her members. One of the reasons is that the Church has sent a select number of people to be trained in Bible schools and seminaries, to come back and serve as “experts” in the church. In many cases, “trained” leaders come back and sit in offices doing administration; and in a few cases, they teach in Bible schools. It is rare to have well-trained leaders in the local church, the institution that God has ordained to bring transformation in the life of individuals and community. As Cole observed,

The church is a teaching-learning community as much as it is a worshipping, witnessing, caring and prophetic community within the world context. This teaching-learning dynamic is central to the great commission. How the dynamics should be played out is the bone of contention. Are some members of the Body designed as perpetual teachers while the rest are perpetual learners? Or are those taught in turn eventually to become teachers also? (Cole 2001, 226)

To answer Cole’s rhetorical question, the church should teach all the believers the transforming Word of God and equip them with skills and knowledge to do the same for others. Learning that transforms always affects the individual’s life as well as the life of the community. A more effective understanding of education is, then, crucial at this time when Christianity is growing so rapidly on the continent.

The church needs ways of training leaders that use various forms and different instructional approaches so that believers may grow in their understanding and application of the Word of God, and be able to help new believers to mature in their faith. Theological seminaries alone cannot provide for the great need of leadership in the growing African church. For example, information received in August 2005 from the Registrars’ offices of two well known theological schools in East and Central Africa, Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) and Nairobi International

School of Theology (NIST), indicated that since its founding in 1986, NEGST had graduated five hundred and forty-eight men and women with Master's degrees—an average of 30 graduates per year. Similarly, since its founding in 1983, NIST had graduated four hundred and sixty men and women—an average of 23 graduates per year (Ntamushobora, 2005). These two schools serve more than 30 African countries. Clearly, their graduates alone cannot serve the church in Africa. There is need for the church to use additional and various other methods to train believers for ministry.

But it is not just a matter of training people; the church and theological schools should train for transformation.

Is Everything that is Taught Transformative?

Not everything taught brings transformation. The curriculum should be relevant in the sense that learners view it as a channel of meeting their recent and prospective needs. Overall, if what is taught is worth learning, it will improve the learner's grasp of the subject matter, enhance his or her enjoyment and understanding of it, and promote mastery of the skills required. Learning that increases learners' understanding of themselves and their world will increase confidence and competence in influencing events and improve ways of coping with widening expectations and demands. Also, it will equip men and women with the knowledge and skills needed in adult working life.

This curriculum can be made practical in a number of ways. Emphasize “making and doing,” and allow learners at all ages to work with abstract ideas and to enrich those ideas by drawing from their own experiences, observation and powers of reasoning and, if possible, by testing and reinforcing their learning with reference to real life example. All that learners acquire should be practical and relevant, in order to enable them to build on it or use it in everyday life. Finally, the more the knowledge and skills learned in school can be developed within and applied to activities that have real purpose and place in the wider world, the more clearly their relevance will be perceived by the learners.

It has been observed that many, if not most, schools in Africa have not been well prepared to address the realities of the current society. For instance, the curriculum in Bible schools and seminaries in Africa require biblical and theological courses that are built on Western theologies. Few schools offer courses that are relevant to African realities, such as reconciliation, agriculture, stewardship, community development, or

skill acquisition. The story is similar in public schools and universities; students have lamented following curricula that are copied from other countries, especially the West.

During a workshop on Theological Education in Africa held in Nairobi in December 2005, one of the pastors in the sprawling Kibera slum shared with the participants a story of a student from a theological school in Nairobi who did his practicum in the church in Kibera. One Sunday, the student preached a sermon that was well researched but not adapted to the level of the congregation. At the end of the service, one elder of the church greeted him and told him, “You have done a good job, but no one understood your message.”

Another problem that affects both the curriculum and the capacity of Africans to achieve self-reliance is that many churches, ministries, and governments in Africa get most of their support from the West. This affects the identity and dignity of the beneficiaries, and their capacity to develop the vision of the church, ministry, and nation at large—because of the “strings” that are attached to this aid. Speaking about the need for African churches to strive towards self-reliance, Bishop Zablon Nthamburi asserted that “the African Church [*African government, too*] will not grow into maturity if it continues to be fed by Western partners. It will ever remain an infant who has not learned to walk on her own feet” (Ntamushobora, 2003). To what extent can transformational learning be achieved if Africans continue to be trained by the use of irrelevant curricula.

What is True Transformative Learning in Africa?

True transformative learning in Africa occurs when the church puts discipleship and training at the core of her mission, and when discipleship and training programs equip believers do what the Lausanne Covenant describes as “responsible service in the world” (Tienou 2003,175). These programs should be need-oriented and holistic in their nature, touching spiritual, social, political, economic and environmental areas. Sometimes we stress spiritual issues and forget that we are in the world and should understand the world we are living in. African believers need to know about and be involved in social, economic, and political issues in order to take their destiny in their hands. Good news and good works should not be separated, but should rather be partners. For instance, educators at all levels should take every opportunity to create awareness about the HIV/AIDS pandemic that has become one of the greatest killers in Africa.

Theological education in Africa must be redesigned and aligned with the context of Africa. A Western curriculum for Bible schools and seminaries that has, in many cases, been transplanted to African theological schools bears elements that are not relevant to the existing situations in the continent. As Ekstrom asserts, “We cannot live in the illusion that the same good theology done by great Germans, Swedes, Americans, and others, will function and be of relevance for other parts of the world” (Ekstrom 2003, 303).

One of the more difficult tasks for Christian education and leadership development is to equip churches to foster true transformative learning among members about these relevant issues, to help theological schools partner with churches, and consult community leaders, in order to be servants of churches and remain relevant to the community.

Conclusion

Transformative learning in Africa is an urgent need, for it is one of the remedies for holistic transformation of Africans and African communities. Such learning is most effectively developed in a Christian education philosophical perspective. The church should be the center of such learning rather than theological institutions. Theological institutions should collaborate with the church and the community that they are called to serve as they assess needs to be met and as they develop programs to meet these needs.

The church as well as theological institutions should employ multiple forms of education and learning practices, and should integrate theology with other relevant disciplines in order to nurture transformation in the lives of Christians and their communities. In so doing, the church in Africa will be equipped to have a transforming impact on each community during the 21st century and beyond.

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About the Author



Faustin Ntamushobora is an ordained and licensed minister from Rwanda. He studied at Bunia Theological Seminary (Democratic Republic of Congo), and Daystar University (Nairobi, Kenya). After a teaching appointment at Kenya Baptist Theological College, he joined the African Leadership and Reconciliation Ministries (ALARM, Inc.) in 2002 as the Africa Director and served with ALARM until July 2007. He also served as pastor-mentor at Limuru Town Baptist Church, Kenya. He is now in the PhD program at Biola University in the USA. Faustin is married to Salome and they have four children: two daughters and two twin sons. Faustin's passion is in education for holistic transformation and production of relevant and contextualized material for the Church in Africa. He has published in *EMQ* (Wheaton), *Mediator* (Kenya), and has co-authored with Celestin Musekura a training manual, *Mentoring: A Remedy for Leadership Crisis in Africa*.

Doing Theology in a Multicultural Theological Community

By Peter T. Cha

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Abstract: As our world becomes more multicultural, Christian communities must find ways to do Biblical and theological reflections in the context of diversity. Toward this goal, this exploratory essay calls evangelical Christians to recognize (1) the significance of the social location of those who read and interpret God's Word, (2) the rich potential of a multicultural reading that can lead readers to a deeper and more accurate meaning of the Bible, and (3) the need for a multicultural, "middle-range" theology that does not fall into the extreme tendencies of universalizing or of fragmentation. The essay concludes by proposing that a theology of social justice can be developed as a form of "middle-range" theology that can serve today's multicultural church.

In today's world of globalization, a Christian community, as a witnessing community, is increasingly being confronted with the multicultural reality of its ministry context. As an objective reality, many regions in our global world, including the United States and South Korea, are becoming more diverse as demographic shifts accentuate the presence of those who come from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds in our communities, cities and nations. As a subjective reality, many societies are gradually becoming more multicultural as cultural pluralism and diversity inform their consciousness, both individually and collectively.

Recently, a growing number of evangelical congregations in the U. S. have been, in response, seeking to grow as multicultural Christian communities. Many of these congregations, situated in diverse urban and suburban communities, aim to be effective in reaching out to diverse populations. Most of the emerging literatures that are informed by these congregational experiences, however, have thus far focused on practical ministry issues such as worship styles, inter-cultural communications skills and congregational leadership structures. What is conspicuously absent in this growing discourse about multicultural ministries is a focused conversation about how to do Biblical and theological reflections together as people of God from different backgrounds. The absence of this focus in the current literature is particularly puzzling since these growing

multicultural congregations are primarily Protestant and evangelical in their theological orientations, identifying themselves as the “people of the Book.”

These recent and other related developments point to an important task today’s seminaries and congregations face, namely the task of training future pastors and theologians who can engage God’s Word competently in today’s complex, multicultural world. In what ways do today’s evangelical seminaries and congregations re-conceptualize the way they do their Biblical and theological reflections, recognizing both new opportunities and challenges today’s changing realities bring? This article aims to make some modest proposals to generate and facilitate much needed conversations in this area of theological reflections.

The Social Location of the Reader Does Matter

In today’s postmodern era, the task of hermeneutics has become particularly significant and contested as a growing number of people – both in and outside of the church – embrace the notion that the way individuals interpret a text is largely dependent on which community of culture to which they belong. During the past three decades, the postmodern hermeneutics of radical reader-response criticism has indeed privileged the social location¹⁰ of readers as a primary factor that determines the meaning of the text. From this perspective, any interpretation of a text is more about the social location of the reader or of the interpretive community than about the text itself.

In response, many evangelical theologians challenged this new method of hermeneutics while continuing to defend the practice of author-oriented interpretation. However, the caution against the reader-response approach should not cause evangelical Christians to overlook or neglect an important emphasis that postmodern scholarship raises: when it comes to hermeneutics, the social location of the reader matters. One’s particular social location may not determine the meaning of the text as postmodernists might insist; however, it does influence how an individual engages it, including God’s Word.

According to sociologist Ann Swidler, culture strongly shapes how people interpret their experiences and evaluate reality around them by providing a repertoire or

¹⁰ By social location I am referring to those social, cultural and historical experiences that influence and shape our identities.

“tool kit” of ideas, habits, skills, and styles.¹¹ These culturally shaped “tool kits,” in turn, influence how an individual interprets one’s text, including the Bible. Using Swidler’s conceptual framework, sociologists Emerson and Smith, in their recent sociological study of white evangelical Christians in the United States, found that the group’s particular social location has strongly shaped their Christian faith and worldview.¹² In particular, they noted that white evangelical Christians interpret their Bible as well as their world through the grids of “accountable freewill individualism,”¹³ “antistructuralism,”¹⁴ and “relationalism¹⁵.” Given these cultural toolkits, Emerson and Smith concluded, white evangelical Christians tend to interpret the meaning of sin, the Gospel, and salvation in narrow, individualistic ways while conservative black Christians do not.

The fact that one’s social location and culture influence one’s interpretation of the Bible has been observed not just by sociologists. John Stott, a leading British Christian leader, noted that the evangelical Christian community in North America tends to ignore major teachings in the Bible that focus on the poor, partly due to its particular social location (i.e., its primarily white, politically-conservative, middle-class background).¹⁶ While the evangelical Christian community believes that the entire Bible is the very Word of God, its pastors and theologians, John Stott argued, are often selective about what themes or portions of the Bible from which they preach and teach. Furthermore, their own interpretation of the given text is strongly shaped by their own lived experiences and culturally-constructed perspectives. In short, as John Calvin noted many centuries ago, people of God read the Scriptures through their own “spectacles”.

¹¹ Ann Swidler, “Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies,” *American Sociological Review*, 51 (1986):273-86.

¹² Michael Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹³ Emerson and Smith use this label to refer to a strongly-held belief that individuals “exist independent of structures and institutions, have freewill, and are individually accountable for their own actions,” a view that is commonly found among white evangelical Christians. *Ibid.*, 76-77.

¹⁴ “Inability to perceive or unwillingness to accept social structural influences.” *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁵ Tendency to attach “central importance to interpersonal relationships.” *Ibid.*

¹⁶ John R. W. Stott, *Human Rights & Human Wrongs: Major Issues for a New Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 21-16.

For Christians who deeply desire to grow in Biblical wisdom, this poses a significant challenge. For when pastors and theologians focus only on those themes that are relevant or meaningful to their particular, homogeneous communities, they can unwittingly hinder their people from seeing and responding to the whole counsel of God. Furthermore, such a way of engaging God's Word might create certain hermeneutical blind-spots that might effectively cover their individual as well as communal sins.¹⁷

Therefore, if the church is to be engaged in a Biblical ministry that is both pastoral and prophetic, her leaders and members need to first acknowledge that social location does influence how one reads and understands God's word. Such an acknowledgement would enable one to approach the study of God's Word with a level of epistemological humility that confesses the need for the work of God's Spirit. Furthermore, such an awareness of one's own culturally-shaped blind spots would motivate one to seek out the perspectives of "others" who come from different social locations, to see the task of doing Biblical and theological reflections as a communal and collaborative work of God's people.

Practicing "Pentecostal Plurality"

One of the reasons why many evangelical theologians seem to distance themselves from the issue of social location is because postmodern scholarship often uses this concept to legitimize radical forms of relativism. A given interpretive community, it is argued, can and should construct its own interpretation of a text, an interpretation that is authentic to the lived experience and perspective of the community that is situated in a particular social location. Such a hermeneutical approach not only elevates the "particular" to dominate, if not eclipse, the "universal" but also dissolves any meaningful possibility of accountability of a local interpretation (i.e., no one from outside of the community can and should critique the validity of the interpretation). Such a method of hermeneutical practice is problematic for Christians who embrace the notion of the absolute and objective Truth. However, taking social location seriously does not have to lead us to the pathway of relativism.

¹⁷ Once again, Emerson and Smith's study illustrates this hermeneutical phenomenon in a compelling way.

In his recent work, Kevin Vanhoozer raises a significant question on behalf of multicultural Christian communities when he asks, “How then can we affirm the priesthood of all believers without falling prey to interpretive relativism?”¹⁸ Vanhoozer, then, proposes the following approach to engage the Scriptural text. He writes:

There is a single meaning in the text, but it is too rich that we may need the insights of a variety of individual and cultural perspectives fully to do it justice.... The single correct meaning may only come to light through multicultural interpretation.¹⁹

Convinced that the fullest meaning of the text can be best attained through the collaborative interpretive work done by Christians from various different backgrounds, Vanhoozer thus introduces the concept of “Pentecostal plurality,” a hermeneutical model that “maintains that the one true interpretation is best approximated by a diversity of particular methods and contexts of reading.”²⁰

In today’s postmodern world, a kind of “monistic” interpretive approach that ignores the significance of social location and quickly universalizes a particular interpretation of the text, a practice that has often characterized evangelical scholarship in the past, can no longer sustain its legitimacy. Instead, as Vanhoozer proposed, evangelical Christians should strive for “Pentecostal plurality”, strive for attaining “critical and multifaceted unity” as one of our hermeneutical goals. Such a practice would enable God’s people to overcome the challenge of hermeneutical blind-spots and biases, thus allowing them to interpret His Word with greater accuracy and fullness.

In today’s fractured multicultural world, there is another significant reason why the Church of Jesus Christ needs to pursue and practice “Pentecostal plurality.” On the night before his arrest, Jesus our Savior offered a passionate prayer for all his followers,

¹⁸ Kevin Vanhoozer, “‘But That’s Your Interpretation’: Realism, Reading, and Reformation,” *Modern Reformation* (July/August 1999): 27.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Kevin Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 419.

for the church (John 17:20-26). Among the many things for which he could have prayed, Jesus chose to focus on one main theme – unity among his followers – when he prayed:

I pray also for those who will believe in me through their (the apostles') message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you... so that the world may believe that you have sent me (John 17: 20-21; TNIV).

It is important to note that Jesus prayed for unity among all His followers so that the world will know who He is, that He is the Messiah sent from God. If there were ever a time when the church needs to be especially attentive to this particular prayer offered by Jesus, that time is now. In today's multicultural world, the ideal of "unity-in-diversity" is increasingly identified as a desirable and yet ever elusive goal. Confronted with the challenge of increasing diversity, various groups are experimenting with different approaches to "manage diversity." On the conservative side, a commonly adopted approach is to promote a model of assimilation, mandating minority groups to adopt the culture of the majority group, thus creating uniformity but not a "unity-in-diversity." On the progressive side, a favored approach is to encourage each group to develop its own identity and culture, thus creating pluralistic diversity but not, once again, a "unity-in-diversity."

Neither approach, therefore, is satisfying to those who seek to develop and experience the potential richness of "unity-in-diversity." Yet, secular organizations are not able to experience what they desire simply because they do not have a compelling, shared core identity that, at the same time, enables different members to maintain their distinctiveness. In a time such as this, can the community of God's people demonstrate and live out this reality of true "unity-in-diversity? Particularly, for seminaries and local churches, can we concretely explore ways to practice "Pentecostal plurality" in the way we approach Biblical and theological reflections? Can we powerfully proclaim that Jesus is the Savior for all people groups by demonstrating that the Christianity is not a Western religion as commonly assumed by the non-believing postmodern world?

While the benefits of the hermeneutical practice of "Pentecostal plurality" are evidently significant, it is also equally clear that the task of practicing and modeling it in today's seminaries and congregations faces many challenges. As a growing number of

seminaries and congregations become more diverse ethnically and racially, these communities of faith have unprecedented opportunities to engage God's word in a creative, multicultural way. However, these opportunities are too often neglected and missed because these institutions continue to use the traditional mode of doing theology, because they continue to view the practice of Biblical and theological interpretation exclusively as a solitary, individualistic enterprise. Such a view and practice strongly discourages the practice of attentively listening to "others", particularly to those voices that come from other social locations, thus continuing to privilege the practice of "monistic" interpretive model.

During the past two decades, many scholars in the field of Christian education have emphasized the importance of viewing seminaries – and local congregations – as "learning communities".²¹ In this model of learning and teaching, the teacher is not identified as the only person who teaches; instead, all members of the learning community, both teachers and students, are recognized as potential teachers and learners. In fact, the main responsibility of the teacher, in such a setting, is to function as a facilitator, encouraging adult learners from different backgrounds to present their thoughts and insights, thus enabling the class to develop together a new level of understanding of a given topic.

Today, an increasing number of theological seminaries are attracting faculty members as well as students from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, thus creating a space of learning and teaching, a space of theologizing, that can potentially experience "Pentecostal plurality." However, this would happen only if the institution intentionally distances itself from traditional methods of theological education, namely the exclusive reliance upon lectures given by faculty members. Instead, seminaries that enjoy the presence of many different people groups should intentionally promote different ways of learning (e.g., group projects, discussions, panel presentation etc.) that would promote rich interaction as a way of learning. Most importantly, it would be important for the seminary leadership to foster an institutional culture that promotes and values the practice

²¹The following books provide helpful elaboration of the learning community concept and practice: Parker Palmer, *To Know As We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1983); Jack Seymour et. al., *Educating Christians; the Intersection of Meaning, Learning, and Vocation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993); and, Linda Cannell, *Theological Education Matters: Leadership Education for the Church* (Newburgh, IN: EDCOT Press, 2006).

of listening and of collaboration in theological teaching and learning, culture of a learning community. As faculty and students from diverse backgrounds learn to engage Scripture together in these ways, they would not only deepen their own understanding of Biblical teachings but would, in my view, also contribute to the formation of new theological insights and categories.

Toward the Formation of “Middle-Range” Theology

In today’s global Christian community, there are two main types of theologies. On the one hand, there is an abstract, philosophical form of theology that tends to assume its universal validity (i.e., this form of theology does not pay much attention to the “social location” of the theologian as well as of its audience). The second is various types of “local” theology that are emerging from a variety of different social locations – African, Asian, Latin, feminist, womanist etc. – reflecting the particular experiences of different groups of people in their theological reflections. In today’s postmodern setting, the latter type of theology has received much attention and affirmation, particularly in more progressive and liberal theological communities. However, while one can gain much insight from different theological voices that emerge from different social locations, “local” theologies also encounter certain limitations. For instance, a “local” theology can easily avoid any meaningful sense of accountability to the larger Christian community and can produce a theological construct that is highly relativistic.²² For evangelical Christian communities that are becoming increasingly diverse and multicultural, both types of theological approaches carry with them certain limitations and liabilities. In short, today’s evangelical seminaries that are training leaders for the global church need to creatively think about an alternative way of doing theology.

During the 1960’s, well-known sociologist Robert Merton introduced the concept of “middle-range social theory” to the discipline.²³ In his view, the field of sociology was being dominated by two types of social theories: (1) highly abstract grand theories that were not verifiable through empirical research and (2) those theories that were too

²² Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 101-104.

²³ Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York, NY: Fortress Press, 1968).

tied to a very particular social phenomenon, verifiable empirically, but could not yield any generalizable principles or lead to larger social theories. To Merton, as a social theorist and a researcher, neither was an attractive option. Thus, he proposed a new category called “middle-range social theories” that are close enough to empirical realities to be relevant to empirical research while, at the same time, detached somewhat from the particular social phenomenon to yield transferable and generalizable theories.

For similar reasons and concerns, perhaps the evangelical community should think about developing and nurturing what may be called “middle-range theology”, a form of theology that is neither too abstract and universalizing – theology that fails to take its own social location seriously – nor too particular – theology that is trapped within the boundary of its social location. Such a form of “middle-range theology” would be formed as theologians and pastors from different social locations dialogue with one another, bringing reflections and perspectives that are influenced by their lived experiences in particular social locations. Such a form of “middle-range theology” would be able to bring together the “universal” and the “particular” and hold them in balance and tension. In doing so, such a theology would also benefit the two other types of theology mentioned above: it would influence the more abstract theology to interact more intentionally with the particular lived experiences in today’s world, while encouraging various “local” theologies to dialogue with one another - recognizing shared beliefs as well as unique particularities. In many ways, a growing number of schools such as Torch Trinity Graduate School of Theology, as they continue to attract scholars and students from different parts of the global community, are uniquely positioned to create and nurture a theological learning community in which such a form of theology can emerge.

Developing a Theology of Social Justice: A Proposal

Among today’s younger evangelicals in the United States, there has been a growing interest in the Biblical theme of social justice.²⁴ In many ways, these young people are reacting against the lack of interest shown to social engagement by previous

²⁴ Robert Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Co., 2002), 227-36.

generations of fundamentalists and evangelicals.²⁵ However, even as these evangelical Christians increasingly become active in various types of justice ministries, the evangelical theological community in the United States has not yet developed a robust theology of social justice,²⁶ thus failing to provide much needed Biblical perspectives and wisdom to this emerging activism among its youth.

