The

Mediator

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Preface

It has been many years since I assisted APNTS with the editing of *The Mediator*. Since those early years of relaunching the journal back in 2000 after its maiden voyage in 1996, the journal has moved online, and since then, the seminary has expanded its programs and extended its outreach. This has made two things possible: inexpensive dissemination of ideas through the internet and more opportunity to get new insights and cutting-edge research to the world. Personally, since those early days, I have written a couple of books and various journal articles, so my command of the English language, which is my native language, has grown. I have found that the best tool for me in editing has been to write. I encourage students, alumni, instructors, pastors, and church leaders to write anything and everything, to get their ideas down on paper or computer, and then with practice, learn to write well and accurately. Thankfully, we have many resources to help us do this.

Since its beginning, *The Mediator* has sought to be a place where writing can be a catalyst for theological and ministry formation and effectiveness. As the editor, I strongly encourage readers of this journal to contribute to the dialogue by submitting their own writing so that others can benefit and grow from the exchange of ideas. There is a great need in the world for in-depth, accurate, insightful, and expansive thinking about God and God's mission in this world. As Christian writers, our driving motive must in some way touch upon the mission of making Christlike disciples among the peoples of the world. Dialogue at a theological institution like APNTS will be at a substantially high level that may not be accessible to every person. But this high level of scholarship is needed as an anchor against the winds of divergent and sometimes wrong ideas in the world. In-depth Wesleyan-holiness theology in all disciplines is needed to secure the church, its leaders, ministers, and laypeople in the faith handed down to us.

I am excited to offer readers this issue of *The Mediator* because all the papers were written by recent APNTS graduates. The papers represent a wide range of ideas about ministry. Pajaron offers readers insights into parenting, bringing together in dialogue various theories of early childhood development and what Scripture teaches. Goto explores the phrase "Spirit and truth" from John 4:23 and argues that John as the writer calls readers to worship God through Jesus in love, particularly Jews and Samaritans. Fernandez challenges readers to realize how important hospitality is in education and that children and students of all ages must be treated with respect and given an opportunity to participate in a welcoming learning environment. Grunwald reminds readers that children also have a vocation to love God and love neighbors.

Included at the close of this issue are recent dissertation abstracts from the various programs offered through APNTS. The quantity and quality of insights in these recent studies bear witness to the great potential for God's kingdom represented in each student at the seminary.

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Reconciling Evidence-Based Parenting Programs
with Biblical Perspectives on Child Rearing

Evelyn R. Pajaron, Ph.D.

The parents' shaping influences and pivotal roles in their children's behavior, character, development, and outcomes have flooded research across multidisciplinary sciences in the past several decades. Books and peer-reviewed journals have recognized parenting, motherhood, and fatherhood as scientific and distinct areas of study (Bornstein 2002; Lamb 1997, 2010; O'Reilly 2011). The multidisciplinary sciences and varied theoretical perspectives show the complexity child-rearing entails and the dire implications when parents fail or are not supported in their God-given roles. In view of these realities, parent education programs have become major endeavors in developed countries to intervene, support, and scaffold families, especially families-at-risk. With the deluge of problem-addressing parenting programs offered by different fields of study, the trend has moved toward evidence-based parenting programs (EBPP) to prove effectiveness that can be replicated. EBPPs are those programs wherein empirical studies using randomized controlled trials (RCTs) have been rigorously evaluated and whose findings of their effectiveness have been peer-reviewed by experts (Cooney et al. 2007, 2).

Theoretical Bases of Parent Education Programs

Parent or Parenting Education (PEd) refers to an organized program that imparts information and skills to parents towards improving parent-child relationships and child development outcomes (Mahoney et al. 1999, 131; Fine 1980, 6). PEd encompasses the core domains of child development, parenting and parent-child relationships, and family. These domains have come up with theories based on substantial observation and research to explain the factors and inter-relatedness of those factors affecting certain as-

pects of a child's or a parent's development, their relationship, or how family members affect one another. These theories try to explain conceptually the factors and inter-relatedness of those factors affecting certain aspects of a child's or a parent's development, their relationship, or how family members affect one another. A brief summary of some major theories relating to parenting and parent education is presented in Table 1. These theoretical perspectives give helpful insights into children's development and parenting that often become the basis for PEd curriculums and programs.