Currently, there is a small but growing number of evangelical theological writings that wrestle with some aspects of social justice. Written primarily by white evangelical theologians, these writings primarily focus on the divine nature of who God is and how this God chooses to relate to humanity.²⁷ To put it differently, these theological reflections are a part of the abstract, universalizing theology with certain dangers and limitations mentioned above. This is especially problematic when the theological reflections deal with an issue such as social justice - a controversial issue in our society where each racial or cultural group seems to have a different understanding of what social justice might look like. Therefore, if an evangelical Christian community were to develop a theology of social justice that would enable it to proclaim and practice this Kingdom value prophetically, it needs to develop, I would suggest, a “middle-range” theology of social justice, a theology that reflects God’s nature of and concern for justice as well as current experiences of injustice that call for particular action from the Christian community.

Given this goal, I would suggest that the development of this particular theology should include theologians and church leaders from different parts of the world, representing different cultural and social locations. In such a gathering, the emerging interpretive picture of God would be richly nuanced by different perspectives, thus arriving at a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the God of justice. Furthermore, such a gathering would also effectively assist the group with the task of

²⁵ In his book, *The Uneasy Conscience of the Modern Day Fundamentalists*, Carl F. H. Henry focuses on this phenomenon and identifies some of its causes as well as its negative impacts on the church’s credibility.

²⁶ Glen Stassen and David Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 345-46.

²⁷ These works include Stephen Charles Mott’s *Biblical Ethics and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) 59-81, Ronald Sider’s *Just Generosity* (Grand Rapid, MI: Baker Book House Co., 1999), and Glen Stassen and David Gushee’s *Kingdom Ethics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003)345-68.

identifying the very force – the principalities of power – that opposes the justice of God’s Kingdom. As God’s people from different social locations share various forms of injustice they encounter in their daily lives, it becomes clearer what the picture of God’s justice might look like in today’s inter-connected world of globalization.

When the first church was formed in Jerusalem, one of the defining qualities it possessed was the way Christians sacrificially cared for one another (Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-37). What does it mean for today’s Christians in developed countries like the United States and South Korea to practice such a ministry of caring for fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, particularly in light of the fact that a majority of our fellow believers in today’s global Church are the poor in the Southern Hemisphere?²⁸ Today’s evangelical Christian community must develop a sound theology of social justice that is rooted in the careful exegesis of God’s Word and in the comprehensive analysis of various forms of injustice that grieves our God.

Conclusion

In his recent book *Exclusion and Embrace*, Miroslav Volf passionately called for all Christians to denounce the practice of “exclusion” – the act of seeking purity of singularity – and actively pursue the practice of “embrace” – the act of intentionally integrating “otherness” into one’s own identity.²⁹ As today’s world becomes increasingly diverse and encounters the painful experience of fragmentation and inter-group hostilities, the church of Jesus Christ has a unique opportunity to be the light and the salt in this world. The church, as the body of Christ, can and should display the blessed reality of “unity in diversity” that our Savior prayed for in John 17. Such an expression of “unity in diversity” can take on a variety of forms. However, for evangelical Christians, for the people of the Book, it cannot and must not fail to include how we engage God’s Word, how we do our theology. Today’s seminaries have an important calling and unique opportunities to teach and model this way of doing theology.

²⁸ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 72-78.

²⁹ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996).

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About the Author



Peter Cha is Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois. Trained in both theology and sociology,

Dr. Cha studies how church and society – faith and culture – interact with one another.

Perspective Transformation in Christian Higher Education at St. Petersburg Christian University

By Kent L. Eby

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Abstract: Since 1989, Christian higher education is a new phenomenon to Russia. This article outlines a research study completed at St. Petersburg Christian University in St. Petersburg Russia focusing on transformative learning with a specific emphasis on emancipatory learning. Emancipatory learning is more than just awareness; it is also critical reflection on the process as well as taking socially responsible action upon this new learning. Russia continues to develop in many ways and Christian higher education has great potential to positively impact this development and the inner conditions of people's lives.

My journey towards this article began many years ago in 1994 when my family and I moved from our comfortable surroundings in small town Midwestern USA to the bleak and troubled conditions of post-communist Russia. Moving to Russia in 1994, in my mind, was like going back in time to what I imagined the late 1930's were like just after the depression. Store shelves were nearly empty. Certain food staples, such as eggs or dairy products, would be missing in the city for weeks at a time and many people were forced to subsist on the steady diet of bread and potatoes. These bleak physical conditions were strongly indicative of the condition of peoples' spirits as well. The Communist system had abandoned them and with nothing to replace it. Russia, it seemed, was struggling to find herself economically, socially, and politically as well as religiously.

In 1995 we moved to St. Petersburg, Russia and for the next twelve years we would be involved at St. Petersburg Christian University. Through these years Russia changed dramatically from the bleak state of 1994 to an energy rich country whose economy began to grow at a pace far exceeding many countries of the world. Living conditions greatly improved, but the inner condition of peoples' lives remained a battlefield of despair and uncertainty. These conditions were often evident in the lives of students who came to St. Petersburg Christian University. Many had grown up in single parent households, often with one or both alcoholic parents; some came from church

backgrounds where questioning was thought to indicate lack of faith; most were raised in an educational system where rote memory and facts were the most highly valued outcomes of the educational process.

St. Petersburg Christian University (SPbCU), since its founding in 1990, has served to train many of the future Christian leaders of evangelical Christianity in Russia. It is one of the oldest Christian universities in Russia and has experienced widespread recognition both from within and outside Russia. Over the past 17 years, more than 600 students have graduated from SPbCU and are now serving as leaders of Christian ministries, missionaries, pastors, as well as in many other areas of service.

This article will discuss transformative learning as it relates to the process of Christian education at St. Petersburg Christian University. In 2005, I conducted my doctoral research at SPbCU related to the development of perspective transformation among students and graduates of the university; and to begin the process of identifying factors and possible phases in this transformation process. The research showed that perspective transformation had occurred during the students' experiences at SPbCU, the nature of which is discussed in this article.

Streams of Thought

The three streams of thought flowing into this research are a historical/cultural overview of the Russian soul, a brief review of Mezirow's transformative learning theory, and a consideration of Russian theorists who have influenced Soviet education.

Historical/Cultural Overview

Russia is a country that is as deep as it is wide. For centuries people have sought to understand this land and its people and each time have walked away perplexed at the difficulty of the task. The Russian soul has been described as, "A mystery wrapped inside an enigma" (Ennis, Ennis, and Rinehart 1995, 6). In the Russian language there are two words for "soul." The first is "Dusha" (душа) which generally deals with the intellectual, everyday spirit of a person. The second is "Dukh" (дух) which is related to the eternal spirit that is in each human being. It is important to understand these two words and their differences because before one can get to the "dukh" the journey must first go through the "dusha."

Insight into the development of the Russian soul is connected with the historical development of the people. They first roamed the thick forests and cleared land on which they could live. These forests provided protection from invaders, but, at the same time, there were uncertainties and dangers from the vicious bears, wolves, and thieves who also hid themselves in the forests. These uncertainties and dangers shaped the Russian soul as did the eventual move onto the vast plains where there seemed to be no limits all the way to the horizon.

Another explanation for the complexity of the Russian soul is the terrible suffering and oppression under which the people have lived for so many years. The Steppes of Russia were the crossroads for travelers and bandits coming from the Fertile Crescent and Asia towards Europe. For over 200 years, the Mongol raiders or “Tatars” subjected Russians to very cruel and dictatorial leadership (Elnett 1926, 27). As the Tatars were raiding from the East, the Swedes were raiding Novgorod from the North. The Russian people with their long memories remember attacks and devastation from the Poles and later from Napoleon and the French (Iswolsky 1960, 47). During World War II, the Germans advanced deep into Russia attacking the cities of Leningrad, Moscow, and Stalingrad. These attacks from the outside as well as the dictatorial rule of the Tsar and subsequent Soviet leaders have all contributed to the long suffering, resilient, and deep qualities of the Russian soul (Smith 1976, 104).

Shame is another issue that has deeply affected and formed the Russian soul. A conservative estimate of those who died or perished during the Soviet times, is sixty million people (Elliott 2003, 1). As one author writes, “An entire society has, for practical purposes, been traumatized repeatedly for decades” (Merridale 2000, 54). There is a great heroic pride in this resiliency, but there is also a dark history of underground and unspoken pain out of fear of reprisals (Elliott 2003, 1). In the early 1990’s a study was conducted which identified four significant issues of shame: (1) shame of being left alive when so many others have lost their lives, (2) shame of powerlessness of being unable to protect the ones you love, (3) shame of trusting in your leaders and government and being betrayed again and again, and (4) the corporate shame of the exposure of the true state of the Russian economy before the whole world (Ennis, Ennis, and Rinehart 1995, 12-13).

The Russian soul is a complex and boundless spirit with a depth that few can comprehend—with a tendency to the mystical. Mysticism is related to the unknown and thus is safer than the known, which has so often brought fear, hurt and shame. Mysticism is beautiful because it can be created by the individual in their own imaginations. This mysticism through creativity and imagination has expressed itself in world recognized Russian music, art, and literature. Russia has produced some of the great artists, writers, composers, dancers, and musicians. This mysticism also allows for the safety of unknowns and contradictions which are a part of the dualistic reality of the coldness of public life and the warmth of private life in Russia. It is this mysticism and dualism that “. . . makes the Russians, as a people, both stoics and romantics, both long-suffering martyrs and self-indulgent hedonists, both obedient and unruly, both stuffy and unassuming, publicly pompous and privately unpretentious, both uncaring and kind, cruel and compassionate” (Smith 1976, 105).

Mezirow’s Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative learning as an adult education theory emerged in the United States in 1978 after Jack Mezirow published his study of women returning to college after a number of years working either in the home or outside of the home. Central to this theory is what Mezirow terms “perspective transformation” which is the process of constructing meaning through critically reflecting upon the meaning schemes and meaning perspectives that one currently holds (Mezirow 1978, 7; Mezirow 1989, 170). As an adult learning theory, transformative learning challenges the learner toward emancipation from the unchallenged social, cultural, and historical assumptions that have been used by adults to understand their world and to make meaning (Collard and Law 1989, 100; Mezirow 1989, 170). According to Mezirow, the goal of transformative learning is to challenge learners to critically reflect upon their meaning schemes and meaning perspectives in such a way that they become “more inclusive, discriminating and integrative” thus leading to social action (Mezirow 1991, 167; Mezirow 1994, 222-223).

Russian Theorists

Two key Russian (Soviet) theorists that have influenced Russian education and psychology are Anton S. Makarenko and Lev Vygotsky. The basic idea of the educational methodology of Makarenko is to use the collective (social cultural group) to motivate and encourage learning. Vygotsky is known for his developmental psychology and his theory of the “zone of proximal development” (ZPD).

Makarenko is considered to be one of the most influential people in Soviet education (Jacoby 1974, 29; Holtz 2002, 116). The methodology that he developed through his work in youth colonies has been used to frame much of Soviet education. The Makarenko’s methodology has three aspects: First is the development of the collective, which was a well-known social structure within Russian culture but had previously not been implemented into education. Second is the development of discipline through the collective. The collective as the primary social structure in education became the place where each student developed his or her identity and thus became the place where discipline occurred. The third and final aspect of Makarenko’s methodology is his system of perspectives. The system of perspectives was developed with the socialist system in mind. It was designed for application within this socialist framework (Makarenko 2001a, b, c).

Vygotsky is considered one of the major influences in developmental psychology. He believed development and learning to be interrelated and this interrelatedness he explained through the ZPD (Vygotsky 1978, 84-85). The ZPD “is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky 1978, 86). Western psychologists and educators have read Vygotsky and understood the ZPD to be the potential for development and critical thinking. To fully understand Vygotsky’s developmental theory, it must be considered along with how societal influences impact one’s development. His context was not individualistic but rather collective in nature.

Research Study Overview

My doctoral research developed from a concern for how students at St. Petersburg Christian University were being influenced through their studies at SPbCU. It appeared that changes were taking place in the lives of many students as a result of their studies but little or no research was being conducted to identify the nature of this change. The resulting purpose was to determine whether, and to what degree, transformative experiences occurred among present and former students studying in the Bachelor level programs at SPbCU and, if they did occur, what phases were identified in the transformative process and what factors facilitated this transformative process. Mezirow's theory of transformative learning was used as a framework for inquiry into possible research findings that might be helpful as components for developing a distinctly Russian form of Protestant Christian higher education.

The qualitative research study used a proportional stratified sampling process. A constant comparative methodology was used in data collection and analysis. The specific research setting was at St. Petersburg Christian University with a sample of twenty-four participants. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The analysis of data from participants from each of the three bachelor level programs included an investigation of variables such as rural and urban and gender. Following are findings from the research:

1. A process of transformation was identified in both meaning schemes and meaning perspectives.
2. The nature of changes reported by respondents were convictional, behavioral, social and psychological.
3. Transformation of meaning schemes and meaning perspectives occurred; being visible through experiences such as changes, additions, and affirmations of beliefs, judgments, and feelings.
4. Three main factors facilitated the change process: people, subjects studied, and experiences.
5. Five meaning schemes and five meaning perspectives were identified as having been integrated and acted out by the respondents. The meaning schemes identified were: various character issues, approach to evangelism, various personality traits, life plans, and specific values and principles. The

meaning perspectives identified were world view changes, greater tolerance towards other confessions/denominations, life emphasis changes, theology and worship experience changes, and life vision changes.

Implications from Research Study

Three areas of implications were identified from this study: curricular design and teaching styles, emancipatory learning, and the role of teachers. This article will focus on the implication for emancipatory learning.

In addition to the five meaning schemes and perspectives identified above, recurring themes that emerged through the data analysis were engagement, service, openness, freedom, and tolerance.

Based on these themes, an emancipatory methodology was recommended for consideration in selecting teaching styles for Christian higher education at SPbCU. Concerning this, Mezirow writes:

Emancipatory education is about more than becoming aware of one's own awareness. Its goal is to help learners move from a simple awareness of their experiencing to an awareness of the conditions of their experiencing (how they are perceiving, thinking, judging, feeling, acting—a reflection on process) and beyond this to an awareness of the reasons why they experience as they do and to action based upon these insights. (Mezirow 1991b, 197)

Thus emancipatory learning is more than just awareness; it is also critical reflection on the process as well as taking socially responsible action upon this new learning. This focus on “social responsibility” fits well with the collective focus of both Makarenko's educational methodology and Vygotsky's developmentalism. Emancipatory learning would assist SPbCU students to better understand the changes that they are experiencing in at least five ways.

1. Understanding of previous limitations that influenced them, prior to studying at SPbCU.

2. Understanding the process of change that they experience while studying at SPbCU.
3. Understanding how to process the changes and to take appropriate action.
4. Identifying and challenging people's thinking related to those among whom they will be ministering upon completion of their studies at SPbCU.

[Transformative learning as emancipatory learning should assist people to "make informed decisions of how to take the action found necessary by the new perspective" (Mezirow 1990, 358).]

5. Discerning the social implications and impact of their perspective transformation upon the collective from which they gain their identity and worldview.

Reflectivity in Learning

Critical reflection is an internal process of thinking critically (not negatively but analytically) in order to understand more deeply. This deeper understanding creates positive opportunities for the learner. For example, in transformative learning critical reflection occurs at the level of the underlying assumptions used to interpret the data we receive and disseminate. This being the case, critical reflection can challenge a person to modify his or her assumptions or to adopt new ones when existing assumptions have been deemed limiting or obstructive. Victoria Marsick refers to this as "taking off the blinders" which she goes on to define as "broadening the participants' perspective" (Marsick 1990, 33). While this is a valuable component when considering a methodology for Christian higher education, it should be noted that this process must be handled responsibly so that the students know how to share their transformations with those who may not have experienced this process. In fact, transformative learning may sometimes have negative outcomes as expressed by this respondent.

My parents and relatives remain in our conservative church. They change very little. When I arrived, out of inexperience I wanted to show how I had so strongly changed. I wanted to show [them] everything new: how I relate to God, to people, what the church is [tradition and doctrine]. I wanted to show them and I saw the fear on their faces; it was awful! '____, where are you?' And I quickly

half closed down. I understood that I am living in a different world there. (in Eby 2006, 168)

An example of how reflectivity in learning could be included by exploring and challenging assumptions was provided in the responses that discussed the area of Systematic Theology. A number of respondents mentioned how Systematic Theology at SPbCU opened new ways of thinking by challenging their old beliefs:

Here I got to hear an alternative to that opinion which I had. And I understood that this opinion is better argued, weightier. I hadn't thought about this earlier. It was very difficult to reject my old biases. In general it is very difficult for a person to reject their own convictions in which he had been confident. But this all took place so quickly in the first year. (in Eby 2006, 169)

As noted, there were difficulties related to changing old beliefs to include the new as well as the speed with which it took place. Reflectivity in learning could be improved by including a component that not only challenges old beliefs but that also provides the following:

1. Safety and understanding in the process of the transition by helping the student to more deeply understand their old belief and its origins; to understand the new belief and its implications for application in theology; and to understand how the old and new beliefs differ and ways in which to explain these differences.
2. Mentoring in how to apply new beliefs in such a way that will allow the person to return to their old context, to explain their new beliefs in a non-threatening way, and to still be accepted.

This leads to another discussion related to the consideration of a methodology for Christian higher education, that of social responsibility.

Social Responsibility in Learning

Historically, Russian culture has been collective in nature. This characteristic goes back to the old "Mir" or village structure where the identity of a person was not

individual in nature but was attached to the “Mir” in which she or he lived. The word “Mir” in Russian eventually developed the meaning of world. Russian developmental psychologist, Lev Vygotsky believed that a unique component to be considered when studying human development is the influence of society upon the person. From a Russian context, “society,” is understood as the collective in which a person lives. He stated,

Human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them. (Vygotsky 1978, 88)

As educators, we have a responsibility to help our students understand what they are learning and the implications this learning may have in their lives. We are individuals, but we are individuals within a community—within a social setting—and we must be responsible to assist our students to know how to integrate their new meaning perspectives in such a way as to be able to relate them positively to their current community members or within their own social setting. Mezirow provides three suggestions related to this social responsibility that can be included in the classroom setting:

1. Actively foster learners’ critical reflection upon their assumptions, not only concerning the content and process of problem solving, but also concerning the premises behind their sociolinguistic, epistemic, and psychological beliefs.
2. Establish communities of rational discourse in classrooms, workshops, conferences, and action settings, with norms consistent with the ideal conditions of learning, within which beliefs may be questioned and consensually validated.
3. Help learners learn how to take appropriate action resulting from transformative learning to the extent feasible. (Mezirow 1991, 211-212)

A component could be added to the curriculum which would assist students to consider the social context from which they have come and to which they will return

upon completion of studies at SPbCU. While necessitating greater work on the part of the professors and SPbCU, this component would consist of two specific parts:

1. From Mezirow's three steps listed above, develop experiences to challenge students to understand the assumptions that they bring with them to class; to help them form communities of dialog with other students and teachers at SPbCU as well as with their home church pastors and other interested people from their home context; and finally develop learning experiences in the classroom to enable students to elaborate on their new beliefs as well as to defend them through classroom discussions and organized debates. Included in these classroom discussions and debates would be a component to consider the social context from which the students came and to which they will return and how the changed beliefs might be exemplified and explained in such a way as to elaborate but not alienate them from others within the social context or "Mir."
2. Develop materials that could be submitted to the pastors and bishops of the regions from which the students come. The materials would outline the content of the courses and the issues presented to the students. The materials would also encourage the pastors to engage with SPbCU as well as with the students from their churches in order to better understand what is being learned and the dialogue that is occurring.

Conclusion

Christian higher education in the Russian context continues to develop at a rapid pace. More and more national administrators and faculty are being trained and employed in Christian institutions of higher learning. This trend has both positive and negative implications. A positive implication is that with the depth and complexity of the Russian soul it is the Russians themselves who are best equipped to understand and develop their educational systems and methodology. A negative implication is that due to the newness of Christian education in the Russian context as well as the busyness of those involved, little reflection is occurring to reconsider the model of Christian higher education in order to determine contextual issues for Russia.

Russian education in general is experiencing much change. In the Russian curriculum, more time is being proposed for critical reflection and different methodologies are being considered for the classroom which will encourage critical reflection. The process of perspective transformation identified through this research study means that, intentionally or unintentionally, critical reflection was already occurring among the students studying at St. Petersburg Christian University in the three bachelor level programs.

Specific ideas and methods related to perspective transformation and emancipatory learning have been presented and discussed as they relate to the research findings at SPbCU. Components to be included in emancipatory learning methodology are reflectivity and social responsibility.

Russia continues to develop economically and politically and Christian education has great potential to influence the development of the inner conditions of people's lives. It seems that a better understanding of the nature of transformative learning and perspective transformation will foster this influence; but Russians need to further the research and make it contextually relevant to their own situations through the development of curriculum, teaching styles, methodologies, and mentoring.

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About the Author



Kent L. Eby is Assistant Professor of Mission, School of Religion and Philosophy, Bethel College, Mishawaka Indiana. Kent and his family spent the past thirteen years serving in St. Petersburg Russia at St. Petersburg Christian University. In June 2007, he returned to the US to begin teaching at Bethel College. The research and experiences leading to this article come from serving in Russia as well as thinking through, researching, and writing his PhD dissertation at Trinity International University.

Understanding and Promoting Life Change Among Evangelical Theological Students in Germany

By Marie-Claire Weinski

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Abstract: A key concern in German evangelical theological education is to foster spiritual growth and intellectual and personal development in students. The goal is to holistically prepare students for the demands of ministry. In order to effectively promote these desired life changes it is crucial that theological schools gain a thorough understanding of the transformational processes students experience during their studies. A qualitative descriptive research study among German evangelical theological students (Weinski 2006) thus specifically inquired into the nature and process of transformative learning in this educational context. The following article presents the prevalent themes, dynamics, and phases of transformative learning the students of this research study experienced. In addition, educational recommendations for educational goals, curriculum design, instructional design and student guidance provide helpful approaches to meaningfully promote transformative learning. Theological schools could then even better support students in their desire to change and to develop to become effective ministers in the kingdom of God.

The Case for Transformative Learning in Theological Education

Theological education should have a life changing, transformative effect on students. It should be about coming to new and deeper understandings of Scripture and theological questions, training of ministry skills, spiritual growth, and character development. Students should be holistically prepared for effective ministry in today's world. That is the desire of both leadership and students in evangelical theological schools in Germany. A survey among evangelical theological schools in German-speaking European countries in 1998 (Faix, Faix and Schmidt 1998) and examination of current study prospectuses of these schools (retrievable from an online list of these schools at: www.kba.de) confirm these statements.

So far so good. The question then is: How do these desired transformations in theological students come about and how can they best be fostered? Unfortunately, evangelical theological schools in Germany have not yet been able to give an informed answer. Their conservative theological position has led them in the past to be more concerned with teaching content and they developed their educational program solely out

of their theological convictions (Ott 2002, 2003). In addition, most of them have not yet constructively dealt with the social sciences and thus lack the scientific foundation for gaining insights into processes and factors of transformation in people (Faix, Faix and Schmidt 1998).

Does this sound familiar to you? My hunch is: yes. Initiatives since the 1990's for revitalizing theological education (see for example, Ferris 1990, Banks 1999) in order to make it more transformative and effective demonstrate that this problem has worldwide dimensions. In this situation, Mezirow's transformative learning theory (1991) appears to provide desperately needed insight. It presents a descriptive theoretical model of adult learning that focuses on how adults transform their thinking and how this transformation then influences their lives. Mezirow's educational theory and theological education share one central concern: understanding and promoting life change in people. Therefore, Mezirow's theory promises to provide ample insights for theological educators to gain a deeper understanding of processes of transformation and to learn new approaches for fostering change in students' lives in a more effective way. Mezirow's theory explains the human side of transformation and especially highlights the cognitive processes and dynamics leading to profound changes in people's thinking and lifestyles.

Yet, certain questions must be addressed when considering application of Mezirow's theory to the context of theological education. What role does the spiritual dimension (from a Christian perspective) play in transformative learning? How is transformative learning structured in the specific environment of theological education? A research study that inquires into these questions would contribute significantly toward a better understanding and effective promotion of transformative learning in theological education. It would also constitute an important step toward fruitfully integrating theology and the social sciences to enhance our understanding about human nature and God's actions in people's lives. The findings of such a research study could show theological educators the particular points where theological students need educational support in their transformation process. Theological schools could use these insights to create a more effective learning environment that meaningfully supports students' intellectual, spiritual, and personal development.

With these thoughts in mind I began a qualitative descriptive dissertation research study among German evangelical theological students (Weinski 2006). The research

purpose was to develop a grounded theory model to describe transformative learning processes in this educational context, to identify factors which effectively promote this kind of learning, and to compare the findings with Mezirow's transformative learning theory. The research project was done among 28 third-year full-time evangelical theological students from 4 different evangelical theological schools in Germany (7 students from each school) in order to be able to capture the different characteristics of evangelical theological schools in Germany. In-depth interviews with these students about their life changing learning experiences during their study produced rich data on their transformative learning process. The rich data base provided a very productive foundation for analysis and interpretation and for the successful development of a grounded theory framework for transformative learning in the context of evangelical theological education in Germany.

Themes of Transformative Learning

What themes and issues do students grapple with during their studies that initiate transformative learning? In this research study, all students, except one, ultimately dealt with two of the most fundamental questions of humanity: “Who am I?”, and “Who is God?”. In Mezirow's terms, the students were engaged in processes of perspective transformation. They went beyond just correcting their specific beliefs, judgments, or feelings. Instead, they were ready to critically examine their basic worldview assumptions about themselves and God.

Students' transformative learning themes in the area of self-knowledge were:

1. personality development
2. a new self-understanding as socialized being
3. becoming a critical thinker
4. realization of human sinfulness and finiteness
5. finding and defending own identity
6. becoming an adult.

Regarding the image of God, transformative learning themes were:

- God's unconditional love

- God's sovereignty and trustworthiness
- God's empowerment through the Holy Spirit
- Balancing human and God's responsibility.

Viewed from a different angle, the students' transformative learning themes focused either on identity formation within a psychological or social framework, or they concerned fundamental issues of conversion and sanctification: the nature and role of human beings in relationship with God.

The Transformative Learning Process

The analysis and interpretation of the students' transformative learning experiences revealed that transformative learning is characterized by a complex interplay of cognitive, emotional, evaluative, social, and spiritual processes. All levels of perceiving and processing are at work during all phases of transformative learning. A distinct pattern of transformation emerged: Transformative learning is a process which evolves in six progressive phases until the transformation is fully realized. It was possible to identify all aspects of Mezirow's ten phases of transformative learning, but they could not all be seen as distinct phases. Furthermore, this study discovered an additional phase of transformative learning: the phase of full understanding and full acceptance.

Phase 1: Initiating Event(s)

For the student research participants transformative learning was initiated by one or more key events. These included: situations in which central expectations were not met, joining the new learning community at the theological schools where some people lived out completely different or contrary beliefs, the experience of failure or coming to one's limits, serious illnesses, corrective feedback, or the comparison with good or bad role models. All students found that entering the new social context of theological education and shifting one's center of life onto this place contributed significantly to the initiation of transformative learning.

An initiating key event could constitute, on one hand, the culmination of several previous events which pointed in the same direction. On the other hand, an initiating key event could be followed by more events that confirmed the first dramatic experience.

The defining quality of these key events was that they radically put into question present convictions, judgments or feelings and thus caused disequilibrium (a state of being out of balance) on a cognitive, emotional, evaluative, social, or spiritual level. For most students, the disequilibrium happened on multiple levels of perceiving and processing. It created an obvious conflict which the students could not ignore: perspectives that didn't make sense anymore, conflicting emotions, confusion about values or difficulties to evaluate a situation, conflict with or pressure from people, a strained relationship with God, resistance to God's guidance, or not being able to see/experience God in a situation. The more levels of conflict that existed and the more intense the conflict, the stronger was the disequilibrium. In the end, students experienced this state of being out of balance so strongly that they wanted to take initiative to directly address the conflicts and examine why their present convictions, judgments, or feelings did not make sense anymore.

An interesting finding was that a little more than a third of the student research participants indicated that their transformative learning was already initiated before entering theological education. They intentionally decided to pursue theological education in order to have an opportunity to deal with the conflicting issues that were uncovered by the initiating event(s).

Phase 2: Time of Exploration, Critical Examination, and Testing

During the time of exploration, critical examination, and testing students began to concentrate on and deeply explore the issue which put them out of balance. Their new critical look at their convictions, judgments, or feelings also led them to critically examine the related underlying central assumptions or core beliefs. In addition, students ventured out to look for alternative perspectives and tested and validated them in dialog and discussion with their instructors, fellow students, friends, family members, God, by reading relevant literature, or through experimentation.

The phase of exploration, critical examination, and testing was strongly characterized by cognitive processes. However, emotional, evaluative, social, and spiritual processes also played a very significant role. Critical examination of central assumptions and core beliefs challenged deep inner convictions or the established sense of self. It was thus an existential wrestling with issues that deeply mattered. This struggle

stirred a number of strong emotions such as fear, sadness, confusion, inner tensions, anger, desperation, brokenness, sinfulness, guilt, or deep insecurity. Students wondered anew about what is really good, right, true and important. They also asked themselves how they could evaluate this whole situation.

On a social level, it was very important for students to engage in dialog and discussion about the conflicting issue with other students, prayer partners, and instructors. Students looked for conversation partners whom they deemed competent and experienced. They also sought out people they considered helpful and supportive. In this context, almost all students expressed a need for personal support and guidance through counseling or mentoring. The negative or positive reactions of the environment also had a noteworthy influence.

The spiritual level of perception and processing played a significant role in this phase. On one hand, God and one's faith was an important focus of critical examination, doubts, and struggles. On the other hand, students actively sought God' leading, his encouragement and comfort through prayer and study of Scripture. Often times, students even experienced God's intervention through a sudden insight, a prophecy, a dream, or a direct divine address. The ability to see this difficult phase with all its conflicts and struggles as part of the sanctification process, or to place this phase in the context of God's sovereign leading and calling was an additional source of help and security.

The ultimate goal of this phase was to find a new perspective that harmonized all levels of perception. This new perspective could then be understood and included in a coherent worldview, supported emotionally, judged positively, and validated through social processes and in relationship with God.

Phase 3: Point of Full Understanding and Full Acceptance

When harmony on a cognitive, emotional, evaluative, social, and spiritual level was reached, students had the impression that they now fully understood and fully accepted the transformation of their perspective. This point of full understanding and acceptance could come about at a specific event when all suddenly fell into place, but it could also be reached through a continuous shifting.

Interestingly, some students first developed a new understanding and could only later accept change. However, others first accepted that their perspective needed to

change and then reached a full understanding of the new perspective. Nevertheless, phase three was only complete if full understanding and full acceptance was there.

Phase 4: Making a Decision and Looking for Ways of Application

The full understanding and full acceptance of the new perspective powerfully stirred in students the desire to live out their new conviction and to look for ways to consciously apply it in different contexts. It was not always possible to identify a specific point where a clear decision was made to change the behavior. It could also be a continuous shifting towards application.

Phase 5: Practicing the New Perspective

During this phase students consciously put their new perspective into practice. The goal was to build competence and confidence in the practice of the new conviction so that it could be fully integrated and internalized. For this reason, phase five was characterized by high activity.

As in the previous phases all levels of perception and processing played a significant role. Above all, social processes were in the forefront because the practice of the new perspective always happened in a social context. Students received direct or indirect feedback from the social environment about their behavior change and had to deal with group dynamics. Often, students looked for personal support and guidance. In addition, students cognitively and emotionally monitored their progress and evaluated their change process. The relationship with God was, above all, a source of strength and grounding during this time.

However this phase of practicing the new perspective was also a time when students experienced challenges and difficulties which tested their ability to change. Depending on how radical the change was and how much support and encouragement came from their social environment, students experienced more successes or initial fallbacks.

Phase 6: Realizing Full Reintegration

At a certain point during the phase of practicing the new perspective, students became aware that their new perspective was indeed fully integrated and internalized into

their lives. It had now become a part of them. This could either happen through feedback from the social environment, successful mastering of a challenging situation, or just the opportunity to consciously reflect back and evaluate the process of change.

Facilitating Transformative Learning in Theological Education

The many new insights about the nature and process of transformative learning in the context of theological education suggest a wide variety of ways for theological schools to promote life change more effectively among their students. This article will focus on the most crucial recommendations for creating an environment that is conducive for transformative learning. Although this study was conducted in Germany, I am sure readers from other cultural contexts of theological education, especially in the Western world, will find application for their practice as well.

Facilitating Transformative Learning through Educational Goals

Almost all students of this study actually underwent processes of perspective transformation and strongly desired this kind of learning. Evangelical theological schools need to more closely attend to their students' learning needs by recognizing the importance of these transformations on a worldview level for effective and lasting change. They have to become aware of the fundamental shifts in students' mindsets and the depth of change that is actually happening during their education.

Since educational goals guide all educational activities, evangelical theological schools should not only focus their educational goals and visions on change of specific behaviors, attitudes, or beliefs. In addition, it would be crucial to include the promotion and support of processes of perspective transformation.

Facilitating Transformative Learning through Curriculum Design

The knowledge of prevalent transformative learning themes and how these processes of transformative learning evolve needs to find expression in the general curriculum design of the schools. Considering that a significant number of students experienced initiation of transformative learning before entering theological education and came with the expressed purpose of pursuing the respective issues in the context of theological education, theological schools need to make efforts to inquire into student's

actual learning interests, preferred topics, and areas of personal development needs and work these into the curriculum. An inquiry could be done during the application process or during the students' first weeks into the study program.

The fact that all students experienced substantial initiation of their transformative learning process simply through entering the new social context of theological education calls for a serious reconsideration of most theological school's curriculum design. During the first year of theological study, most theological schools only offer courses that teach factual theological knowledge in order to give an overview and set a common knowledge base for further studies.

However, students who experience significant initiation of their transformative learning either before entering theological studies or during the first months into their studies need opportunities to grapple with and critically examine theological issues. A simple familiarizing with theological content and memorization during the first year of theological studies completely misses the point of students' learning needs and hinders transformative learning.

Facilitating Transformative Learning through Instructional Design

The complex interplay of the five levels of perception and processing during transformative learning suggests that effective promotion of transformative learning requires an equal consideration of all these processes and a view of the learner as responsible adult. An instructional design oriented around adult education principles, as outlined by adult education specialists such as Knowles (Knowles, Swanson, Horton 1998), Brookfield (1987, 1991), Wlodkowski (1999), and Vella (2001), thus seems to be essential.

In general terms, this means that the instructional design of classes should consider the responsibility of the students to choose and decide the direction of their learning and their need for critical reflection and empowerment to make their own discoveries. It also means to honor the students' need to attribute positive emotions with their learning and to connect their learning with actual practice through analysis of their experiences.

The instructional design has to consider students' focus on application and their desire to learn in a safe and cooperative group learning environment where their self-

worth is respected and where there is enough room for dialog and discussion. In addition, the students' longing for an integration of their spiritual life with their learning and the integral part of spiritual processes in transformative learning speak against the fragmentation of academia and personal spirituality. They should not mutually exclude each other. Both should be addressed through the instructional design of courses.

Considering that transformative learning is such an intense learning process which requires a high amount of energy and time, theological schools also need to address the issue of work load. This study revealed that a high work load was a serious challenge for all students. For the majority of students, it was a hindering factor for transformative learning. Workloads that are too heavy can counteract all other efforts for promoting transformative learning and create an atmosphere where students are in danger of experiencing burnout or depression. Shouldn't theological schools be concerned about actively promoting a balanced Christian life and a healthy and responsible work ethic through the curriculum and instructional design? In their good intention to foster excellence and dedication in ministry, theological schools need to be careful not to create a hidden curriculum that actually reflects an unhealthy achievement mentality.

Facilitating Transformative Learning through Student Guidance

As the preceding description of the six phases of transformative learning has shown, influence from the environment had the most impact in phases one, two and five. In addition, most students actively sought help and support from other people during these particular phases. In this regard, counseling and mentoring were found to be key facilitators for transformative learning. The students' idea of counseling and mentoring was basically oriented around the notion of empowerment. Support and guidance through counseling and mentoring should not patronize students but honor their responsibility as adults.

The dynamics of the six phases suggest that student support only needs to concentrate on helping students successfully complete their current phase. The reason is that the completion of one phase automatically leads into the next and sets energy and resources free to move on in the transformative learning process.

Finally, in the context of student guidance and support it is important to note that the instructors, because of their central role as educators, play a key role in the promotion

of transformative learning. Students keenly observe the instructors in their desire to learn from their example. They understand this role modeling from a holistic perspective and thus look at their instructors' personal/spiritual, academic and ministry life. Thus, instructors need to understand their role holistically, as going beyond knowledge transmission and facilitation of learning in the classroom. They need to be willing to openly share their lives with students and provide opportunities for dialog in and out of the classroom where they honestly let students take part in how they live out their relationship with God, ministry in church, and academic pursuits.

The other important aspect of the instructors' role coming out of this study is the importance of dialog with students in the context of fellowship and guidance. Instructors need to make it a priority to take a personal interest in their students and their development. This means to take time for fellowship and dialog with students, showing initiative in getting to know the students, and becoming an active observer of students in order to be able to meaningfully engage, encourage, and support them. For effective dialog and guidance, it is important to encounter the students on a personal level and to put oneself in their shoes through "thinking with" them. As one student so poignantly expressed, it is the kind of talks at the "kitchen table" where life is shared which have a strong supportive impact on transformative learning.

Conclusion

The presented study on the transformative learning of evangelical theological students in Germany has brought to light that theological education has great potential to powerfully initiate and promote transformative learning. The new insights into themes, dynamics and phases of transformative learning in this educational context provide the essential base for better understanding these processes of life change and for meaningfully supporting theological students in their desire to grow and develop. Thus, the suggested reexamination and redesign of educational goals, curriculum design, instructional design, and the current student guidance praxis promise powerful consequences. Theological schools could truly become places of transformation which holistically prepare future ministers for effective service in the kingdom of God.

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About the Author



Marie-Claire Weinski lives near Hamburg, Germany and holds a Ph.D. in Educational Studies from Trinity International University. Together with her husband Juri (M.A. in Counseling Psychology from Trinity International University) she works as an independent consultant for human resources and organizational development. She brings her insights and competencies in transformative learning to bear on creating an effective consulting environment for successful development and change at a personal and organizational level. She also hopes to encourage theological schools to more effectively use their potential for being places where transformative education can be practiced.

La Formación Integral y su Incorporación en la Estructura Curricular de la Educación Teológica

By Robert Kasper

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Sinopsis: Paulo Friere define el estilo tradicional de la educación, que enfoca principalmente el contenido, como una “educación bancaria”, porque el maestro hace depósitos en la mente del estudiante, y luego en los exámenes busca extraerlos de la mente del alumno. Este artículo nació como consecuencia de la insistencia de algunos profesores de teología que el modelo “bancario” era necesaria para una adecuada educación teológica. El autor demuestra las debilidades del sistema “bancaria”, y aunque la fe cristiana requiere que el estudiante aprenda las doctrinas bíblicas establecidas, enfatiza que una educación teológica más eficaz enfatizaría más que información o conocimiento, y buscaría el desarrollo de la persona en forma integral ‘ su mente, emociones (aspecto espiritual) y habilidades. Concluye que la educación teológica debe enfocar una “formación integral” y no solamente la “información” o conocimiento.

Abstract: Paulo Freire defines the traditional content-focused educational style as similar to the banking system, only in this case the teacher attempts to deposit the information and later have the student withdraw it at exam time. This article grew out of the insistence of some theological educators that the “banking” model was necessary for an adequate theological education. The author shows the weaknesses of the “banking” model, stressing that even though the Christian faith requires that the student learn the established biblical doctrines, a more effective theological or seminary education would focus on more than just information or knowledge, but instead seek to develop the whole person, mental, emotional (spiritual), and ability or skills, concluding that theological education should have a “holistic formation” purpose rather than focusing primarily on “information” or knowledge.

Introducción

Como educadores evangélicos, estamos involucrados en la preparación de personas que deben servir como líderes en la Iglesia. Pero, ¿cómo es que lo hacemos cuando desarrollamos nuestro curriculum (malla curricular o pensum)? O dicho de otra forma, ¿cómo refleja el currículo de nuestra institución el interés que tenemos en la preparación de personas que sirvan a la iglesia de hoy? Normalmente lo que hacemos es determinar tres áreas de prioridad que son de suma importancia:

1. Biblia juntamente con las herramientas para entender e interpretarla;

2. Teología (podemos insistir que sea sistemática o, más frecuente ahora, bíblica) y
3. Aspectos de ministerio – cómo predicar, evangelizar, etc.

Todos concordamos que las personas que quieren entrar en el ministerio necesitan esta información y elaboramos nuestro currículum en base a materias relacionadas con estas tres áreas de enseñanza. Pero ¿es esto una base suficiente o adecuada? ¿No será que necesitamos desarrollar nuestro currículum basados en algo más profundo que solamente el contenido? ¿Por qué será que algunos de nuestros estudiantes dejan los estudios a medias, no entran en el ministerio cuando gradúan, o fracasan en el ministerio? Nosotros podemos responder que se debe a asuntos personales, y por cierto lo es – por lo menos en parte - pero la pregunta merece una respuesta más profunda, por eso tenemos que multiplicar nuestros interrogantes: ¿Cómo los hemos equipado para enfrentar las tentaciones y dificultades que les quitaron del ministerio? ¿Fue adecuada la preparación que les dimos? O ¿será que hay un camino mejor? ¿Hay algo que podríamos hacer para prevenir algunas de estas dificultades? Particularmente, pienso que sí. Un currículum estructurado de tal manera que busque la formación integral de nuestros estudiantes puede ayudarnos muchísimo en esto.

Una educación o formación integral enfoca todo el ser humano, no solamente sus conocimientos - el área mental o cognoscitivo. Ni tampoco enfoca solamente el conocimiento y las habilidades o área psicomotor. Éstas son las áreas de énfasis principal en nuestras universidades y otras instituciones educativas seculares. En ellas, la dimensión afectiva normalmente no se trata, especialmente cuando se trata de la moral. Es allí donde el seminario parece poder superar a la universidad cuando inspeccionamos el pensum inicialmente.

Pero justamente aquí nosotros también tenemos una cierta dificultad – enseñamos la moralidad bíblica, pero muchas veces no nos preocupamos en cambiar la moralidad del estudiante. Nosotros enseñamos la Biblia y el Espíritu Santo la debe aplicar a la vida del estudiante. Un libro que leí recientemente

¹ recalca que lo que distingue a un gran líder de uno que es mediocre (alcanza

poco), es que el primero conjuga/complementa/cuenta con dos elementos de vital importancia: carácter y capacidad. La persona con carácter pero sin capacidad no será un gran líder. Tampoco lo será la persona con gran capacidad y poco carácter o integridad. En el área del carácter, el autor enfoca la integridad y la motivación de la persona, y en el área de capacidad enfoca las habilidades y los resultados logrados. Jim Collins, quien estudió las compañías en los Estados Unidos que eran las más exitosas (ellas mantuvieron esa posición durante 15 años), encontró que los líderes de estas compañías eran humildes pero muy capaces.² Noten que ambos autores insisten en que la *capacidad/habilidad* (conocimiento utilizado correctamente) y el *carácter* de las personas son la clave para el éxito. Lo interesante es su énfasis en cuanto al carácter – la integridad y motivación, algo que no esperamos mucho en el campo secular que enfoca los negocios. ¿Pero el carácter, la integridad y la motivación son elementos principales de nuestro currículum? ¿Cuánto énfasis ponemos nosotros en estos aspectos de la preparación que el estudiante recibe deliberadamente en nuestro seminario?

Lo cierto es que todos concordamos en la importancia del carácter del estudiante y el egresado. Y viendo cierta necesidad en la espiritualidad y carácter de nuestros estudiantes, muchos han añadido materias de formación espiritual en su currículum. Pero, ¿es suficiente solamente añadir unos cursos que enfocan esto? ¿El problema se puede resolver con unas nuevas materias? Personalmente sostengo que añadir unas materias de formación espiritual no es la solución al problema. La formación en lo espiritual y del carácter (la relación del individuo con Dios y su prójimo) tiene que ser algo integralmente relacionado con todas las materias. Todo conocimiento presentado debe ser relacionado/aplicado a estas áreas.

Una respuesta que promete ayudarnos mucho con el desmedido énfasis en lo académico y que puede resultar con la falta del desarrollo del carácter cristiano, es lo que se llama la “formación integral”. La formación integral busca la integración del conocimiento, habilidades y carácter (corazón) del estudiante en todas las materias y

¹ Stephen M. R. Covey, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything*. (New York: Free Press, 2006), compare páginas 31, 57. Debo notar que este Stephen Covey es el hijo del autor del famoso libro: *Los siete hábitos de la gente altamente efectiva* y no el mismo.

² Jim Collins, *Empresas que sobresalen* (Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2002). Él describe esta clase de líder como un líder de nivel 5, que “construye grandeza durable mediante una paradójica combinación de humildad personal y voluntad profesional” (p. 33).

actividades del seminario. Pero antes de hablar más de esto, hay una pregunta clave que tenemos que hacernos: ¿Las Escrituras apoyan un enfoque como éste? ¿Concuerda la Biblia en este énfasis? Por que si no lo hace, no es algo que queremos buscar.

Base Bíblica Para Una Formación Integral

Pasajes que enfatizan la “formación integral”

Filipenses 1:9-11 es un pasaje que lo presenta con mucha claridad. Es la oración de Pablo a favor de los filipenses en la cual él menciona cada uno de los tres aspectos (conocimiento, corazón y actividades) al expresar su deseo para ellos. Él quiere que su amor (ser interior - corazón) abunde aun más y más en ciencia y en todo conocimiento (mente - conocimiento), para que aprobéis lo mejor (actividades), a fin de que seáis sinceros e irreprochables (ser interior - corazón) para el día de Cristo, llenos de frutos de justicia (actividades) que son por medio de Jesucristo, para gloria y alabanza de Dios.