FIELD	THEORY	PERSON	BASIC BELIEFS
Child Development	Psycho-analytic	Sigmund Freud (1856–1939)	A child's behavior is determined by unconscious desires through psychosexual stages of development linked to chronological age (oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital). How parents relate to the child's sexual desires could determine their development and adjustment.
	Matura-tional-Developmental	Arnold Gesell 1880–1961	A child goes through predictable stages and sequences of growth. The pacing for each child depends on internal factors (genetics, personality, temperament, physical and mental development) and external factors (parenting style, environment, culture, peers). A child's development changes with equilibrium (calm plateau) and disequilibrium (unsettled time of rapid growth and learning). Parents need to give reasonable guidance, not permissiveness nor rigidity (http://study.com/academy/lesson/arnold-gesell-biography-theory-of-child-development.html).
	Psycho-social	Erik Erikson (1902–	A child's identity and self-concept develop in stages (from infancy to adulthood) that need to be mastered at each

		1994)	level to become satisfied and productive members of society. A child needs certain stimulations to master the stages (trust vs. mistrust as infants, autonomy vs. shame and doubt at 0–3 years, initiative vs. guilt at 3–6 years, industry vs. inferiority at 5–12, and ego identity vs. role confusion at 12–18). Problems and developmental delays occur when those stimulations are not present.
	Moral Development	Lawrence Kohlberg (1927–1987)	A child's understanding of right and wrong starts from pre-conventional (based on consequences) to conventional (obedience because of love) to post-conventional (moral values based on beliefs or truths that do not change).
	Cognitive-Developmental	Jean Piaget (1896–1990)	A child's way of thinking develops in stages as he/she interacts with the environment: sensorimotor from birth to 2, preoperational from 2–7 as the child learns mental symbols and language, concrete operational from 7–11 as the child organizes learning more logically, and formal operational from 11 onwards with abstract thinking.
	Ecological Systems	Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917–2005)	Everything in a child and the child's environment affects how he/she develops in a bidirectional way: microsystem (family, school, church, peers, and health services); mesosystem (referring to connections and interrelations between microsystem components); exosystem (neighbors, social support, mass media, and local politics that affect the child's development); and macrosystem (cultural values, laws, and customs).

	Faith Development	James W. Fowler III (1940–2015)	A child moves from undifferentiated faith (0–2) where trust and attachment are important; intuitive-projective faith (2–7), where a child responds to stories, images, symbols, and experiences; mythic-literal faith (7–12), where a child accepts the stories of the faith community; synthetic-conventional (12+) where a child adopts a belief system (Fowler and Dell 2006, 34–40).
	Multiple Intelligences	Howard Gardner (1943–)	Not all children learn the same way, as each child's mind is hardwired differently: mathematical-logical, linguistic, musical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist, and existential.
Parent-Child Relationships	Behavioral	John B. Watson (1878–1958)	Based on classical conditioning, a child's misbehavior is prevented through set routines, appropriate activities, and maintaining a positive, non-threatening environment. His advice on keeping children independent of adult love and affection drew criticism (Bigelow and Morris 2001, 26–28).
	Attachment	John Bowlby (1907–1990) & Mary Ainsworth (1913–1999)	A child needs to develop a secure attachment with a parent from which to learn, grow, and develop normally.
	Socio-cultural	Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934)	A child learns cognitively through sociocultural interactions from guided learning within the zone of proximal devel-

			opment (guidance of a more knowledgeable person). The people and environment will influence what and how a child thinks. A child raised in cognitively and linguistically stimulating environments internalizes private speech faster, while low verbal social exchanges result in delays (http://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html).
	Cognitive Social Learning	Albert Bandura (1925–)	A child learns through observation or direct instruction, imitation, and modeling in the context of relationships. A child's behavior improves when good deeds are rewarded, and bad ones are ignored or sanctioned. Thus, a child learns to self-regulate over time (Albert Bandura's biographical sketch at https://stanford.edu/dept/psychology/bandura/).
	Parenting Styles	Diana B. Baumrind (1927–)	A child's behavior is directly related to parental attitudes and behavior of responsiveness and demandingness labeled as parenting styles: authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative.