Colosenses 1: 9-11 repite lo mismo, pero esta vez para los colosenses. Esta vez expresa su petición pidiendo que sean llenos del conocimiento de su voluntad en toda sabiduría e inteligencia espiritual (habla de la mente - conocimiento, etc.), para que andéis como es digno del Señor, agradándole en todo, llevando fruto en toda buena obra (actividades de las manos, etc.), y creciendo en el conocimiento de Dios; fortalecidos con todo poder, conforme a la potencia de su gloria, para toda paciencia y longanimidad; con gozo dando gracias al Padre (aspectos del corazón) que nos hizo aptos para participar de la herencia de los santos en luz; el cual nos ha librado de la potestad de las tinieblas, y trasladado al reino de su amado Hijo, en quien tenemos redención por su sangre, el perdón de pecados (en realidad todo esto trata de la relación con Dios).

Romanos 12: 1-2 es otro pasaje que enfoca la transformación de la totalidad de la persona. Esta vez no es una oración sino una exhortación que Pablo da a los romanos. Deben presentar sus cuerpos a Dios en sacrificio vivo y no conformarse a este siglo (enfoca sus actividades). Esa transformación será lograda con la renovación de su mente, su forma de pensar (mente y su manera pensar acerca de nuestros conocimientos). Luego menciona que esto es un culto u ofrenda para Dios, debe basarse en nuestra relación con Dios y ayudarnos a comprobar su voluntad (aspectos relacionados con el corazón o ser interior).

Unos Ejemplos Bíblicos

Moisés y los 70 ancianos – (Éxodo 18: 19-27)

Moisés tenía que escoger 70 “*varones de virtud, temerosos de Dios, varones de verdad, que aborrezcan la avaricia*” para ayudarlo en su trabajo. El carácter de estos líderes era de mucha importancia. Pero aún antes de escogerlos, Moisés tenía que enseñar al pueblo “*las ordenanzas y las leyes*” (el conocimiento de la ley) pero lo tuvo que combinar con una *demostración o aplicación*. Dios por medio del consejo del suegro le dice “*muéstrales el camino por donde deben andar, y lo que han de hacer*” (18:20).

El conocimiento de la ley tuvo que ser aplicado (mostrado) para formar la base para su andar. El problema que enfrentaron los judíos en su relación con Dios casi nunca resultó de una falta de conocimientos acerca de Dios, sino de la aplicación de estos conceptos conocidos en sus vidas personales. Conocimiento sin aplicación infla la cabeza y endurece el corazón y el resultado es lo opuesto de lo que se buscaba para los que le iban a ayudar a Moisés. Sin la aplicación de la verdad a sus propias vidas, no serían “*varones de virtud, temerosos de Dios, varones de verdad, que aborrezcan la avaricia*”. Moisés tenía que darles el conocimiento, mostrándoles la clara aplicación de la verdad, antes que puedan ayudarlo en los asuntos espirituales.

Una formación espiritual que solamente enfoca la relación personal del estudiante con Dios no llega a este nivel. Aquí la relación requerida comenzó con Dios (temerosos de Dios) pero el enfoque es su aplicación a la relación hacia el prójimo, con una vida señalada por la virtud, la honestidad (verdad) y la falta de avaricia. El conocimiento de las leyes les dio cierta capacidad para juzgar/liderar al pueblo, pero no eran capaces de hacerlo sin el carácter y la motivación correcta (su corazón o carácter), algo que les tenían que enseñar también.

“Conocimiento sin aplicación infla la cabeza y endurece el corazón”

Los primeros diáconos en la iglesia en Jerusalén – (Hechos 6: 1-3)

Circunstancias similares a las de Moisés, ocurre en los inicios de la Iglesia. Los

apóstoles fueron superados por las necesidades de una iglesia creciente. El problema no era menor, si no se atendía correctamente podía generarse un cisma irreparable en los inicios de la iglesia misma. Los hermanos griegos murmuraban contra los hermanos hebreos señalando que había desigualdad en el trato de sus viudas. La solución a este conflicto comenzó al buscar a siete hombres que ayudaran en la distribución diaria de alimentos y así evitar esta aparente desigualdad en el trato de las viudas. Lo interesante es que debían hallar a siete personas capaces de hacer el trabajo, pero los requisitos adicionales que pusieron incluían que fueran de buen testimonio y llenos del Espíritu Santo (corazón – relaciones espirituales) y también personas de Sabiduría (conocimientos). El hecho de tener el don o la capacidad para llevar a cabo el ministerio se sobreentendió, pero los dos otros aspectos no podían olvidarse en la selección.

La importancia de enfatizar más que el conocimiento de información (por ejemplo: Biblia, doctrina, filosofía o teoría ministerial) se pone bien claro al leer la Gran Comisión que Cristo dejó para los suyos después de Su resurrección y justo antes de ascender a Su Padre en Mateo 28: 18-20. El mandato nos indica que debemos “hacer discípulos” bautizándolos (testimonio público de su conversión) y enseñarles (educarlos), ambos aspectos cruciales en la formación de los discípulos. Pero sus palabras no dicen que debemos enseñarles lo que significa el texto bíblico o la doctrina – aunque puede ser parte de la labor – sino que debemos enseñarles “que guarden todas las cosas” que él había mandado. El énfasis no está en el conocimiento de la información sino la aplicación al corazón de tal manera que se externe la Palabra en su vida. Es exactamente lo que dice Santiago 1:22 “*Pero sed hacedores de la palabra, y no tan solamente oidores, engañándoos a vosotros mismos*”. El conocimiento sin transformación del corazón no nos prepara para el ministerio de Jesucristo.

El conocimiento sin transformación del corazón no nos prepara para el ministerio de Jesucristo.

El Entrenamiento de los 12 Discípulos por Jesucristo

Es sorprendente encontrar que uno de los problemas de mayor gravedad que

Jesucristo encontró al discipular a sus seguidores era sus “corazones endurecidos”.³ Normalmente consideramos que el corazón endurecido es el problema del incrédulo – la persona que ha dado su espalda a Dios. Y es cierto que el “corazón endurecido” era una de las características que Cristo atribuyó a los fariseos (Mr. 3: 1-5) pero es sorprendente que él acusa a sus propios seguidores de lo mismo: “*Porque aún no habían entendido lo de los panes, por cuanto estaban endurecidos sus corazones*” (Mr. 6:52). De esta manera, acusa a los discípulos de tener sus corazones endurecidos – el mismo problema que tenían los fariseos.

Esta no es la única vez que él usa esta frase para describir su problema. Notemos Marcos 8:14-17. *Habían olvidado de traer pan, y no tenían sino un pan consigo en la barca. Y él les mandó, diciendo: Mirad, guardaos de la levadura de los fariseos, y de la levadura de Herodes. Y discutían entre sí, diciendo: Es porque no trajimos pan. Y entendiéndolo Jesús, les dijo: ¿Qué discutís, porque no tenéis pan? ¿No entendéis ni comprendéis? ¿Aún tenéis endurecido vuestro corazón? ¿Teniendo ojos no veis, y teniendo oídos no oís? ¿Y no recordáis?”*

Los discípulos de Cristo oyeron sus palabras, tuvieron conocimiento, y anduvieron juntamente con Cristo ministrando a la gente, pero tenían los corazones calcificados, duros. Y es muy evidente este problema cuando uno considera Marcos 8:31-33; 9:30-34; 10:32.45 y Lucas 22:14-24. En cada instancia, Cristo comienza enseñándoles que tiene que morir, y ellos comienzan a discutir acerca de quién sería el mayor o, en su defecto, pedirle puestos en su reino. La enseñanza de Cristo no entró en su corazón endurecido. La información entró en la cabeza pero el corazón no dejó que se aplicara correctamente dicha enseñanza.

“La condición de nuestro corazón determina como nuestras manos aplican nuestro conocimiento”

³ Para una amplia exposición del tema vea un libro escrito por Bill Lawrence, por muchos años profesor de ministerio en el Seminario Teológico de Dallas, en Dallas, Texas. El libro se llama *Effective Pastoring* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1999). Sus primeros capítulos tratan este tema lo que él llama “*The Dreaded Leader’s Disease*”.

La Forma Tradicional de Desarrollar El Pensum

En la forma tradicional de enseñanza, comenzamos con lo elementos que debemos enseñar a los estudiantes para prepararles para los ministerios que van a ejercer. Como estamos trabajando en un seminario, un tipo de escuela, el enfoque está centrado en el currículum y el contenido. Si queremos obtener un reconocimiento para nuestra institución, nos damos cuenta que nuestros maestros/profesores necesitan una preparación adecuada (normalmente el grado superior del que enseñan) para lograr esta acreditación o reconocimiento del gobierno. Entonces nos concentramos en “qué” vamos a enseñar y “qué” conocimientos tienen nuestros profesores. Los contenidos y conocimientos son los elementos principales.

Bajo este paradigma sucede algo interesante en la elaboración del currículum. Generalmente hay una tendencia de dividirlo en materias “académicas” y “prácticas”. Materias de Biblia y de Teología normalmente son consideradas “académicas”; mientras que las de ministerio son consideradas como materias “prácticas”. Las académicas requieren que los profesores hayan estudiado su materia a un grado superior, pero en las “prácticas” lo que más interesa es que los maestros/profesores hayan tenido éxito (buen fruto) en el ministerio. Las materias ministeriales entonces son relegadas a una categoría (explícita o implícitamente) de “no académicas”, que muchas veces resulta en que los estudiantes llegan a la conclusión que Biblia y Teología son “importantes” y las clases de ministerio son de menor valor.

Lo mismo puede resultar en las clases porque los profesores de Biblia y Teología conocen muy a fondo su tema y la pueden exponer con las razones del por qué una posición y no la otra, mientras que los profesores de materias de ministerio conocen que algo les funcionó bien para ellos (y otros), pero no pueden aclarar el por qué funcionó en tal lugar y en otra no. No conocen la teoría detrás de la práctica por lo tanto no parecen ser del nivel de los otros profesores. Este desprecio suele darse incluso en la forma del trato entre los mismos colegas.

Luego de establecer la malla o estructura curricular inicial, hay que hacer una evaluación periódica de la misma, es allí donde viene la lucha de qué cambios hay que hacer en el pensum. Para incluir más Biblia hay que reducir algunos créditos de Teología o ministerio. Para dar más cursos de homilética, hay que eliminar alguno de liderazgo,

etc. Pareciera como que cada área es independiente de la otra, en lugar de ser interrelacionadas y, lo que es más importantes aún, contribuyendo todas a un solo y mismo fin.

¿Será que el modelo de la universidad secular ha invadido al seminario y nos enfocamos más en contenidos que en el resultado o producto esperado? No debe sorprendernos porque las universidades en parte nacieron de los programas educativos de la iglesia en la Edad Media. Y la mayoría de las universidades más antiguas en los Estados Unidos nacieron de los “*Colleges*” formados para la preparación de jóvenes para el ministerio en la iglesia. Pero ahora ellos son las instituciones prestigiosas en el campo de la educación. Ellos han cambiado de su misión original - ¿deberíamos seguir su modelo? Propongo que no - cuando se busca un egresado que tiene una formación integral – donde la mente, corazón y manos funcionan integralmente, el modelo de la educación tiene que cambiar.

**Un proceso para la evaluación del pensum
cuando se busca la Formación Integral del estudiante**

Cuando se busca la formación integral del egresado, se tiene que recalcar que lo que se busca es una formación del ser completo (I Tes. 5:23 “*Y el mismo Dios de paz os santifique por completo; y todo vuestro ser, espíritu, alma y cuerpo, sea guardado irreprochable para la venida de nuestro Señor Jesucristo*”). Lo que se busca es una formación que impacta la mente, el ser interior (corazón) y las habilidades o dones (manos). Si la formación es integral, los tres aspectos están desarrollados de tal manera que funcionan como una totalidad en cada uno de las tres áreas. Los dones son usados de acuerdo a la base asentada en la mente y el corazón. Lo que es la persona en su ser interior ejerce influencia sobre su utilización de sus conocimientos y habilidades. Y esto se demuestra en lo que dice y hace, en el producto (Mateo 7: 16-18 “*Por sus frutos los conoceréis. ¿Acaso se recogen uvas de los espinos, o higos de los abrojos? Así, todo buen árbol da buenos frutos, pero el árbol malo da frutos malos. No puede el buen árbol dar malos frutos, ni el árbol malo dar frutos buenos*”). Entonces, si buscamos lograr una

formación integral, tenemos que definir cómo el estudiante/el “producto” de este programa, se parecerá.

Creo que por lo general, esto en parte es lo que tratamos de hacer. Decimos que un pastor en nuestras iglesias debe ser así, debe conocer esto, debe ser una persona con tales actitudes y poder hacer aquello. Entonces ¿cuál es la diferencia entre lo que se hace comúnmente y lo que les estoy hablando? Lo explicaré con un ejemplo de nuestra propia experiencia.

Hace aproximadamente 10 años se comenzó a discutir la posibilidad de crear un programa doctoral especialmente para entrenar a rectores y decanos en cómo dirigir un seminario teológico. La idea era que la mayoría de estas personas no tenían ningún entrenamiento para hacer este tipo de trabajo – eran buenos maestros en Biblia, Teología, etc., pero con la dificultad que al ser elegidos para dirigir su institución, muchos se quedaban frustrados por no sentirse capaces para hacerlo bien. La idea que resultó era que debíamos desarrollar un programa para suplir esa necesidad y a la vez formar teólogos para este área. Las primeras discusiones se realizaron con siete instituciones y se puso el nombre de Programa Cooperativo de Educación Doctoral (ProCED). Con el tiempo todas las instituciones que colaboraran en las discusiones iniciales y la formación de este programa tuvieron razones para no continuar. Siendo así como el Seteca se quedó con la iniciativa que logró lanzarse recién en el año 2004 bajo el nombre de Doctorado en Educación Teológica (DET). Menciono esto porque quiero que vean que el programa desde sus inicios tenía un producto definido en mente. Y el currículum del programa se formó entretejiendo 4 materias de educación/administración con 4 de teología, más dos materias que trataban temas de investigación. Todas las materias tenían un contenido específico relacionado con el resultado que buscábamos.

Los resultados obtenidos con los primeros estudiantes no fueron malos. Seleccionando unos ejemplos positivos (como solemos hacer) podemos señalar un seminario que está en un proceso de transformación significativa porque el rector está aplicando lo aprendido en el programa. En otro caso, el jefe del departamento de teología en una universidad evangélica ha sido nombrado rector de la misma. Sin embargo, al hacer una profunda evaluación del programa durante el año 2006, se notaron unas lagunas significativas y como consecuencia el currículum fue revisado y debidamente

ampliado. A continuación les explico el proceso que se usó y que puede servir de modelo para su institución.

1. Elaboración de una “descripción de trabajo” para el puesto que el graduando debe llenar.

A pesar de ver elementos positivos en los estudiantes en el programa, no se pudo ignorar que también se podría mejorar para el futuro. Con esto en mente, se inició el proceso de evaluación.

La mejor manera de evaluar el programa nos pareció que es a través de una comparación entre nuestros objetivos en el programa, y los requisitos que seminarios ponían al buscar un candidato para llenar puestos similares a los que pretendíamos alcanzar con nuestros graduados. Lo que se hizo entonces fue buscar de varias instituciones, las descripciones de trabajo para los puestos de rector y decano, y también los perfiles que los seminarios elaboraron para guiarse en la búsqueda de personas para estos puestos. Nos quedamos con una variedad de documentos de años pasados y de los tiempos más recientes. De éstos se hizo una compilación de los requisitos, muy consciente de que estábamos elaborando un perfil que sería muy difícil llenar – porque en realidad incluía todo lo que se podía pedir – un candidato perfecto.

Además nos habíamos dado cuenta que una de nuestras deficiencias en el programa resultó por asumir (al iniciarlo) que nuestros estudiantes eran personas espirituales, y como consecuencia no se necesitaba dar tiempo a aspectos del crecimiento espiritual, relación con Dios, etc. Por no incluir estos elementos en el programa con el primer grupo de estudiantes, hubo oportunidades cuando los estudiantes no recibieron la ayuda que necesitaban en estas áreas, porque no teníamos mecanismos para ayudarles.

Con este trasfondo, se tomó el perfil que se había elaborado, y lo dividimos en las áreas del SER, CONOCER y HACER (corazón, mente y manos o áreas afectivas, cognoscitivos y psicomotrices) para ver su importancia para los que iban a contratar a nuestros egresados. Era de suma importancia a este nivel considerar el “perfil” que se elaboraron para la búsqueda de candidatos para los puestos, porque en ellos se enfatizaba mucho más el aspecto del ser, del carácter, que en las descripciones de trabajo.

Ya que nuestro programa en Internet funcionaba un poco diferente que un seminario que funciona con estudiantes en clases presenciales, desde este paso operábamos un poco diferente en el siguiente paso. Con las clases en Internet, el contenido de la materia se presenta mediante lecturas (libros, artículos, etc.) sobre lo cual el o la estudiante tiene una tarea y una interacción con sus compañeros. Tratábamos de darles tareas que se podían aplicar directamente a sus labores en su trabajo diario (estudiaban en su residencia y trabajando medio tiempo). Dividimos la materia en unidades, con objetivos específicos, relacionado con el trabajo de un rector o decano, para cada unidad.⁴ Como resultado, nos era fácil hacer una lista de los objetivos de las materias, y hacer una comparación con los elementos del perfil del rector o decano.⁵

En el caso de un seminario o instituto bíblico, el proceso comenzaría algo similar, con la elaboración de descripciones de trabajo para los egresados de los programas. Esto es más fácil al estar relacionado estrechamente con una denominación y grupo de iglesias que son similares. En el caso de programas que preparan pastores, sería muy útil sentarse con los líderes de la denominación o iglesias, y preparar un perfil de la clase de pastor que ellos buscan. Lo ideal es que el perfil describa qué cualidades buscan en su *ser* interior (actitudes hacia y relaciones con Dios y los hermanos y prójimos), cuáles son las áreas que debe *conocer* y las habilidades que debe poseer para *hacer* la obra del ministerio. Con estos tres aspectos bien detallados, ya se tiene el perfil de lo que quieren lograr en el programa. Una persona preparada integralmente.

Cuando se ha completado esta lista, el siguiente paso sería analizar los objetivos que actualmente se tiene. Es tiempo de compilar una lista similar de los sumarios, tareas, exámenes y la actual enseñanza en los salones de clase. A esta altura diría que no es crucial que esta lista sea exacta o totalmente documentada.

2. Evaluación de los objetivos de los sumarios y otro material del curso.

Antes de analizar los objetivos que se usan en su institución, valdría la pena una

⁴ Los estudios sobre el aprendizaje del adulto confirman que éste aprende mejor cuando lo que estudia se relaciona directamente con su trabajo o interés y lo puede aplicar inmediatamente. Entonces iniciamos el programa con este enfoque como parte principal en el diseño mismo del contenido.

⁵ En este caso, usábamos un perfil genérico que incluía los elementos requeridos para ambos puestos.

breve aclaración de las diferentes clases de objetivos. Hay como cuatro clases de objetivos: los claramente expresados, los obvios aunque no son expresados, los objetivos que se obtienen pero no se desean lograr y los que quisieran lograr. Los que son de la cuarta clase deben expresarse más adelante en el proceso. En este momento se está buscando los objetivos expresados, los obvios y los no deseados, en cada una de las tres áreas del conocer, ser y hacer. Es importante que también apunte al lado del objetivo, dónde está situada en su malla curricular. Antes de terminar esta parte, convendría evaluar qué porcentaje del currículum enfoca cada uno de las tres áreas de énfasis. Recuerden que para una formación integral, se requiere la presencia de las tres áreas de objetivos, no solamente en el currículum en general, sino en todas las materias.

Al hacer el ejercicio del punto anterior, debe haber logrado una buena idea (en general) de los objetivos principales del perfil del egresado. Lo que está buscando ahora es algo similar en cuanto a sus materias individuales y su currículum en su totalidad. Pero antes de hacer esto, es importante volver a repasar la clasificación de los objetivos para ponerlos en su área correspondiente.⁶

Clasificación de objetivos

Una de las clasificaciones más usadas en el campo de la educación es la de Benjamín Bloom. Él no solamente utiliza las tres áreas, sino también clarifica cómo profundizar en cada una de ellas. A continuación presentamos su análisis de los tres.⁷

- **Cognoscitivos:**⁸ *Es la habilidad para pensar las cosas. Los objetivos cognitivos giran en torno del conocimiento y la comprensión de cualquier tema dado.*

Hay seis niveles en la taxonomía. En orden ascendente son los siguientes:

⁶ En esta ponencia, se está usando como ejemplo el proceso usado para evaluar el pensum del Doctorado en Educación Teológica (DET). En el caso de una institución usando este proceso para incorporar la formación integral en su currículum, convendría iniciar el proceso aquí con la presentación de la clasificación de los objetivos, aún antes de analizar los perfiles y descripciones de trabajo como se ha descrito en el punto anterior.

⁷ Lo que utilizamos aquí es de su “taxonomía de objetivos” que puede encontrarse en Internet en la siguiente dirección: http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxonom%C3%ADa_de_objetivos_de_la_educaci%C3%B3n

⁸ Otra fuente excelente de clasificación es presentado por un colega, el Dr. Frank Fenby en su sitio Web. La dirección es: <http://www.edifymin.org/Education/Teaching/CognitiveD/CognitiveDomain.html> El valor de esta tabla radica en que explica lo que el aprendiz tiene que poder hacer para los diferentes niveles, y las palabras claves que deben aparecer dentro de los objetivos nuestros si queremos lograr el nivel elegido.

Conocimiento - muestra el recuerdo de materiales previamente aprendidos por medio de hechos evocantes, términos, conceptos básicos y respuestas.

- *Conocimiento de terminología o hechos específicos;*
- *Conocimiento de los modos y medios para tratar con convenciones, tendencias y secuencias específicas, clasificaciones y categorías, criterios, metodología*
- *Conocimiento de los universales y abstracciones en un campo: principios y generalizaciones, teorías y estructuras*

Comprensión - Entendimiento demostrativo de hechos e ideas por medio de la organización, la comparación, la traducción, la interpretación, las descripciones y la formulación de ideas principales.

- *Traducción*
- *Interpretación*
- *Extrapolación*

Aplicación - Uso de conocimiento nuevo. Resolver problemas en nuevas situaciones aplicando el conocimiento adquirido, hechos, técnicas y reglas en un modo diferente.

Análisis - Examen y discriminación de la información identificando motivos o causas. Hacer inferencias y encontrar evidencia para fundamentar generalizaciones.

- *Análisis de los elementos*
- *Análisis de las relaciones*
- *Análisis de los principios de organización*

Síntesis - Compilación de información de diferentes modos combinando elementos en un patrón nuevo o proponiendo soluciones alternativas.

- *Elaboración de comunicación unívoca*
- *Elaboración de un plan o conjunto de operaciones propuestas*
- *Derivación de un conjunto de relaciones abstractas*

Evaluación - Presentación y defensa de opiniones juzgando la información, la validez de ideas o la calidad de una obra en relación con un conjunto de criterios

- *Juicios en términos de evidencia interna*
 - *Juicios en términos de criterios externos*
- **Afectivos:**⁹ *El modo como la gente reacciona emocionalmente, su habilidad para sentir el dolor o la alegría de otro ser viviente. Los objetivos afectivos apuntan típicamente a la conciencia y crecimiento en actitud, emoción y sentimientos.*
- Hay cinco niveles en el dominio afectivo. Yendo de los procesos de orden inferiores a los superiores, son:*
- *Recepción - El nivel más bajo; el estudiante presta atención en forma pasiva. Sin este nivel no puede haber aprendizaje.*
 - *Respuesta - El estudiante participa activamente en el proceso de aprendizaje, no sólo atiende a estímulos, el estudiante también reacciona de algún modo.*
 - *Valoración - El estudiante asigna un valor a un objeto, fenómeno a o información.*
 - *Organización - Los estudiantes pueden agrupar diferentes valores, informaciones e ideas y acomodarlas dentro de su propio esquema; comparando, relacionando y elaborando lo que han aprendido.*
 - *Caracterización - El estudiante cuenta con un valor particular o creencia que ahora ejerce influencia en su comportamiento de modo que se torna una característica.*
- **Psicomotrices:**¹⁰ *La pericia para manipular físicamente una herramienta o instrumento como la mano o un martillo. Los objetivos psicomotores generalmente apuntan en el cambio o desarrollo en la conducta o habilidades.*
- Comprende los siguientes niveles: - Percepción - Disposición - Respuesta dirigida - Respuesta automática - Ejecución consciente.*

Áreas/aspectos a evaluar

⁹ Vea la clasificación de Fenby:

<http://www.edifymin.org/Education/Teaching/AffectiveD/AffectiveDomain.html>

¹⁰ Vea como lo clasifica Fenby:

<http://www.edifymin.org/Education/Teaching/Psychomotor/psychomotor.htm>

Ahora que conocemos las tres áreas de objetivos y cómo podemos profundizar en ellas, es muy instructivo hacer una evaluación de (1) los sumarios, (2) los apuntes usados en la enseñanza de la materia, y (3) cómo se evalúa el aprendizaje logrado por el estudiante por medio de las tareas y exámenes. Obviamente, si queremos lograr algo específico como resultado del proceso educativo en nuestra institución, debe ser reflejado en estas áreas. Los apuntes probablemente enfocarán más el contenido y las tareas y exámenes lo que es de importancia en el contenido o la aplicación del contenido, pero hay que verlos uno por uno aparte y con más cuidado.

A la hora de hacer las evaluaciones es muy importante que éstas apunten a los objetivos enfatizados. Un análisis global no es malo, pero si se quiere demostrar con claridad que cambios deben hacerse, es necesario poder documentar los objetivos de acuerdo a cada área: el conocer, ser y hacer. Entonces el análisis de cada materia debería hacerse buscando la importancia dado a cada uno de estas áreas. Luego de hacer la identificación por materia, se puede elaborar el perfil que presenta el programa en su totalidad. Los aspectos claves que se buscan descubrir son: [1] cuál es el porcentaje de énfasis dado a cada una de las áreas (conocer, ser y hacer) y [2] si hay o no una integración de los tres aspectos en cada materia.

□ Sumarios:

El sumario o sílabo de la materia debe elaborar (como mínimo) cual es el área a cubrir, cuáles son los objetivos y las tareas que el estudiante debe completar para su evaluación o calificación final. Hay otros elementos importantes que se deja de lado porque estos tres elementos son las que queremos examinar para nuestro fin. En el contenido podemos ver si se espera que el estudiante adquiera conocimientos, destreza en alguna habilidad o un cambio de su actitud o carácter. Estos elementos quedan aún más claramente expresados en los objetivos elaborados por el profesor. Pero tal vez lo más importante es cómo se evalúe al estudiante (cuales son los instrumentos para medirle y darle una calificación). Estas son las tareas y exámenes – y aquí debe enfocarse en el porcentaje que vale cada uno de estos elementos. Los estudiantes dirigen su atención y esfuerzo a lo que les dará una calificación más alta – entonces el valor de cada actividad calificada es significativo.

□ Tareas (lecturas y escritos):

Las lecturas asignadas generalmente presentan información o contenido. Pero no necesariamente. El contenido puede enfocar la información de más de una manera. El libro puede ser un manual de cómo hacer o aplicar algo. Así hay manuales para aprender a predicar, aconsejar, ejercer el liderazgo, estudiar la Biblia o aún hacer teología y cosas similares. También hay mucha literatura evangélica que enfoca la vida espiritual, las relaciones espirituales con Dios y con nuestro prójimo. Libros diseñados para ayudarnos a crecer en nuestro ser interior. Entonces es importante identificar el propósito de cada lectura asignada.

Las tareas también pueden tener diferentes objetivos. Asignar una monografía académica que requiere investigación bibliográfica puede tener el objetivo principal de profundizar el conocimiento del estudiante en un área de conocimiento, pero también puede haber sido asignado para ayudarlo a aprender como hacer investigación bibliográfica. Y si parte de la tarea incluye hacer aplicación a la vida o ministerio, puede tener más que un solo objetivo. Por esto hay que examinar con cuidado las exigencias del profesor para ver si enfoca algo más que conocimiento.

□ Exámenes:

Los exámenes con frecuencia se utilizan para ver cuánto recuerda el estudiante del material presentado en la clase. Cuando el examen le pide al estudiante devolver la información presentada en la clase o en las lecturas, básicamente trata de ver cuánto del contenido ha retenido. Hasta puede requerir que sea en las mismas palabras de los apuntes o texto. Esto es un enfoque puramente memorístico – demuestra la capacidad memorística del estudiante. Pero los exámenes también pueden enfocar la comprensión o aplicación de conceptos a nuevas situaciones, pueden pedir un análisis, síntesis o evaluación de la información. Aunque no pasa del área de conocimientos, por lo menos exige que el estudiante tenga que repensar y reflexionar sobre la nueva información adquirida.

□ Apuntes y/o visita a las clases:

Puede ser algo difícil ver con mucha claridad los objetivos que se relacionan con el corazón y las capacidades solamente con un examen de los apuntes del profesor. Muchas veces los profesores solamente incluyen la información o contenido en sus

apuntes, y luego las aplicaciones al corazón y al ministerio se hacen en la misma clase. Por esto es bueno e importante visitar las clases y ver cómo los profesores enseñan la materia. Valdría la pena hacer un análisis, aunque algo inexacto, de cuánto tiempo se dedica al desarrollo de la mente, el corazón y las habilidades. Es obvio que unas materias en el curriculum se adaptan más que otras a la aplicación al corazón o las habilidades ministeriales y su uso, pero la pregunta clave es ¿si el profesor enseña su materia integralmente o no? ¿Hace algún intento? O ¿se concentra puramente en el conocimiento?

Lo que se debe hacer ahora es tomar los objetivos expresados en nuestros sumarios y materias y organizarlos en una lista bajo los tres áreas: conocer, ser y hacer o en forma más técnica los cognoscitivos, afectivos y psicomotrices. Al completar el ejercicio de arriba, y aún sin ser demasiado profundos, se puede tener una idea lo suficientemente clara si el programa enfoca una educación/formación integral o no y dónde hay que hacer cambios para lograr que sea integral. Esto se hace en el siguiente paso.

3. Análisis de lagunas o áreas débiles que el pensum no cubre.

Ahora ha llegado el momento de comparar la descripción de trabajo o perfil que se emplea para buscar a alguien para cubrir algún puesto, y ver si los objetivos nuestros se alinean con este perfil o descripción de trabajo. En el primer paso sugerimos que hicieran una compilación de lo que se busca en varios perfiles y/o descripciones de puestos de trabajo/ministerio. La ventaja de esto es que con esa compilación, se queda con algo más genérico, y no específico a una sola situación. Normalmente cada una de las tres áreas será representada. Hay algunos puestos que requieren más conocimiento, otros más habilidades psicomotrices, pero todo perfil o descripción de trabajo para un ministerio tendrá una amplia lista de objetivos relacionados con el área afectiva. Los objetivos de esta lista deben incluirse en los objetivos de la institución que desea proveer las personas mejor preparadas para llenar estos puestos.

Al comparar las dos listas para ver si hay objetivos en el pensum para cada una de las características del perfil buscado, no es urgente que dichas listas sean exactamente

iguales, pero sí es preocupante si hay una gran variación entre las dos. Por ejemplo, si la lista elaborada del currículum enfoca principalmente objetivos cognoscitivos, pero la descripción del puesto enfatiza principalmente habilidades y carácter, sus egresados no encajarán bien en este puesto. Creo que el carácter es crucial en cada ministerio, entonces un énfasis fuerte en esta área del pensum no presentará un problema, a menos que afecte al nivel académico del programa y que la iglesia desee un pastor con título profesional. En este caso, si se reduce el nivel académico puede afectarse el reconocimiento del seminario y el egresado no llenaría el objetivo o requisito profesional solicitado.

En este punto, tenemos que confrontar un error que comúnmente se sostiene: que un énfasis en los aspectos de la vida espiritual rebaja el nivel académico. O dicho de otra manera, que el énfasis en el aspecto académico reduce el nivel de espiritualidad del programa. Eso es igual a decir que el Apóstol Pablo no era un hombre espiritual porque tenía un alto nivel de preparación académica. Pero, poner mucho énfasis en un área puede disminuir el énfasis en la otra, a menos que haya un esfuerzo concentrado en prevenir que esto suceda. Entonces nuestro énfasis en el pensum y la enseñanza debería ser balanceada en las tres áreas y de acuerdo al perfil del puesto para el cual la persona se está preparando.

La meta de este punto es alinear los objetivos del programa con los requisitos para el puesto, ya sea pastor, profesor, misionero, etc. Al querer preparar obreros, pastores, ministros, misioneros, líderes (llámamelos como queremos) para la iglesia, los queremos preparar académicamente, maduros en su vida espiritual y con las destrezas que necesitan para hacer bien la obra. Esto es una preparación integral.

4. Rediseño del contenido y objetivos para las materias

En muchos casos, al completar este tipo de ejercicio que se ha descrito, se darán cuenta que los objetivos de la malla curricular no se ajusta muy bien a las características que se buscan en la descripción de trabajo. Por esto es que se habla de un rediseño del contenido o reajuste de los objetivos. Pueden existir materias que quisieran añadir o quitar de su pensum, pero muchas veces el problema puede corregirse mediante un trabajo, intenso y extendido si quiere lograr un impacto duradero, pero no algo que

requiere grandes cambios en el contenido. El cambio mayor y más frecuentemente necesitado es un cambio en los objetivos que quieren lograr con ese contenido.

Implementar una formación integral en su currículum no se soluciona con añadir nuevas materias. Esto solamente perpetúa el modelo de solucionar un vacío con otra materia que no esté relacionada con las otras. Poner otra materia de Biblia o predicación y quitar uno de teología o de liderazgo no resulta en una integración. Más bien resulta en competencia entre departamentos y maestros que quieren hacer sobresalir su área. La solución se logra más bien cuando toda la facultad ve la importancia de las tres áreas y cada profesor en cada materia intenta deliberadamente incorporar objetivos relacionados con los tres aspectos en su sumario, sus ponencias, las tareas que asigna y los exámenes que elabora.

Entonces es crucial que toda la administración y la facultad se unan en este proyecto. Tienen que ver la diferencia que existe entre sus objetivos y cuáles son los resultados del currículum en la manera que ellos lo enseñan. Tienen que darse cuenta que no están en competencia para parecer más académico o más espiritual. Todas las áreas son igualmente importantes y deben reforzar cada uno a los otros aspectos aunque su área no lo enfoca tan directamente. Biblia y Teología existen para ser el fundamento de la vida espiritual y la labor ministerial.

Robert Clinton sostiene que en la formación del líder hay una serie de etapas y Dios obra en esta persona de diferentes formas en cada etapa.¹¹ Dios comienza con las bases soberanas, nuestra herencia de la familia. La segunda fase lo llama crecimiento de la vida interna. La tercera es una maduración en el ministerio seguido por la cuarta que el llama maduración en la vida. En la quinta etapa, que puede ocurrir en diferentes momentos en la vida de diversos líderes, llega a lo que llama la convergencia. Es la etapa en que todo lo anterior llega a un punto donde se une para permitir al líder ejercer un liderazgo que converge con todo lo que es y ha experimentado. Menciono esto para hacer el siguiente punto: dice Clinton que durante las primeras cuatro etapas, Dios se interesa más en la formación del líder como hombre de Dios, que en su ministerio para Él. Muchas de las dificultades y pruebas que experimenta el potencial líder son lecciones

¹¹ Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1988).

que Dios le quiere enseñar, para poder darle un ministerio fructífero. La formación integral de la persona es lo que le ayuda a llegar más pronto a la convergencia.

Queremos que las personas que Dios pone frente a nosotros en nuestros seminarios puedan aprovechar al máximo los años que inviertan con nosotros, para ser mejores siervos de nuestro Dios. Una formación parcial requiere que Dios use a otras personas o experiencias de la vida para lograr esa formación integral. Tal vez nuestra labor será imperfecta – realmente lo es – pero hagamos el mejor esfuerzo que nos es posible, con la ayuda de Dios.

Libros Recomendados

Byrnjolfson, Robert & Jonathan Lewis (eds.) *Integral Ministry Training*. (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2006), 238 páginas.

No tengo copia del libro, pero ha de ser excelente porque conozco el enfoque de los autores. Los dos trabajan para la Alianza Evangélica Mundial en el área de la formación de misioneros, especialmente del mundo de los dos tercios. Ambos hablan español y tienen experiencia en el ámbito de la iglesia hispana.

Diamond, Roberto M. *Designing & Assessing Courses & Curricula: A Practical Guide*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 321 páginas.

Excelente libro pero con una perspectiva dirigida al campo secular. Escrito para ayudarle al lector a diseñar un programa donde se alinea los objetivos con las metas finales y el currículum en su totalidad.

Ford, LeRoy. *A Curriculum Design Manual for Theological Education*. (Nashville: Broadman, 1991), 352 páginas.

El libro es uno de los mejores en existencia desde la perspectiva evangélica y se dirige a los que se involucran en la educación teológica. Es muy detallado y completo.

Molina Bogantes, Zaida. *Planeamiento didáctica: Fundamentos, principios, estrategias y procedimientos para su desarrollo*. (San José, Costa Rica: Editorial Universidad Estatal a Distancia, 4ª reimpresión, 2000), 289 páginas.

Una obra producida en Costa Rica para el sistema universitario, y entonces es más contextualizado que lo de Diamond y Ford. Da sugerencias muy buenas y aunque secular, tiende a enfocar una educación más integral.

About the Author



Robert (Roberto) Kasper, Canadiense de nacimiento, casado con Shirley - tienen 4 hijos y 8 nietos. Profesor de tiempo completo en el SETECA y dirige su Doctorado en Educación Teológica (DET). Enseña materias de posgrado en Internet y en módulos. Vive en el Valle de Río Grande en Texas. Dios le ha permitido ministrar entre hispanos / latinoamericanos por más de 40 años en Costa Rica, Argentina, Bolivia, Guatemala y Texas, EE.UU.

Bob (Robert) Kasper, Canadian by birth, married to Shirley with 4 children and 8 grandchildren. Full-time professor at the Central American Theological Seminary (SETECA) in Guatemala City, and director of their Doctorate in Theological Education (known as DET). Teaches graduate classes on the Internet and in Modules, which allows them to reside in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, USA. The Lord has allowed them to live and minister to Hispanics (Latin Americans) for over 40 years in Costa Rica, Argentina, Bolivia, Guatemala and Texas.

Una Filosofía Ideal Para El Seminario Bautista de la Habana

By Israel Martín Lemos

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Sinopsis: El Seminario Bautista de la Habana “R. A. Ocaña” ha crecido de 31 estudiantes a 660 en el período de 6 años. Sin embargo, de acuerdo al autor, su filosofía educativa no se ha adaptado a las necesidades reales de la denominación y el país. En el artículo, presenta una filosofía educacional ideal. Se define las posibles bases filosóficas de la institución siguiendo las categorías de la Metafísica, Epistemología y Axiología desde la perspectiva del cristianismo bíblico conservador. Se presenta el modelo misional como la alternativa más factible para que la institución desarrolle la educación teológica, ofreciéndose pautas concretas para avanzar la institución según este modelo. También se enfatiza la importancia de asumir un sistema educativo Teocéntrico con el adecuado balance entre el contenido, alumno y contexto. Por último, se plasma la importancia de que el Seminario despliegue una educación integral, cuidando el equilibrio entre el saber, ser y hacer de los estudiantes.

Abstract: The Baptist Seminary of Havana, Cuba “R. C. Ocaña” has increased from 31 students to 660 in the space of six years. However, according to the author of this article, its educational philosophy has not been adapted to the actual necessities of the denomination and country. The article presents a more ideal educational philosophy for the institution. The possible philosophical foundations of the institution are defined using the categories of Metaphysics, Epistemology and Axiology, from a biblical conservative evangelical perspective. The missional model is set forth as the most feasible alternative to improve its theological education, and offers concrete suggestions to incorporate the model. It is important that the educational system assumes a theocentric position and an adequate balance between content, student and context. Finally, the importance of developing an holistic education with a balance between knowing, being and doing is stressed.

Introducción

El Seminario Bautista de la Habana, “R. A. Ocaña”, teniendo más de cien años de fundado, es la institución teológica evangélica más antigua de Cuba. Ha jugado un rol muy significativo para la denominación bautista; así como para otros grupos evangélicos. Esta institución ha pasado por diversas etapas históricas, en las que se han destacado diversos énfasis educativos tradicionales; sin embargo, durante los últimos años se han observado cambios radicales en las proyecciones, currículos y modalidades de la

institución, que han determinado un crecimiento notable de su matrícula (de 31 alumnos a 570, en un período de seis años), así como de su efectividad (mediante las nuevas modalidades educativas y nuevas especialidades). Los cambios significativos que han tenido lugar en el Seminario Bautista de la Habana, y que lo han impulsado notablemente, nos hacen recordar el pensamiento de Gary Hamel respecto a las organizaciones, cuando expresó: “El mundo se ha dividido en dos tipos de organizaciones: Las que no pueden ir más allá de un mejoramiento continuo y las que han dado un salto en la innovación radical”

¹. No caben dudas de que esta institución ha experimentado cambios sustanciales.

Ahora bien, un análisis detallado de la institución demostrará que aun en la actualidad, después de haber efectuado ciertos cambios radicales, se continúa sustentando una filosofía educativa con fuerte influencia filosófica neo-escolástica, con énfasis en los contenidos y el rol del maestro como disciplinario mental y emisor de información. Además se sigue un modelo de educación teológica neo-tradicional, que además de preocuparse principalmente por el contenido de la revelación cristiana (doctrinal y ético), está enfocado fundamentalmente en los aspectos cognitivos², descuidándose la formación integral de los alumnos.

Por las razones anteriores, la presente exposición persigue ofrecer a la directiva de la institución³ una filosofía educativa que sea capaz de permitir los mejores resultados posibles en cuanto a la creación de aprendizaje en los alumnos. Se defenderá la siguiente propuesta: Una filosofía educacional sustentada por bases filosóficas correspondientes al Teísmo Cristiano Bíblico; que siga los lineamientos del Modelo Misional de la Educación Teológica, centrándose en Dios y su Palabra, con el debido balance entre contenido,

¹ Gary Hamel, “El Final del Progreso” en *Liderando la Revolución*, traducido por Jorge Cárdenas Nanetti (Bogotá: Norma, 2000): 17, Material Electrónico.

² En este caso, nos estamos refiriendo al llamado Modelo Confesional de la Educación Teológica, en donde se hace énfasis en la “Información Teológica”, en ganar entendimiento que da forma sistemática a las creencias cristianas y provee dirección para el crecimiento personal y para la práctica del ministerio. Al respecto, véase a Robert Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education, Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Nashville: Broadman & Hollman, 1993): 143-144, en donde el autor presenta un excelente resumen de los diversos modelos tradicionales de educación teológica, incluyendo el Clásico, Vocacional, Dialéctico y Confesional, respectivamente.

³ La cual está formada por la Comisión Rectora (Rector, Vicerrector, Director Académico, Secretario de la Facultad, Director Interno, y Administrador); así como por los decanos o directores de las diversas especialidades (Ministerio Pastoral y Teología; Misiones y Evangelismo; Adoración; Educación Cristiana; Ministerio Juvenil).

alumno y contexto, y abarcando la vida total del estudiante (ser, saber y hacer); proveerá el marco adecuado para el óptimo trabajo de la institución.

La propuesta será desarrollada siguiendo los siguientes aspectos: 1. Definición de las bases filosóficas de la institución según la cosmovisión cristiana bíblica; 2. Pautas para avanzar la institución hacia un modelo misional; 3. Pautas para asumir un sistema educativo Teocéntrico, con balance entre contenido, alumno y contexto; 4. Pautas para desplegar una formación integral del alumno.

Definiendo las Bases Filosóficas de la Institución Según el Teísmo Cristiano Bíblico

Se puede afirmar que la filosofía educacional no es distinta de la filosofía general; ella es filosofía general aplicada a la educación, como un área del desempeño humano⁴. Generalmente se describe la educación como un proceso deliberado que tiene una meta deseada⁵. Si este es el caso, los educadores tienen que tener alguna base para arribar a la concepción de una meta. Una meta presupuesta supone una cosmovisión o punto de vista filosófico que incluye las creencias respecto a la realidad, la verdad, los valores, etc. Se puede comprobar que la filosofía es la base constituyente en la práctica educacional⁶.

El Seminario de la Habana está consciente de las diversas etapas históricas por las que ha pasado la institución; así como de las características de cada período⁷. Por otra parte, la institución ha podido constatar la existencia de ciertas corrientes teológicas que

⁴ George R. Knight, *Philosophy and Education, An Introduction in Christian Perspective* (Berreen Spring, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998): 13.

⁵ Ibid. , 31.

⁶ Ibid. , 31-32. Sería muy conveniente el estudio detallado del cuadro presentado por Knight, en donde establece claramente las relaciones entre los determinantes filosóficos (Metafísica, Epistemología, Axiología), los factores modificantes contextuales que influyen en las metas (Dinámicas Políticas, Condiciones Económicas, Fuerzas Sociales, Expectativas de la Familia Inmediata y comunidad); y los asuntos educacionales (Naturaleza del Estudiante, Rol del Maestro, Énfasis Curricular, Metodologías de Enseñanza; Funciones Sociales de las Instituciones Educativas).