Sources: Holden 2015, 30–61; psychologycharts.com; simplypsychology.org; McDermott 2002.

Table 1: Major Theoretical Perspectives on Child and Parent

Development, Parent-Child Relationships, and Family

The psychoanalytic approaches to child development (Freud and Erikson) deal with the unconscious and self-concept formation. Behavioral approaches deal with managing the child's behavior through routines, positive and negative reinforcements, and rewards (Watson). Developmental approaches deal with stages of growth in the cognitive, moral, psychosocial, and faith aspects (Gesell, Piaget, Fowler, and Kohlberg) and the impact of

people and environment on the child's development (Bowlby and Ains-worth, Baumrind, and Bronfenbrenner). Social learning approaches deal with the way children learn in relationships with others, particularly the parents (Vygotsky and Bandura). These basic theories have spawned many more as the scientific studies on fields affecting parenting and childrearing continue.

In contrast to these propositions that capsulize and organize the theo-rists' studies and observations from the human standpoint, the Bible pro-vides the bigger picture and purpose of life from the perspective of God, who reveals himself and his ways through its pages. God inspired the Scrip-tures to be "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the [person] of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16–17 NASB).

Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Childrearing

The Bible is a rich source of wisdom for parents for bringing up children and maintaining harmonious family relationships. It has a few explicit com-mands for parents and children, as well as implicit lessons that can be de-rived from stories and from God's model as a "parent" in dealing with his "children." It situates childrearing in the bigger picture and context of God's scheme of things for his creatures and his overall plan for humanity. The theological perspectives and reflections on these biblical commands and principles also give insights that parents can learn from and apply.

Biblical Perspectives

The Bible is God's revelation of himself as creator, sustainer, sovereign ruler, redeemer, and restorer of all of his creation, especially of humanity made in his image (Gen 1–2; Ps 103:19; John 1:1–3; Col 1:15–17; Rev 21:1–7). Creation reflects wisdom, order, beauty, glory, harmony, awesome won-der, and the infinity of its creator (Ps 19:1–6; Rom 1:18–21). Through the Bible, we learn of him, his plan, purposes, and ways in relation to humanity and his creation. Although he is all-powerful, the Bible also tells that he is love and that his love is the basis, standard, and source of our love for others demonstrated in our actions (1 John 4:7–12; 1 Cor 13:4–8a; John 3:16; Rom

5:8). He also is just, righteous, and holy (Deut 32:4; Isa 45:21, 51:8; Jer 9:24). His laws reflect his character and are intended for the protection and for the good of his people (Rom 7:12; Ps 19:7–11). The commandments regulate a person's relationship with God and with the rest of humanity and are summarized in the word "love" (Exod 20:1–17; Matt 22:36–40). This backdrop sets the basis and motivation to trust and obey God's commands to parents and children regarding their responsibilities and relationships in the family.

God instituted marriage with the first man and woman, and he gave them the ability to procreate and the responsibility to have dominion as stewards of his creation (Gen 1:27–28, 2:18–25, 4:1–2; Heb 2:6–8). God is personally involved in forming each child in the womb (Ps 139:13–16; Eccl 11:5) and gives them as blessings and gifts from him (Gen 1:28; Ps 127:3–5; 128:3–6). One of the stated purposes of this union is to raise godly off-spring (Mal 2:15). The Bible gives a few explicit directions to parents on how to bring this about. Parents are commanded to take God's statutes, commands, and ordinances to heart and to instruct patiently and intention-ally their children and grandchildren about God, his laws, and his ways as life presents itself throughout the day (Deut 6; 11:18–22; Eph 6:4). They are to train and discipline their children (Prov 19:18; 22:6; 23:13–14) without exasperating or embittering them (Col 3:21; Eph 6:4). It is implicit that parents ought to love their children (Titus 2:4; Prov 13:24), provide for their needs (1 Tim 5:8; Matt 7:9–10; Luke 11:11–12), teach them (Deut 4:9, 6:7; Prov 1–9), and show compassion to them (Ps 103:13).