⁷ Los historiadores de la denominación han registrado adecuadamente las diversas etapas históricas de la institución con sus peculiaridades. Algunos plantean las siguientes divisiones históricas: 1. Fundación e Intermitencia (1906-1935); 2. Organización y Estabilidad (1935-2000); 3. Nuevos Horizontes (2000-Actualidad). Para esta temática, véase un bosquejo similar y las características de cada período en Leoncio Veguilla, *Más de Cien Años de Obra Bautista en Cuba Occidental, 1886-1996* (Habana: STBH, 1997): 19.

han influido notablemente en su proyección educacional⁸. Sin embargo, no existe una definición clara de las bases filosóficas sobre las que descansan las iniciativas educativas de la institución. Se hace necesario explicitar dichos supuestos filosóficos desde la perspectiva cristiana bíblica.

Se considera que las bases filosóficas pueden ser expresadas a través de las categorías conocidas como: Metafísica (naturaleza de la realidad), Epistemología (naturaleza de la verdad y el conocimiento) y Axiología (los valores)⁹.

Sugerimos que se puedan presentar las bases filosóficas de los programas de la institución siguiendo el modelo de las mencionadas categorías, y en concordancia al Teísmo Cristiano Conservador¹⁰ o Cosmovisión Cristiana Bíblica¹¹. Una propuesta de definición filosófica básica para los programas sería la siguiente:

Una *Metafísica* que reconoce las realidades espirituales que presenta la Biblia, y en donde se destaca el Dios Trino verdadero, sin excluir las realidades materiales creadas que nuestros sentidos experimentan. Una *Epistemología* basada fundamentalmente en el reconocimiento de las verdades absolutas reveladas en la Palabra de Dios, las cuales pueden ser conocidas por el hombre, con el auxilio del Espíritu de Dios. Esto sin excluir la revelación general, de la cual se puede desprender conocimiento verdadero. La verdad absoluta, revelada en la divina Palabra, es la regla para evaluar cualquier enseñanza de los programas. Una *Axiología* que se sustenta en el carácter del Dios revelado en la

⁸ Los fundadores de la denominación y el Seminario llegaron a Cuba procedentes de los EEUU, involucrados en las llamadas “Misiones de Fe”, las cuales tuvieron ciertas relaciones con el movimiento conservador fundamentalista; y dieron origen al evangelicalismo característico del Protestantismo Latinoamericano (Los autores Anthony y Benson, plantean que para el año en que muere Charles Finney (1875), el evangelicalismo se había convertido en la característica distintiva del Protestantismo Americano. Véase esta opinión en Michael J. Anthony y Warren S. Benson, *Exploring the History and Philosophy of Christian Education* (Grand Rapids: Kegrel, 2003): 217. Otra influencia teológica marcada en el Seminario Bautista de la Habana, puede encontrarse en la persona de su fundador, Moisés N. McCall, quien fue criticado por ciertas posturas eclesiológicas landmarkistas (véase este asunto en Leoncio Veguilla: Op. Cit. , 22). Por último, la institución recibió una fuerte influencia dispensacionalista premilenarista en la persona del profesor Domingo Fernández, quien fue heredero espiritual de McCall (véase sobre este asunto en Marco A. Ramos, *Historia del Protestantismo en Cuba* (San José: Caribe, 1986): 398).

⁹ Knight: Op. Cit. , 13.

¹⁰ Esto estaría en total congruencia a la forma en que la institución se auto-caracteriza, resaltando su ortodoxia doctrinal, la cual corresponde a una teología conservadora. Así se refleja en Leisy Mesa, *El Seminario en el Corazón de Nuestra Obra* (Tesis de Diploma, STBH, Habana, 2002): 91.

¹¹ El mismo George R. Knight considera la necesidad de buscar una filosofía educacional positiva sobre la base de la Cosmovisión Cristiana, en Knight: Op. Cit. , xiii.

Biblia; así como en su voluntad para el ser humano. De aquí se desprenden los valores que deben ser sostenidos en los programas educativos de la institución¹².

No caben dudas que existe una estrecha relación entre las creencias básicas que se sostienen y la forma en que se ven los componentes básicos educacionales (naturaleza del estudiante, rol del maestro, énfasis curricular, los más eficientes métodos instruccionales, etc.)¹³. Éste es un asunto que no debe ser soslayado por el Seminario Bautista de la Habana, ni por ninguna otra institución teológica.

Asumiendo un Modelo Misional para la Educación Teológica

A pesar de que los bautistas a lo largo de la historia han tenido sus pronunciamientos ocasionales en contra de la educación teológica formal¹⁴, motivados principalmente por sus reclamos de no hacer distinciones entre el clero y el laicado¹⁵, ellos han desarrollado múltiples instituciones de educación teológica. De hecho, esta denominación tiene varios de los más grandes Seminarios del mundo, en cuanto a número de estudiantes¹⁶. Aun en nuestra nación (Cuba), los Seminarios Bautistas son los de mayor matrícula.

Sin embargo, se puede constatar la existencia de diversos modelos de educación teológica en las diversas instituciones bautistas (y de otras denominaciones evangélicas), y la existencia de grandes debates alrededor de ellos, no existiendo un acuerdo definitivo en esta cuestión. Resulta conveniente hacerse la pregunta que alguien se formulara respecto a la manera de desplegar la educación teológica: “¿Si la realidad institucional pudiera ser rehecha según el deseo del corazón, cuál sería el ideal de escuela teológica?”¹⁷.

¹² Para la presentación de las categorías filosóficas según la cosmovisión cristiana bíblica, se ha seguido el modelo ofrecido por el programa de Doctorado en Filosofía de la Educación Teológica, ofrecido por SETECA, y cuya descripción aparece en “Filosofía del Programa”, enero 2007, <<http://phd.seteca.edu/filosofia.html>>.

¹³ Véase a Knight: Op. Cit. , 37.

¹⁴ Hart, D.G., y R. Albert Mohler, Jr., *Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996): 30. Material electrónico.

¹⁵ Ibid. , 32.

¹⁶ Ibid. , 10.

¹⁷ Banks: Op. Cit. , 1. En donde el autor cita a David Kelsey para introducir su exposición acerca de la manera en que los Seminarios despliegan la Educación Teológica.

Se debe considerar que la Biblia tiene mucho que decir en cuanto al modelo de educación teológica que podamos llevar a cabo. Siendo los bautistas una denominación con distintivo énfasis en la Biblia como regla de fe y práctica¹⁸, deben examinar nuevas alternativas de modelos de educación que se apeguen más a los principios bíblicos. Por esta razón proponemos que el Seminario Teológico Bautista de la Habana se disponga a reevaluar su proyección educativa, y presentar un nuevo modelo, acercándose al llamado “Modelo Misional”, el cual parece rescatar énfasis bíblicos descuidados en los Seminarios actuales.

Describiendo el Modelo Misional de Educación Teológica

En este modelo se presupone una educación teológica con la perspectiva de lo que Dios está haciendo en el mundo, según sus propósitos. Se piensa en la reflexión, entrenamiento y formación de carácter desde el mismo campo de la misión. Se comprende la educación teológica basada totalmente en el campo, y que abarca de alguna manera el “hacer lo que se estudia”¹⁹.

Este modelo pone su énfasis en la misión teológica, en el compañerismo en el ministerio, basado en la interpretación de la tradición y reflexión en la práctica con fuertes dimensiones espirituales y comunitarias. Desde esta perspectiva, la educación teológica está principalmente, aunque no exclusivamente, preocupada por el servicio real, informado y transformador del reino, y por tanto, principalmente enfocado en la adquisición de la obediencia cognitiva, espiritual – moral, y práctica²⁰.

Pautas para que el Seminario de la Habana Avance Hacia el Modelo Misional

1. *Reconsiderar el Entendimiento respecto a la Educación Teológica.* Es necesario que la institución entienda la educación teológica como una práctica real dentro de la misión de hacer discípulos (la Gran Comisión); ella es una dimensión de esa misión²¹. El enfoque misional implica que la capacitación que ofrece el Seminario no

¹⁸ Sobre el distintivo bautista de la autoridad bíblica, véase a Justo Anderson, *Sus Bases y Comienzos*, Tomo I en *Historia de los Bautistas* (Texas: Casa Bautista de Publicaciones, 1993): 51.

¹⁹ Banks: Op. Cit. , 142.

²⁰ Ibid. , 144.

²¹ Ibid. , 131.

será fundamentalmente “para el servicio futuro”, sino para entrenar a la persona “en y a través del ministerio real”. Se enfatiza el entrenamiento “en el servicio”²². La educación teológica debe “aumentar el ministerio” en progreso de la persona y no “preparar a la persona para el ministerio”. Esto consideraría la formación ministerial como un proceso y no como un programa²³. De la misma manera, es necesario que se tenga en cuenta que la Educación Teológica es una dimensión de la Educación Cristiana general (la cual incluye todo el aporte que se puede obtener de la familia, iglesia, etc.), y no como el más alto estado de ella²⁴.

2. *Reconsiderar la Manera en que Funciona la Institución.* El Modelo misional, siguiendo un enfoque bíblico de discipulado, entrenamiento, compañerismo e involucramiento de los colegas en la misión, plantea la necesidad de que los profesores (hermanos de más experiencia) ejerzan una labor de transferencia de vida más que de emisión de información²⁵. Ellos no sólo deben “presentar” la verdad sino “representar” la verdad²⁶. Ellos deben estar directamente involucrados en la experiencia práctica de la misión, junto a los estudiantes²⁷, y deben utilizar métodos conversacionales que den margen a la espontaneidad²⁸. Además, deben promover el trabajo en grupo, actuando como tutores y consultantes²⁹. Es necesario recordar que el Seminario de la Habana ha retenido una proyección neo-escolástica en cuanto al rol del profesor y el currículo, lo cual requiere urgente reevaluación. De la misma manera, el currículo no debe ser visto al

²² Ibid. , 132.

²³ Ibid. , 136. Esto resulta trascendental en la institución, la cual por casi un siglo ha tenido la visión de capacitar para el futuro Ministerio Pastoral, el cual se ejercía totalmente después de finalizados los estudios. De esta manera se acentuaba notablemente la diferencia “clero-laico” y el proceso general de clericalización y profesionalización. Actualmente hay una apertura en la institución en este aspecto, sin embargo, persisten rezagos de la mentalidad anterior. Todavía existen ciertas restricciones en el desempeño ministerial de los estudiantes, los cuales ven la graduación como el punto que permitirá el ejercicio pleno del ministerio (por supuesto, esta concepción ha sido transmitida por la institución).

²⁴ Ibid. , 157-158.

²⁵ Véase el estudio presentado por Banks respecto a los ejemplos de los profetas, Jesús y Pablo, en Ibid. , 171-172.

²⁶ Ibid. , 174.

²⁷ Ibid. , 185. Uno de los grandes problemas de los Seminarios es la gran separación que existe entre Seminario – Iglesia, Clase – Realidad. Esta situación se deja ver actualmente en el Seminario de la Habana.

²⁸ Ibid. , 179-181.

²⁹ Ibid. , 155, 194.

estilo Tomista, con énfasis en la acumulación de cursos y otros tipos de experiencias académicas³⁰, sino como un proceso total de reflexión crítica e integración. El currículo debe verse de manera holística, pues es “formativo” en el completo sentido del término. En el Seminario de la Habana, hasta este momento los currículos se conciben como grupos de materias y de contenidos específicos. Sin embargo, se deben tener en cuenta todas las actividades planificadas para la formación del estudiante. Razón tiene Banks al señalar que aunque los Seminarios hacen énfasis en sus declaraciones de misión acerca de capacitar “líderes-siervos”, sus currículos no contribuyen notablemente a esto³¹. También es importante que la institución considere ampliar su labor práctica y trabajo en comunidad. Hasta este momento existe una dicotomía muy pronunciada entre las clases teóricas (en los días de la semana) y la práctica de fin de semana³². Se requiere un vínculo mucho más estrecho explotando las variantes de proyectos investigativos y reflexión desde las realidades circundantes³³. Algo indispensable para que el modelo misional sea desarrollado en el Seminario de la Habana es el rescate del trabajo en grupos pequeños (al estilo de Jesús y Pablo), empleándose mentores entre los mismos estudiantes y profesores. De esta manera se progresa en conocimiento, moral y formación espiritual, trabajando en comunidad, lo cual ayuda a desarrollar las habilidades para la interacción y roles en la sociedad, aparte de fomentar la madurez cristiana³⁴.

3. *Reconsiderar el Alcance que puede lograr la Institución.* El Seminario Teológico de la Habana debe discernir la necesidad de extender su alcance por medio de la cooperación con otras instituciones y esfuerzos involucrados en la misión cristiana (por ejemplo, en la colaboración con institutos bíblicos y centros de capacitación de laicos,

³⁰ Banks: Op. Cit. , 223. Respecto a este asunto es útil chequear las características de los énfasis Tomistas en la educación evangélica en Miller, Randolph Crump, *Theologies of Religious Education* (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1995): 36-58. Material electrónico.

³¹ Ibid. , 224. Consideramos que ese es el caso del Seminario Bautista de la Habana.

³² Es bueno chequear el señalamiento de Banks respecto a esta dicotomía, en su análisis del Modelo Vocacional. Véase Ibid. , 36.

³³ Ibid. , 168. En este sentido, los estudiantes de las extensiones y los que cursan los programas a distancia tienen algo más de ventaja por cuanto reciben instrucciones y entrenamiento desde su propio contexto práctico, permitiéndole esto las reflexiones desde su propio entorno.

³⁴ Ibid. , 123.

evitando un ambiente competitivo)³⁵. También debe orientar y ayudar a las iglesias en el cumplimiento de su rol y funciones³⁶. Además, sus programas de postgrado y su personal calificado deben comenzar a mirar más allá de lo que ocurre en el ámbito teológico de la institución y ayudar en otras áreas de las realidades sociales³⁷.

Creo que respecto al hecho de que el Seminario de la Habana asuma un modelo misional de educación teológica, caben las palabras con las que Banks concluye su propuesta, citando a Alan Jones. “*Yo supongo que estoy pidiendo nada menos que la conversión de los Seminarios*”³⁸. Esta propuesta va dirigida en esa dirección.

Asumiendo una Educación Teocéntrica Balanceada

El conocido educador Roberto W. Pazmiño define la educación como: “*El proceso de compartir contenido con personas en el contexto de su comunidad y sociedad*”³⁹. Él plantea que independientemente de los distintivos de la educación cristiana respecto a la educación general, ella también contempla los tres elementos claves: contenido, personas y contexto⁴⁰. Pazmiño hace referencia a la obra del educador y teorizador curricular de los años treinta del siglo pasado Hollis L. Caswell, quien describió los intereses de los estudiantes (personas), las funciones sociales (contexto), y el conocimiento organizado (contenido), como elementos que son el centro de las

³⁵ Banks explica este aspecto del modelo misional a la luz del mandato de la Gran Comisión (Véase Ibid. , 152-153). Esto sería trascendental para el Seminario de la Habana, por cuanto la institución estuvo a punto de cerrar sus puertas a finales de la década de los 90, debido al auge de los institutos bíblicos para laicos y Centros locales, que ofrecían mejores alternativas que una institución estancada. Esto repercutió en cierto resentimiento entre estas instituciones, lo cual es negativo y daña la Obra del Señor. Una reconsideración en este aspecto se hace necesaria.

³⁶ Ibid. , 155.

³⁷ Ibid. , 190. Se sabe que el Seminario de la Habana está proyectando el lanzamiento de una revista oficial y varios suplementos teológicos con el objetivo de ofrecer asistencia y orientación a las iglesias y la sociedad cubana, desde el marco de la cosmovisión cristiana (sobre este asunto, véase a Abdiel Morfa, *Proyecciones de la Planificación estratégica del STBH* (Habana: STBH, 2007): 2). Esto correspondería con cierto énfasis del modelo misional.

³⁸ Banks: Op. Cit. , 247.

³⁹ Roberto W. Pazmiño, *God our Teacher, Theological Basics in Christian Education* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academia, 2001): 141.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

diversas perspectivas educativas de la educación⁴¹. Los que enfatizan los intereses en los estudiantes propugnan un enfoque Homocéntrico; los que prefieren las funciones sociales sostienen un enfoque sociocéntrico o comunitario; mientras los que dan mayor importancia a la organización del material, insisten en el enfoque en el contenido⁴². Caswell planteaba la necesidad de hacer combinaciones sabias de énfasis, tal como hace un buen químico⁴³.

Varios educadores cristianos (entre los que se destaca el mismo Pazmiño) insisten en la necesidad de que la educación teológica (y cristiana en general); así como todas las áreas de la vida, se centren en el Dios Trino revelado en la Biblia, quien se ha dado a conocer a los hombres para establecer una relación especial con ellos. De esta manera propone una enseñanza “Teocéntrica”, la cual ofrece una alternativa de la visión cristiana del mundo, poniendo a Dios como punto de partida, y sin ignorar el conocimiento discernido en la naturaleza, razón, tradición, historia, intuición e imaginación. Además, con la postura “Teocéntrica” se sugiere la necesidad de un método holístico que involucre toda la vida creada, incluyendo personas, comunidades y todo lo demás. Este método también infiere que su centro es Dios y su revelación, tanto en la educación como en toda la existencia⁴⁴. Al método también se le ha llamado “Trinidad Educativa”, indicando que los tres elementos esenciales de la educación son: contenido, personas y contexto comunitario, los cuales se observan en función de la plena revelación de Dios⁴⁵. Se considera que la Trinidad Educativa es un formato esencial para orientar el pensamiento y práctica de la educación cristiana. Es un formato basado en el principio que afirma que Dios está en el centro de la vida, y por lo tanto, en la educación⁴⁶. Pazmiño insiste en

⁴¹ Roberto W. Pazmiño, *Principios y Práctica de la Educación Cristiana, una Perspectiva Evangélica* (Nashville: Editorial Caribe, 1995): 17.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 17-19.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 23-24.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

todo momento en la necesidad de buscar el debido balance entre los componentes de la “Trinidad Educativa”, evitando reduccionismos⁴⁷.

***Pautas para que el Seminario de la Habana Logre Balancear los
Componentes de la Trinidad Educativa***

1. *Evitar los excesivos énfasis en los “contenidos”*. El Seminario Bautista de la Habana ha heredado el sistema educativo prevaleciente en el continente Latinoamericano, el cual está caracterizado por su trasfondo neo-escolástico. Como se ha visto, este modelo representa al sistema tradicional de enseñanza, en el que se enfatizan los contenidos curriculares y el rol protagónico del maestro, quien actúa como emisor de conocimientos, dejando al alumno en una posición de receptor de información⁴⁸. Entre los educadores que criticaron esta herencia neo-escolástica que ha matizado la educación teológica del continente se encuentra Paulo Freire, quien se pronunció en contra de que las relaciones educadores-educandos tuvieran naturaleza narrativa, discursiva y disertadora. Él planteó que en dicha narración de contenidos estaba implícita la presencia de un sujeto (educador) y de un objeto pasivo (educando). El contenido narrado no tenía nada que ver con la experiencia existencial de los educandos. En vez de comunicarse, el educador hace “depósitos” en los educandos, quienes reciben, memorizan y repiten. A este sistema le llamó concepción “bancaria” de la educación⁴⁹, al cual consideró como una visión distorsionada de la educación, con ausencia de creatividad, transformación y verdadero saber. Respecto a esta crítica, Daniel S. Schipani expresó:

Freire saca a la luz los presupuestos básicos del modelo “bancario” y expone sus elementos distorsionantes: la dicotomía entre conciencia y mundo, la

⁴⁷ Para una exposición amplia de cada aspecto de la Trinidad Educativa; así como las sugerencias para lograr el adecuado balance, Véase a Robert W. Pazmiño, *God our Teacher, Theological Basics in Christian Education* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academia, 2001): 141-145.

⁴⁸ Véase a Knight, Op. Cit. , 54-56.

⁴⁹ Véase a Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum Books, 1993): 1. Material electrónico.

contradicción entre educador y educando, y la ausencia de diálogo y mutualidad en el proceso y el contexto educativo”⁵⁰.

Es necesario que el Seminario de la Habana renuncie a su tradicional sistema bancario de enseñanza, por cuanto desde el punto de vista de la educación teológica, el sobre-énfasis en el contenido y el correspondiente descuido de la vida de los creyentes y su contexto trae resultados inadecuados.

2. *Enfocarse más en los alumnos.* Como bien aprecia Pazmiño, las válidas preocupaciones por la capacitación bíblica, teológica y litúrgica para el ministerio cristiano futuro, deben complementarse por la consideración de la participación de las personas en la educación cristiana presente en su más ancho contexto social y de comunidad⁵¹. También es importante ver que el entendimiento no debe estar limitado al intelecto. Un entendimiento holístico del aprendizaje requiere atención a las emociones⁵², intenciones, actividades físicas, carácter y formación espiritual⁵³. Razón tenía Freire al destacar la importancia de tener en cuenta a los pupilos a la hora de conformar los currículos, no dejando estos únicamente en las manos de “especialistas”⁵⁴. El Seminario de la Habana debe comenzar a pensar con seriedad en la consideración del alumno a la hora de desarrollar sus prácticas instruccionales, empleando un sistema de mentores profesor-alumno, que se centre en la formación del estudiante.

⁵⁰ Daniel S. Schipani, *Paulo Freire, Educador Cristiano* (Grand Rapids: Libros Desafía, 2002), pp. 20-21. Este autor afirma que Freire toma los conceptos de “biofilia” y “necrofilia” de Erich Fromm. Freire consideraba que la educación “bancaria” era necrófila porque reducía a las personas a meros objetos, bloqueando el crecimiento, promoviendo la mecanización y la idea de que conocer es poseer y controlar. Este tipo de educación suprime o lesiona la creatividad.

⁵¹ Robert W. Pazmiño, *God our Teacher, Theological Basics in Christian Education* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academia, 2001): 142.

⁵² Sobre esta temática es recomendable considerar los criterios de Daniel Goleman respecto a la llamada “Alfabetización Emocional”, en donde resalta la importancia de considerar a nuestros alumnos en el área afectiva, ayudándolos a desarrollar las denominadas “Competencias Emocionales”. Véanse estos tópicos en Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*, (New York: Batam Books, 1997): 146-180. Material electrónico.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ana María Araújo y Donaldo Macedo, *The Paulo Friere Reader* (New York: Continuum, 2001): 243-244. Material Electrónico.

3. *Considerar más seriamente el contexto.* Se puede observar como el educador Freire enfatizó la necesidad de la reflexión del alumno para que se sintiera como actor en el mundo, como hacedor de su cultura⁵⁵. Él otorgó gran importancia a la contextualización de la educación⁵⁶. Se considera que no hay vías más efectivas para educar teológicamente a las personas que el uso de la enseñanza en “el propio contexto de los alumnos”, lo cual permite la transferencia efectiva de vida, el fuerte sistema relacional, la alta relevancia del mensaje bíblico, y el impacto significativo del medio⁵⁷. El extraordinario movimiento creciente de grupos pequeños caseros o células que se ha desplegado en el continente Latinoamericano y particularmente en Cuba, así lo demuestra⁵⁸.

Consideramos que el Seminario de la Habana hace bien en considerar las palabras de Pazmiño:

*“La Trinidad Educacional nos llama a atender al contenido, las personas y el contexto en maneras que no reduzcan nuestro enfoque a justamente uno de estos elementos esenciales de la planificación y diseño educacional.”*⁵⁹.

Sin dudas, este balance evitará las distorsiones características de las filosofías educativas actuales.

⁵⁵ Ibid. , 6.

⁵⁶ Freire insistió en varios de sus escritos en la necesidad de conocer y adaptarse al contexto de los alumnos. Él mismo, después del exilio, volvió a visitar todo Brasil en busca de conocer bien a la gente que pretendía educar. Él le llamó a esto “Reaprender Brasil” Vease Araújo y Macedo: Op. Cit.; p. 234.

⁵⁷ Véase a Paul R. Gupta y Sherwood G. Lingenfelter, *Breaking Tradition to Accomplish Vision, Training Leaders for a Church Planting Movement* (Winona Lake: BMH Books, 2006): 25-31; 159-171. En donde se expone la importancia de los entrenamientos informales contextualizados. También sería útil chequear a Mike Berg y Paul Pretil, *The Gospel People* (Miami: MARC, World Vision International, 1992): 149-156. En donde se habla de la contextualización bajo el título “Un Cristo para Latinoamérica”. También sería interesante estudiar los análisis de Schipani sobre Globalización y Contextualización en Schipani: Op. Cit. , 89-102.

⁵⁸ Véase a Alberto González, *Un Modelo Educativo Contextualizado: Las Casas Cultos* (Habana: STBH, 2003): 1-8.

⁵⁹ Schipani: Op. Cit. ; p. 145.

Asumiendo una Educación Integral

Cuando hablamos de una Educación Integral nos estamos refiriendo a aquella que abarca todas las áreas de la vida de nuestros alumnos. Nos referimos a una forma de crear aprendizaje en las esferas cognoscitiva, afectiva y psicomotora de los estudiantes, o como más comúnmente se conoce: el saber, ser y hacer de los educandos⁶⁰.

La característica distintiva de la educación teológica latinoamericana, y particularmente la correspondiente al Seminario Bautista de la Habana, hace un fuerte énfasis en los aspectos cognoscitivos del aprendizaje, sobre los elementos afectivos y psicomotores⁶¹. Esta distorsión no resulta conveniente de ninguna manera. William R. Yuont señala acertadamente que cuando sobre-enfatizamos los aspectos del saber (lo que pienso), eso nos lleva a un “intelectualismo”; cuando resaltamos desmedidamente los elementos afectivos (lo que siento), eso nos lleva a un “emocionalismo”; mientras que cuando sobrevaloramos el área psicomotora (lo que hago), eso nos puede llevar a un “hiper-activismo agotador”⁶².

Pautas para que el Seminario de la Habana Logre una Educación Integral

1. *Buscar adiestramiento en la elaboración de los llamados “Objetivos Instruccionales”*. Un objetivo instruccional puede ser definido como una declaración del tipo de desempeño que puede ser esperado de los estudiantes después de la lección, unidad o curso⁶³. Ellos no son más que los cambios de comportamiento observados en el aprendiz, que se dan como resultado del proceso de aprendizaje⁶⁴. Resulta muy importante la adquisición de habilidades en la redacción de estos objetivos a fin de poder impactar positivamente la vida del estudiante en las diversas áreas.

⁶⁰ Roberto Kasper, *Educación Bancaria vs Formación Integral* (Material electrónico inédito): 15.

⁶¹ Este sobre-énfasis se divisa en el Seminario de la Habana, al estudiar los sumarios de las diversas asignaturas, los cuales dejan ver que los objetivos plasmados, actividades programas y evaluaciones, tienen incidencia en un 90% en los niveles del dominio cognoscitivo.

⁶² William R. Yount, *Created to Learn* (Nashville: Broadman & Colman Publisher, 1996): 253-255.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 132. Los objetivos instruccionales se enfocan más en el estudiante que en el contenido; más en lo que los estudiantes harán que en lo que harán los maestros. Estos objetivos no son descripciones de la enseñanza, sino indicadores finales de que los alumnos han aprendido lo que se intentó enseñarles. Es por esta razón que a los objetivos instruccionales también se les llama “Objetivos de Conducta”.

⁶⁴ Carmen María Galo de Lara, *Tecnología Didáctica, Objetivos y Planeamiento* (Guatemala: Piedra Santa, 2000):10.

2. *Redactar objetivos instruccionales para cada materia, que en forma balanceada abarquen los tres dominios del aprendizaje y sus respectivos niveles*⁶⁵. Esto permitirá que la institución (con sus profesores), pueda planear mejor sus sesiones de clases y programas a fin de dar una formación más integral a los alumnos. Hasta el momento el énfasis recae sobre los elementos cognoscitivos. Se impone un mayor trabajo en los dominios afectivo y psicomotor respectivamente.

3. *Buscar la adecuada correspondencia entre los objetivos, las actividades programadas y las evaluaciones*. No tiene sentido que se redacten bien los objetivos y las actividades que se desarrollen en el aula estén desconectadas de estos. De la misma manera, la evaluación no puede ocurrir arbitrariamente, sino guiada por las metas y objetivos instruccionales⁶⁶.

El Seminario debe lograr abarcar los tres dominios en cada una de las materias, a fin de lograr el perfil deseado en el egresado de la institución, habiendo recibido una formación balanceada e integral.

Conclusiones

Se puede afirmar que las filosofías educativas que se llevan a cabo en cualquier institución de enseñanza, incluyen la organización de toda la práctica instruccional, articulando los objetivos, conjunto de contenidos, estrategias metodológicas, criterios de evaluación y las necesidades e intereses de los alumnos y comunidad educativa⁶⁷. Una pedagogía apropiada sería aquella que responda satisfactoriamente a las interrogantes de qué, cómo, cuándo, y dónde se lleva a cabo el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje⁶⁸.

En el presente trabajo se ha presentado una posible filosofía educacional ideal para el Seminario Bautista de la Habana “R. A. Ocaña”. Para lograr ese propósito se definieron las posibles bases filosóficas de la institución (las cuales afectan cada

⁶⁵ Para un resumen de cada dominio y sus niveles, véase a Yount: Op. Cit. , 141-151.

⁶⁶ Ibid. ,133-134. También recomendamos chequear la exposición de Ana María Elorreaga en el material de clases de la unidad 5, “Evaluación Instruccional, ¿Qué tan bien aprendieron?”, en la materia MA 1505, “*Diseño de Currículo e Instrucción Bíblica*”.

⁶⁷ Lourdes Cartaya y María E. Grenier, *La Programación Curricular* (Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación, 2004), p. 2.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

programa), siguiendo las categorías de la Metafísica, Epistemología y Axiología, y esto, desde la perspectiva del cristianismo bíblico conservador. Se presentó el modelo misional como la alternativa más factible para que la institución desarrolle la educación teológica, ofreciéndose pautas concretas para avanzar la institución según este modelo. También se enfatizó la importancia de asumir un sistema educativo Teocéntrico con el adecuado balance entre el contenido, alumno y contexto. Por último, se plasmó la importancia de que el Seminario despliegue una educación integral, cuidando el equilibrio entre el saber, ser y hacer de los estudiantes.

No nos caben dudas de que si el Seminario Bautista de la Habana asume una filosofía educacional sustentada por bases filosóficas acordes totalmente a la revelación divina; siguiendo un modelo misional de la educación teológica, centrado en Dios (Teocéntrico) y enfatizando la formación integral del estudiando; la institución se desarrollará de manera exitosa.

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About the Author



Israel Martin Lemos. Nacido en la Habana, Cuba, en 1974. Graduado de Ingeniería en Telecomunicaciones. Graduado de Bachiller y Maestría en Teología del Seminario Teológico Bautista de la Habana. Estudiante del programa doctoral de SETECA. Amplio desempeño en diversas áreas del liderazgo evangélico cubano, incluyendo el pastorado de iglesias bautistas, la dirección denominacional, la dirección de ministerios evangelísticos y los trabajos profesoraes-educativos. Actualmente me desempeño como Director Académico y profesor del Seminario Bautista de la Habana. Estoy casado con Dodanim Rodríguez, y Dios nos ha bendecido con tres hijos.

Israel Martín Lemos. Born in Havana, Cuba in 1974. Holds an Engineering degree in the area of telecommunications, as well as a Bachelor's and Master's in Theology from the Baptist Theological Seminary in Havana. Currently studying in the doctoral program in theological education at the Central American Theological Seminary (SETECA). Widely involved in diverse areas of Cuban Evangelical leadership, including pastoring Baptist churches, denominational leadership, leadership of evangelistic ministries, as well as education and teaching. Currently the Academic Director and professor at the Baptist Seminary of Havana, Married to Dodanim Rodriguez and God has blessed them with three children.

Qualitative Data Analysis and the Transforming Moment¹

By Donald Ratcliff

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Abstract: Insight as an important and repeated component of most qualitative research studies. Yet insight is often a vague concept that is not well articulated in textbooks and research reports. The late James Loder of Princeton University posited a theologically-based process he termed “the transforming moment” that identifies predictable phases in a wide variety of transformations, including those of a psychological, scientific, and spiritual nature. This process corresponds at many levels with the role of insight in qualitative research. As a result, careful examination of Loder’s outline of the transformative process can help clarify what is meant by insight and how it informs research activities.

In a class related to qualitative research, I was explaining how insight as well as reflective thought was involved in generating hypotheses and grounded theory. A student asked me this question: “Will you describe how insight happens?” I was stumped. The answer seemed painfully obvious—everyone knows what insight is, and has experienced it at some point, yet I also realized that it is a complex activity that eludes full description; it just happens.

I thought a lot about that question over the next few weeks, and eventually concluded that James Loder’s concept of the “transforming moment” might have something to contribute to understanding insight. Indeed his perspectives may significantly inform the entire process of qualitative data analysis.²

The Transforming Moment

For about 30 years of his professional life, subsequent to a deeply transforming moment of his own in 1970, James Loder repeatedly emphasized the importance of the process of transformation and described a five-phase process. As Professor of the Philosophy of Christian Education at Princeton University, he emphasized the centrality of the human spirit in this progression, the aspect of self that emphasizes relationality

¹ Adapted from *Transformation*, v. 25, no. 2-3 (April/July, 2008), pp. 116-133, used by permission.

² The methodologies described here are primarily adapted from the work of Patton (2003) and LeCompte, Preissle and Tesch (1993), although not exclusively from these sources.

(Loder and Neidhardt 1992, 10) that can be viewed as the image of God (Loder 1998, 110), and that constitutes “the uninvited guest in every meaningful knowing event and the dynamic that unobtrusively directs and shapes them all” (Loder 1989, 2). He found a five-step pattern in the work of the human spirit that was relatively consistent across many aspects of human history: major scientific advances, ancient Greek insights, psychotherapy, poetry and other forms of “knowing” in the fine arts, social and cultural transformations, human development processes such as identity formation and personality transformation, religious conversion, and other spiritual experiences.

The most definitive consideration of this process is found in Loder’s book *The Transforming Moment*, now in a second edition (1989), although additional detail related to this process is to be found in both earlier and subsequent work. Five phases are considered in detail, all of which are important aspects of transformation in Loder’s perspective, yet each may be understood in slightly different ways depending upon the aspect of life described.

The first phase involves a *contextually situated conflict* that is persistently borne by the person (or, presumably, by society when applied at the cultural level). Conflict can be healthy, indeed essential to transformation that is more than superficial change. Loder (1989) uses the idea of conflict as being more than a momentary struggle. It is an ongoing opposition—usually intrapsychic in nature—where the person is driven to find adequate resolution, even though the options may not be understood at all. Conflict is contextually situated; and it is vital to understand the various aspects of context of the conflict to better understand the nature of the conflict. Conflict initiates the process of knowing which involves transformation.

The subsequent phase involves an interlude characterized by *scanning*. Solutions to the conflict are sought, either overtly or subtly, consciously or unconsciously. This may involve contemplative wondering, a testing of the boundaries, internal dialogue with an “unseen teacher,” or immersed exploration of possible connections and combinations of meanings (Loder, 1979).

Insight, intuitively experienced, marks the third phase of the transformation process. This is a constructive act of the imagination, bringing into cognitive association two factors previously thought to be unrelated. This “constructive resolution” or “striking juxtaposition” reveals a likely order of things that was previously hidden. In his earliest

consideration of this stage, Loder (1979) emphasized the celebratory aspect of this experience, including the awakening to the transformation of everything ultimately.

Release and redirection of energy constitutes a fourth phase of this process, in which learning from the insight provided in the third phase is the focus. This may also involve conviction, awakening, and numinous experience, as the person becomes more receptive to the context and to self. The tension built in the first two phases is now released because of the insight achieved, and the consequent “re-patterning” of the original conflict.

The final phase involves *interpretation and verification* wherein the insight achieved is tested for coherence—being clearly connected to the original conflict—and also tested for correspondence—public demonstration of the insight to determine the degree to which the insight provides an adequate solution or understanding. Insights are not always trustworthy, and thus verification is important to the process, even though it concludes the transformative sequence.

It is not my intention to suggest that the five phase “transformative logic” parallels some artificially constructed “five phases in research” or even a five-part organization to qualitative data analysis. Rather, I will examine each aspect of qualitative data analysis that may relate to one or more aspects of the transformation process. Each of the phases—and indeed the transforming process as a whole—can help provide better understanding of qualitative analysis as an entity, contributing to the accuracy and trustworthiness of the products of analysis. Qualitative data analysis involves transformation of the researcher and, ideally, of the reader/practitioner as well.

Data Analysis and Data Collection

For those who are more familiar with quantitative research, it may seem odd that data analysis can be relatively simultaneous with data collection in qualitative research. While a qualitative study often occurs over several months, or even years, of research, data analysis is expected to begin during the first day or two of data collection. Many textbooks provide dire warnings of the folly of allowing data to accumulate for months. “I have several hundred pages of field notes, now where do I begin the analysis?” is a plaintive cry voiced in many such texts. The question is a clear-cut warning; it was a serious mistake to wait very long before beginning the analysis.

The methodological scheme of qualitative research is at once more complex and simpler than quantitative research. Almost any quantitative text will provide a five, six, or perhaps seven-phase outline of how to go about a research study. For example, such a study might involve these steps: form the questions and hypotheses, locate a random or representative sample of people with whom you will test the hypotheses, conduct the research using the appropriate instrument/s, tabulate the responses, apply the appropriate statistical tests, make conclusions from the results of the statistical tests, and suggest applications and limitations of the study. When all the steps are completed, the research is over, “all but the paper work.”

A schematic of qualitative research seems much simpler. Hypotheses and questions may or may not be involved in the preparation, although identifying respondents is crucial (often selected for a specific purpose or for convenience, but rarely a random sample). From that initial start only two more phases predominate (see figure 1). First, collect the data, writing down what was observed and said—perhaps with some personal notations about the situation, people, and researcher. Second, analyze the field notes for trends and other patterns. After a reasonable amount of time (typically, but not always, specified in the prospectus), write up the results to finish the task. One might say, “How simple!”

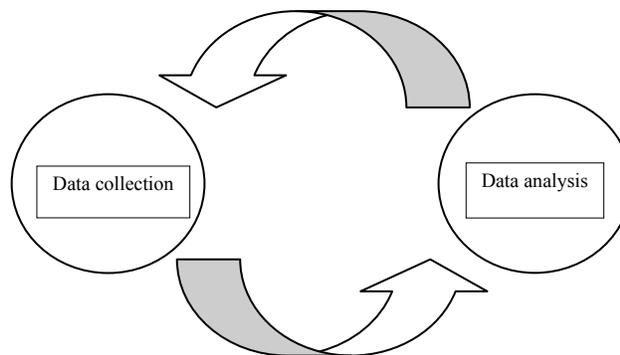


Figure 1. The Qualitative Research Cycle

Did I say “simple?” Ignoring the complex issues related to collecting and recording findings, the data must be analyzed carefully. Words, not numbers, are the data.

They are words that are rarely, if ever, counted, but analyzed sometimes one-by-one, at other times by phrases or sentences, and perhaps in other ways as well. There are no statistical tests that can be run to give a precise result for the study. Words can be examined in a wide variety of ways, unlike the simple counting of numerical data. The initial examination of data may suggest categories, trends, and connections between categories of what is observed or what is heard in interviews. With time, more advanced analysis may be possible, including the generating of theory, diagrams and matrices, or other advanced methods. It is possible that analysis will indicate the need to fine-tune the direction of the research or the methods being used. Analysis can also reveal the possible influence of the researcher on what is being studied, as well as permit comparisons with other sites and other researchers who may be involved in a large-scale qualitative research project.

The cycle repeats itself again and again—data collection, data analysis, data collection, data analysis—dozens, perhaps even hundreds of times. For some, this cycle may continue for several years, until there is enough information, the researcher is exhausted, or something else brings a halt to the research. The research books state that the process continues until “saturation,” i.e., the data no longer provide new information. Yet a creative researcher can always find additional aspects of an interesting issue to examine in a new way or with some new group of people. I know of one researcher who has spent about a half dozen years in active research of his topic, and he indicated to me he could spend that much time and more considering additional components. His difficulty is not inadequate planning or execution of the plan; it is a problem of a fertile mind that is highly inquisitive and constantly finding new and interesting aspects of the groups he chose to consider that are worthy of study. Only the arbitrary deadline for completing his degree was able to curtail his efforts.

The two alternating steps often involve intense effort and much time. What seems quick and simple is often time-consuming and exhausting. Loder perceives a similar pattern of transformation, with the net result being change; the person is significantly different after experiencing the five-phase process. The process of transformation may take time—sometimes even years, he suggests. Much anxiety and stress can be involved during the initial conflict stage, while the mid-point of the progression, insight, is followed by expenditure of energy that has been generated. As if that were not enough,

the final phase involves testing and application, which can involve another significant expenditure of time. And yet the whole process may also occur within a much shorter time frame, perhaps even just a few minutes.

Loder's theory describes both major and minor transformations: from spiritual conversion to becoming more fully one's self in interaction (Loder 1989, 64) and even the experience of creating or listening to poetry (Loder 1989, 49-50). Similarly, some cycles of research are major shifts, others are minor, and still others involve applying and/or testing, which is the last phase in Loder's progression.

The two central, recurrent phases of qualitative research, and the contrast of the person before and after the transforming moment, is an apparently superficial comparison that can be made between Loder's theology of transformation and the process involved in qualitative research. Even more significant is the congruence between the role of insight in qualitative data analysis and the five phases in the transformative process.

The Initial Analysis of Qualitative Data

Qualitative data is often, though not always, in the form of field notes. Notes are related to activities, conversations, observations in the environment, and records of comments made during interviews. In addition, objects ("artifacts") from the location of the research may be studied, such as manuals, brochures, displayed artwork, and the like. Increasingly, other forms of data are collected, such as video, photographs, and audio recordings. The progression reviewed below follows the progression synthesized and outlined by Ratcliff (2002) from the review of a wide variety of qualitative research textbooks and individual research studies.³

Review of the Data

The first step in analysis is to review what has been written or collected through the day, while creating additional notes of clearly recalled but inadequately recorded details of what occurred. Memos may be made about personal feelings, hunches and impressions about what is unfolding, and thoughts about the methodologies used during the day. The latter may be taken from sheer memory or from notations in the margins of

³ Ratcliff, D. E. (2000). Analysis of field notes and other data sources. Accessed March 12, 2008 at <http://qualitative-research.ratcliffs.net/initialanalysis.pdf>

field notes. Thus it is vital that the analysis follow very soon after the data is collected; preferably the same day or within 24 hours if at all possible.

Video, audio, and photographic records also may be reviewed, although the researcher may be able to delay analysis of these, as they are a fairly complete record of what they encode. In some cases, a complete transcript of video and audio materials will be made, which is likely to be expensive or very time consuming. An alternative is to simply listen to audio or watch the video and do analysis directly from the media. Keeping a careful record of the time when data was collected will help in locating an important notation in field notes, a key quotation in an audio recording, or a relevant video segment at a later time.

The review of data is perhaps most like the scanning phase of Loder's schematic, although there is also the possibility of conflict and insight during this process as well. However, data review is perhaps best thought of as preparing the research for possible conflict in subsequent phases of the analysis. Scanning for potential conflict does not fit Loder's approach very well, nor is this likely to be the conscious goal of the researcher. Data review does, however, prepare the researcher for locating trends and patterns in the data, that when located may produce conflict in the process of teasing out the exact nature of those emergent components, as well as additional scanning of the data for potential insight.

Determining the Unit of Analysis and Coding the Data

A second step in qualitative data analysis is to determine the unit of analysis in the field notes or media being analyzed. For example, a phrase, sentence, or paragraph of field notes may be the unit being considered. Similarly, one second or one minute of video or audio may be the unit for media. On the other hand, the unit could be a particular event or topic of conversation. Once a unit is chosen and the researcher has conducted some analysis using that unit, the decision may be made that another unit is preferable. Perhaps a minute of time contains too much information to be adequately analyzed. It may even be that the unit must be each frame of a video or each word of an audio recording and field notes. This decision involves a bit of trial and error. Try not to change the unit after the first day or two as it becomes harder to compare after the change.

Qualitative research books often speak of “coding” field notes. This involves an abbreviation or word that describes a given unit. Using single letters or numbers as codes probably is not a good idea, as it is easy to forget what letters and numbers stand for over time, especially if a code is not often used. To find a good code for a unit of data, one should ask “What is this?” or “What is happening?” during a video or in field notes. In contrast, the researcher is more likely to ask “What’s the idea being communicated?” to find codes in an interview. More than one code may be used for a given unit. Try not to read anything into the data; just represent what is seen or heard with one or more words or abbreviations. Try to develop a code for anything that might be important.

Some people use pre-existing codes, such as Flanders’ (1970) categories of teaching behaviors. If a theory is an important framework for a research study, it may suggest the use of some codes over others. But I often encourage people to develop new codes rather than using existing codes or theories, at least at the beginning of research, to help sensitize the researcher to as many aspects of the situation as possible, or at least those aspects relevant to the study, yet missing in existing coding schemes.

Both the unit and codes that are developed are likely to be the source of potential conflicts leading to insight, in Loder’s progression of transformation; thus it seems crucial to test these to find what unit is most functional, and what codes best reflect the data. Thus trial and error with the unit of analysis is an important step in the analytic process. Codes found subsequent to determining the best unit of analysis are likely to conflict—codes often conceptually overlap one another (they tend not to be mutually exclusive)—and thus codes become more precise as the researcher experiments with alternative codings. Codes can and should be refined, new codes added to existing codes, and sometimes codes need to be removed. No coding scheme is perfect, but particularly using pre-existing coding schemes can be problematic because they may not fit the new situation as well as they did the original context in which they were developed. There is always a danger of constraining and thus distorting the understanding of data by the use of pre-existing or inadequate codes.

Loder alludes to these possibilities in the context of discussing transformation in counseling:

Therapeutic knowing . . . is subject to characteristic perversities, most commonly the reduction of personal uniqueness to ‘the theory.’ This is certainly not to say that theory will not help in the discovery and recovery of one’s uniqueness, but it is a violation of the knowing event so central to the human spirit to assert that no matter what may appear ‘you must believe the theory.’ (Loder 1989, 62-63)

Coding is an ongoing activity throughout a research study, as new data may indicate the need to revise codes. As might be suggested by Loder’s comments, it is important to not be bound by theory or assumptions as one codes data; emergent data is the preferred approach for most research studies. It is also likely that some data (most likely early data) will need to be recoded, perhaps even multiple times, as code understandings shift, new codes introduced, and some codes discarded.

Development of Categories

Codes are often just short abbreviations that stand for categories. In my own research of children in a hallway, I used “li” for lines of children in the hallway, and “cl” for clusters of children standing around talking to one another. But sometimes two or more codes become a category. For example, raised eyebrows and a slight tilt of the head downward could be separate codes. However, often these things occur together, and can denote skepticism, a category resulting from two coinciding codes. It must be admitted, however, that the division between a code and a category is a bit arbitrary, and most of the time a code is also a category. In some cases a code as an embryonic category; the code may “grow up” to be part of something bigger (the category), but sometimes the code is already a category.

Regardless, categories involve definitions. You define categories, and those definitions make it easier to locate additional examples of the categories. As categories are filled out with additional examples from ongoing data collection and analysis, definitions, as well as codes and categories, may be revised and thus be more precise and more clearly represent the data. Definitions of categories can become more mutually exclusive (they overlap less with one another) and more exhaustive (represent more of the collected data) with time, the result of regular examination of field notes, interview comments, and other data.

As categories and definitions of categories improve, it is important to track the revision process and the reasons for the changes made. Categories and definitions of categories should be changed when existing forms inadequately represent the data, but it is easy to forget exactly why changes were made. Keep good notes about how and why you make revisions and do other aspects of analysis.

With time, some categories are likely to become more inclusive and others more exclusive. More inclusive categories may reflect several other categories. In my research, I found that the “ceremonies” children performed in a school hallway could be subdivided into several varieties: lines, clusters, and phalanxes (walking side by side). Thus “ceremonies” is a more inclusive category, with three subordinate categories. The *subordinate* categories provide more detail about standard categories; they reveal categories within categories. As a result, they provide greater precision in the analysis.

On the other hand, I also distinguished group-centered “ceremonies” with more individualized “rituals,” such as wall-rubbing and doorway touching. Rituals and ceremonies point to a broader category, that of spirituality, because both implied some sort of transcendent meaning for the child (clusters and phalanxes were identified with friendships, lines with external control). These broader categories can be termed “*superordinate*” because they reflect more of the data as well as several regular categories. Superordinate categories are important because they provide a larger framework for understanding the data and the study as a whole. When using a grounded theory design, in which theory is generated from the data of a research study, multiple levels of superordinate categories often will eventually reflect the central components (“axial categories”) of the theory that is developed. In my research study, latent emergent spirituality became my central category that included most, if not all, of the other categories.

When developing categories at any level, be careful to connect them with the original data from which they are derived. One may simply write codes on printed copies of field notes, or add a code using “markup” in Word. Qualitative research software such as Ethnograph or Atlas TI can also be used. Notations of time in field notes are essential. When audio or video is in the form of computer files, relative time is usually provided on computer media players. Also keep track of the *actual* time when videos and audio were made, to more readily locate a desired file as well as relative location within the file. On-

screen notations of time in minutes and seconds can be very helpful with videos. [See Ratcliff, 2003 for more details on making good video and audio recordings in research.]

Time links between data and analytic categories make it easier to go back and see how categories originally developed. What may be seen initially as a good example of a given category may later be seen as peripheral. To be peripheral is not to be bad; outlying examples of a category are crucial to defining the limits of a category.

The creating of categories is a complex, seemingly never-ending process when one is in the early phases of a research study. Defining where one category ends and another begins is not easy, and often requires considerable trial and error. Similarly, deciding what categories are superordinate and subordinate also takes time and effort. Sometimes such decisions create much conflict, as one wrestles with questions such as, “Is this a superordinate category I am seeing, that includes other categories, or is it a completely new category?” Scanning the other categories and codes, as well as repeated scanning of the original data record, may increase the sensed conflict. The tension that results from the conflict and scanning can be preparatory to insight, in Loder’s framework. “No pain, no gain” a colloquial sage may comment. Without the struggle, it could be that the analysis will be less adequate, and the research mediocre. The promise of release subsequent to insight, and a direction of energy in more productive directions, as Loder suggests, is perhaps motivating to allow and even encourage the conflict inherent to the process. Yet there will still be subsequent testing of the insight by examining additional data, and possibly previous data, to be certain the new insight works. Keep track of revisions to codes and categories, so that the potential influence of personal biases can later be evaluated (this can be considered an aspect of Loder’s fifth phase of coherence and correspondence). Multiple conflicts are likely to emerge throughout a study along with scanning, insight, and so on in the data analysis. Loder’s progression may be revisited many times in a single research study.

Connecting Categories, Identifying Themes, and Creating Hypotheses

The next phase in the initial data analysis is finding relationships between categories. For example, a given code or related category of behavior may occur regularly at the same time every day. This suggests a link to time as relevant. In my hallway study, I found movements in the hallway were quite predictable in the mornings

because children changed classes at predictable times. These were less predictable in the afternoons, a phenomenon I must admit I was never able to explain. Certain spaces may be related to one or more categories of behavior. For example, I found rough and tumble play was more likely to occur near drinking fountains and restrooms. While many kinds of associations between categories are possible, two specific kinds of connections will be considered here: themes and hypotheses.

A category that reoccurs regularly in research data may indicate a **theme** that needs to be identified (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003). As one examines the field notes, videos, and audio tracks associated with a given category, it helps to make separate notes about commonalities *between* these kinds of data as well as *within* each kind of data. Notes or descriptions may need to be summarized to reflect an emerging theme. Of course, several different themes may emerge at the same time, and themes can also shift with time—either because what is being heard or observed is changing over time, or because your understanding of the data is changing (or both!).

Two or more codes or categories that almost always occur together or in rapid succession may suggest causation or other kind of association. On the other hand, sometimes categories may occur together without their being related. The more often two or more things coincide, the more likely a relationship exists. By examining the original data connected to reoccurring categories or codes, the researcher may develop hunches about how they are related. These hunches can be “tested” by examining data from other times during the day, reviewing previous data, and by carefully analyzing data from subsequent days of research. Hunches that prove to be predictable and rarely have exceptions can become *hypotheses*, statements of a relationship between two or more categories. For example, in my research I developed the theory that teacher presence in the school hallway was related to their correction of misbehavior of children, although this initial hypothesis had to be modified many times because of various kinds of exceptions I discovered (see the section on analytic induction below).

It must be admitted that it is possible to go directly from data to themes. Many well-known scholars such as Erik Erikson, Jean Piaget, Robert Coles and others apparently made this leap without coding and linking categories. Notice I said “apparently” because they may have, in fact, made the intermediary steps either mentally or in notes to themselves. But it is the rare researcher, especially the new researcher, who

can generate themes without coding or linking. In general, it is better to systematically develop codes and categories from data, then to seek connections between categories, and then to develop themes from patterns found. Once you are established as a major theorist, perhaps you can skip some of these steps, but most people need the systematic process to provide guidance through this phase of research.

As links are made between categories, and themes and hypotheses are developed, frustration and confusion can be expected. Conflict can accompany scanning of categories, perhaps not every day that analysis occurs, but often enough that one needs to understand what is occurring. Themes can overlap and become muddled. Hypotheses may conflict with one another, or exceptions to those hypotheses can multiply. As might be expected, Loder's first and second phases are again visited by the researcher attempting to do systematic analysis. Occasionally those struggles bring with them stage three insight and release of energy. The energy then can be directed to creative development of more connections, thematic discovery, and more precise hypotheses. But it is unwise to expect all of these to occur with one major insight! It is more likely that minor insights will occur with some degree of regularity, followed by testing for coherence (Does the insight really address the frustrating conflict that scanning failed to address?) and correspondence (When I talk to other researchers, or even those I am researching, does the insight really hold up?).

Formal Analysis Approaches

It is beyond the scope of the present work to summarize the many varieties of formal qualitative analysis. While quantitative research may use one general kind of analysis, i.e., statistics, which can be subdivided into the general varieties of descriptive and inferential statistics, qualitative research includes a greater variety of analytic procedures. It is difficult to specify an exact number, as there is overlap between analytic approaches. New methods of analysis are regularly invented (although most are variations on existing perspectives), and some of the phases of the preliminary analysis can be elaborated into one or more formal analytic procedures. Ratcliff (2002) identifies fifteen approaches to qualitative research, while others have suggested more. LeCompte, Preissle and Tesch (1993), for example, are content to offer four general approaches; although the four are then subdivided into a total of seven subcategories of analysis.

In this brief overview, three general approaches to formal data analysis are considered. The first, typological/taxonomic analysis is an elaboration or development of the categories stage of preliminary analysis considered in the previous section of this report. The second, logical/inductive analysis, extends the idea of developing themes and hypotheses, also considered in the previous section. The third formal analysis method involves the creation of metaphors, one of the most creative and provocative approaches used in understanding and representing qualitative data. Subsequent to a summary of each of these, comparisons with Loder's phases in the transformative process will be considered.

Typologies and Taxonomies

Categories that relate to some aspect of a given research study can simply be listed, providing an outline of objects, events, or relationships. For example, I asked the children interviewed in the school hallway study to list all of the possible activities that can take place in the hallway. This sort of information is often the result of "grand tour" questions, where the people being researched are asked general questions that provide an overall perspective of a location or phenomenon.

What did the children describe as happening in a school hallway? One hundred different activities and objects were named, some of which I never observed during more than one hundred hours of observation over the four months I spent at the school. While the list in itself is impressive, it was then elaborated into categories and subcategories of behavior and objects. My own children helped with this aspect of the study, as they were about the same age as the youngsters studied, and this analysis took place when the children studied were on summer break and thus unavailable. I also compared the lists offered by boys and girls, perhaps reflecting distinctive gender perspectives, and also briefly considered alternatives offered by children of different ethnic backgrounds.

I thus developed a *typology*, a classification system taken from the patterns, themes, and other kinds of data from a research study (Patton, 2002). Actions of individuals, activities of groups, meanings, kinds and degrees of participation, relationships, and descriptions of settings are only a few of the possible categories that can be considered. This kind of classification system does not have mutually exclusive categories, and generally cannot be considered exhaustive of the data.

A *taxonomy* is a sophisticated typology with multiple levels of concepts, what we described as superordinate and subordinate levels of categories in the previous section. Spradley (1980) emphasizes that a taxonomy involves only a single domain or area of study. Usually a taxonomy meets the mutually exclusive criterion; in other words, categories do not overlap with one another. And ideally the categories are exhaustive of the data (no additional categories in that domain are possible).

I attempted to make a taxonomy of the ways children gathered together in the hallway of the school. The three ceremonies predominated: lines, clusters, and phalanxes. Were these three categories mutually exclusive? In my initial observations, they seemed to be very distinct: lines were single file arrangements of children, sometimes waiting and sometimes walking toward some destination, clusters were circular or semi-circular arrangements of youngsters that were always stationary, and phalanxes involved children walking side-by-side down the hallway. The three fit the superordinate category “social formations” [the idea of “ceremonies” did not come to me until long after the study was concluded]. There were variations of each, which could be subordinate categories, such as standing and sitting clusters. I eventually found that the three ways children arrange themselves were not mutually exclusive, nor were they exhaustive. Walking lines would momentarily become phalanxes when the teacher was not looking or was unwilling to correct kids. Stationary lines sometimes became clusters of several children, again when the teacher did not intervene. Inevitably, parts of the line were more like a phalanx or cluster, while other parts were not. I also discovered that children also gathered in crowds. On closer inspection, crowds were often mixtures of phalanxes and clusters, but not always. Sometimes the arrangement of children seemed haphazard. They just stood around, waiting to move on to their destinations. Thus the three ceremonies or “social formations” were a typology.

Logical/Inductive Analysis

Logical analysis can take many different forms. There are patterns in what is observed or heard in interviews. These patterns can be represented in charts and matrices of many different varieties. Miles and Huberman (1994) wrote a superb book that outlines hundreds of ways in which qualitative data can be diagrammed or otherwise organized. These more visually-oriented arrangements of words and phrases are not

always explained in detail; the visuals “speak for themselves” and implicitly invite readers to add their own analyses to that of the researcher. At one point in my hallway analysis, I drew a large flow chart that indicated how and when lines could become clusters or phalanxes, the ways clusters could become lines or phalanxes, and under what circumstances phalanxes could become clusters or lines (see Figure 2).

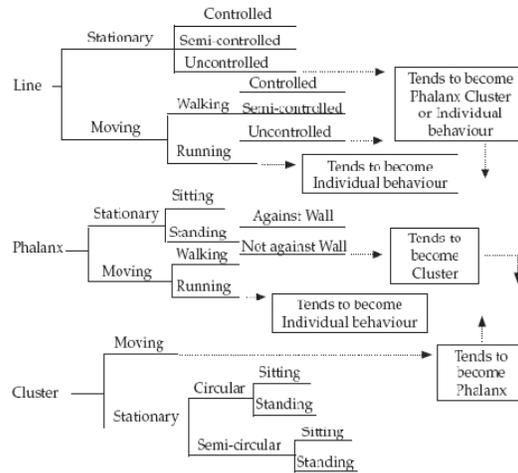


Figure 2. Flow chart of children’s movement and organization

The phrase “*inductive analysis*” refers to the process of inducing hypotheses, often referred to in the literature as “analytic induction.” In their early book on Grounded Theory (theory developed from research data), Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasize that analytic induction was foundational to their more elaborate procedure for theory production. Originally suggested by Florian Znaniecki (1934), and later elaborated by Howard Becker (1958) and Jack Katz (1983), analytic induction involves recursive formulations of hypotheses. More specifically, a hypothesis is developed from observed patterns in the data, and then tested against subsequent data. The testing is not mere checking for consistency, but rather involves a search for “a negative case,” an exception to the original hypothesis, using new data. When a negative case is located, the hypothesis is then revised so that the exception is accounted for (see figure 3). The hypothesis then corresponds with all of the relevant data found to that point. More data are collected, with the focus on finding an exception to the revised hypothesis. On locating that exception, the hypothesis is again revised, and a new search for an exception

to this third hypothesis is sought. This process continues until a hypothesis is created that seems to have no exceptions (see Ratcliff, 1994, for additional details on this procedure). Analytic induction was an important predecessor to the development of grounded theory design, and is central to almost all theory testing and refinement.

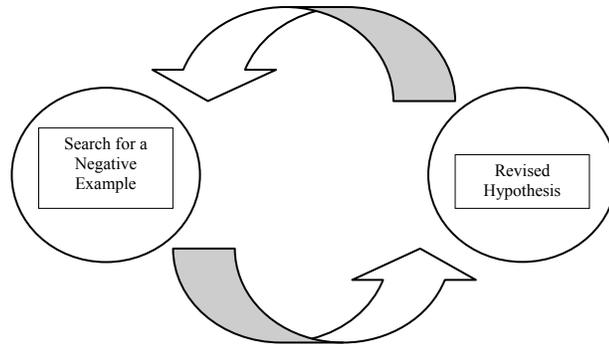


Figure 3. Analytic Induction

Earlier, when describing the development of a hypothesis, I mentioned how teacher’s surveillance and correction of children varied in the hallway. Over a period of several days, my data collection and analysis concentrated on creating a hypothesis that fit the actions of teachers in this regard. Examining dozens of examples of teachers in the hallway responding (or not responding) to misbehavior of children, and making at least six revisions to my initial hypothesis, I was able to develop an elaborate hypothesis that described the conditions under which teachers corrected or ignored undesired behavior. I found that architecture was a significant influence upon teacher action or inaction, particularly as architecture affected the nature of social relationships between teachers and the grades taught. It was a carefully crafted hypothesis that probably is irrelevant for any school other than the one I studied.

Metaphorical Analysis

The creation and elaboration of *metaphors* is arguably the most enjoyable method of analysis offered by qualitative research. The researcher tries to find parallels between

an aspect of what was observed and another substantively unrelated phenomenon.

Metaphors, similes, and analogies can produce powerful, creative linkages (LeCompte, Preissle and Tesch, 1993), that help to fulfill the ethnographic ideal of “making the commonplace strange.” One may “try on” several possible metaphors to examine how well they fit what has been observed in the research.

Participants can play an important role in the development, evaluation, and elaboration of metaphors. With sufficient rapport, it is possible to ask participants to create metaphors, perhaps at the conclusion of the final interview for the research study. One can also be sensitive to spontaneous metaphors used by participants in interviews and in ongoing activity. Research participants may elaborate metaphors that fit well. Perhaps most important, it is often essential for those involved in a research study to provide feedback on the validity of a metaphor, as part of the “member check” at the conclusion of a study.

In my research study I was struck with the similarities of how children moved in the hallway and movements of automobiles on highways. When I suggested this to some of the youngsters at the conclusion of my work, every child responded affirmatively and several added interesting details that I had never considered. For example, the teacher was compared with a patrol officer, children running with nosebleeds were ambulances, and one creative boy suggested he was a steamroller that would “roll all over you” [quoting lyrics of a classic by James Taylor]. Another fourth grader became so intrigued by metaphorical analysis that he offered a half dozen additional metaphors for one aspect of hallway behavior—the movements of the elite sixth graders.

Metaphorical analysis is clearly exemplified in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures. The first chapter of Lamentations, for example, offers ten different metaphors in quick succession. There are also many metaphors in the book of Proverbs and in the prophetic books.

Data Analysis and the Transformation Process

The three approaches to formal analysis considered here may involve any or all of the five phases of transformation described by Loder. While typologies are usually developed using categories from the initial analysis, the organization of those categories can involve conflicts readily resolved through scanning; or, in some cases, the scanning

will continue until insight is achieved, followed by redirection of energy, and interpretation for coherence and correspondence. The attempt to make mutually exclusive categories that are exhaustive of the data related to an aspect of a study is even more challenging, and may prompt the initiation of an entire transformation cycle.

Logical analysis by the creation of charts and diagrams may appear to be mere labeling and locating of categories or patterns in a pictorial representation. Yet, conflict can arise in the decision related to the best location of a given category or pattern in that representation. In addition, the decision of what kind of representation best fits the given data is an important one, but can be overwhelming considering the hundreds of alternatives that are possible. As with typologies and taxonomies, conflicts may be resolved by subsequent scanning; or, when this does not produce adequate resolution, additional phases of the transformative process may occur.

In contrast, analytic induction is likely to involve the entire cycle, although the emphasis is likely to be on insight and redirection of energy in the service of creating an innovative hypothesis. When analytic induction is elaborated into grounded theory design, creating multiple hypotheses is even more likely to involve the entire five phases, particularly as the testing of hypotheses, the fifth phase, affirms relevant categories, and conflicts between multiple alternative ways of combining hypotheses and other patterns produce conflicts that make way for axial categories and the generation of theory. In grounded theory, it seems likely that the transformative process will occur in its entirety more than once, as the researcher moves towards theory that involves greater complexity and broader explanatory power.

Metaphorical analysis (Patton, 2003), which is probably the most playful of the formal analytic techniques, seems unlikely to produce all five phases of the transformative process. Yet, even when metaphors are easily discovered, one tests for correspondence through the use of the member check. Yet, if the generating of metaphors is difficult for the researcher, the entire transformative process *could* be activated. Similarly, if the results of the member check are disconfirming, i.e., if the participants seriously question the validity of an offered metaphor, then internal conflict will surface as the result of the discrepancy. This conflict derives both from the difference and from the need to decide if a metaphor could be valid even when participants do not affirm that validity. In such a case, tentativeness is called for, but also scanning of the responses of

other participants who are involved in member checks, or scanning of relevant outsiders for confirmation or disconfirmation. Unresolved scanning may precipitate other phases of the transformative process.

While other approaches to formal analysis (such as event analysis, domain analysis, hermeneutical analysis, discourse analysis, semiotics, content analysis, phenomenological/heuristic analysis, and narrative analysis) have not been explored here (see Ratcliff, 2002), these are likely to involve at least some of the phases of Loder's transformative process. Furthermore, it is likely that the second and fifth phases in that process will be involved in the decision as to what kinds of analysis will be considered in a given study. Indeed, these two phases are likely to be found throughout the entire analytic process; though perhaps they are oversimplified when described as "trial and error."

The "member check" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) involves asking at least some if not all of the participants about their reactions to the conclusions of a given study. It is a means of testing the validity of the analysis. While traditionally this occurs near the end of a study, it is possible to have a succession of member checks at various points in the research *if* they are unlikely to change the subsequent data collected. This is an aspect of data analysis that should occur in almost any study, and clearly is related to Loder's final phase of interpretation of an insight particularly as that interpretation tests for correspondence in the public context.

Conclusion

James Loder's transformational sequence can help describe what occurs to the researcher during the analysis process. It certainly does not describe the entire process of analysis, nor does it necessarily explain why conflicts emerge and the reasons why insight takes place. Perhaps description of these aspects of research is sufficient to encourage new researchers in initial efforts towards making sense of qualitative research data, as well as help them maintain an optimistic view of the eventual conclusion of a research study.

Yet, as noted earlier, a description of the basic transforming process is insufficient. Convictional knowing provides a basic orientation to the world in general, as well as the transformation of the person, which should help the individual researcher be

more open to transformative experiences, as well as have a perspective of the world that is more isomorphic than one who lacks convictional knowing. If the perspective of the lived world and the self have themselves been transformed, then the individual—and by implication communities of believing researchers—will see their transformations transformed, both by subsequent convictional knowing experiences, and by biblical, theological, and other understandings resulting from the work of the Holy Spirit.

If that be the case, then not only should resulting perspectives be clearer and more congruent with the real world, but also the human spirit need not confront conflict by itself. Genuine insight may emerge by the cooperative efforts of the Holy Spirit and the human spirit that is made in the image of God to relate intimately with God, spirit with Spirit. I often tell my students that prayer and prayerful reflection are important, if not essential, components to high quality research. It is by sharing intimacy with the divine that perspectives can shift, even change dramatically at times, as fragmentary knowledge and distorted perspectives are replaced (albeit in part, never entirely) with fuller, deeper understandings, by God's grace and mercy. Then, at the conclusion of one's research or any other activity, one can only exclaim, with the great composer Johann Sebastian Bach, "Soli gloria Deo."

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About the Author



Don Ratcliff is the Price-LeBar Professor of Christian Education at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, where he teaches classes in human development, culture and ministry, and research. He has authored, coauthored, and/or edited eight major books, including *Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, Research, and Applications* (Cascade Books, 2004). He has many research resources available at his web pages located at <http://qualitativeresearch.ratcliffs.net> and <http://ministryresearch.ratcliffs.net>. He also has many resources related to children's spirituality and child theology at <http://childfaith.net> and <http://childtheology.net>, and his personal web page can be found at <http://don.ratcliffs.net>.



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