God is shown as displaying paternal and maternal characteristics and ways that serve as models for parents. God disciplines his children for their good (Heb 12:4–11; Prov 3:11–12), gives good gifts generously to them (Matt 7:9–11; Luke 11:11–13; Rom 8:32), and comforts, nurses, and nur-tures them (Isa 66:12–13; Hos 11:1–4). God's dealings with Israel are often portrayed in father-child images (Deut 14:1–2; Jer 3:19; 31:20; Hos 11:1) and show what parenting involves. He loves them (Deut 7:7–8; 23:5), yearns for them (Jer 31:20), feels grief when they sin (Ps 78:40), and gets provoked and feels angry when they continually refuse to obey (Ps 78:21–22, 31). He shows mercy and compassion (Isa 14:1; 30:18), hears their cries for help

and deliverance (Exod 3:7–9), and forgives their sins (Jer 31:34). But he also lets them suffer the consequences of their choices with their repeated failure and refusal to obey (2 Kgs 17:7–8; Ps 78:10–11, 40–42, 56–56; Jer 9:13–16).

In Proverbs 1–9, the kind of conversation occurring between parents and children provides insights. Both parents are involved in the instruction of the child about how to apply God's ways with wisdom as the child interacts with the world around him or her. They teach, instruct, and extol the ways of wisdom, and they warn about the enticements and dangers the child might face. The father's (Prov 1–7) and personified wisdom's (Prov 8–9) manner, attitude, and persuasive words to the son seem to support a preference for persuasion and rhetorical, rather than physical, means of instructing, admonishing, and rebuking the son. Many passages address the wise or foolish use of the mouth and lips (Prov 4:24; 10:6, 11, 32; 12:14; 14:3; 15:2; 16:23). The use of the rod as a form of discipline (Prov 23:13–14; 13:24; 22:15) is set as only one of the many tools in the full range and levels of disciplinary measures shown in the book of Proverbs. William Brown explains, "While the corporal means of discipline is accepted in these sayings, biblical wisdom probes deeply into the rationales and motivations behind such usage with the effect of imposing limits: edification rather than punishment, love rather than hatred motivates acts of discipline" (Brown 2008, 72). Proverbs 22:15 recognizes that "foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child" (NASB) and therefore wise instruction, godly discipline, reproof, training, and correction are needed so as to impart wisdom and develop character (Prov 3:11–12; 13:24; 22:6, 15; Eph 6:4). The child is urged to receive, obey, remember, and keep the parents' instructions and to honor them (Prov 3:1; 4:10; Eph 6:1). The basis and motivation for heeding the parent's admonitions are a healthy reverence and awe of God and a desire to please him, not legalistic outward obedience to a set of rules.

The biblical perspective on childrearing centers on God, who gives children as presents whom parents are to steward and raise toward godliness, using the different tools available in their toolkit as shown in Proverbs. God's parental modeling shows that parenting requires commitment, is demanding and challenging, and carries no guaranteed results as it deals with people who have been given the freewill to make their own choices.

Theological perspectives

A number of notable theologians speak particularly on parental responsibility as a serious calling and duty towards the nurture of children. John Chrysostom (A.D. 347–407), Archbishop of Constantinople, "raises parenthood to cardinal importance in the Christian religion as a moral and ecclesial calling" (Guroian 2001, 77). He speaks strongly against parental neglect of children. He says parents are to teach and instill virtues and godliness in the children so as to "reveal the image of God within them" and increase their likeness to God (Chrysostom 1986, 44, 68–71). Martin Luther (1483–1546), a German Catholic priest who figured in the Protestant Reformation, spoke of parental responsibility as "the highest duty," that parents will give an account to God, and that they thus "must spare no toil, trouble, or cost in teaching and educating our children to serve God and humanity" (Janzow 1978, 40). He also talked about the critical role the wider community and civil authorities have in the education of children, especially impoverished ones (Strohl 2001, 150–54). He provided his catechisms for parents and the church to use, as he sees children as capable of spiritual learning but also recognizes their sinfulness asserting itself by age seven (Strohl 2001, 144–45).

In the Pietist tradition that influenced Hermann Francke (1663–1726) and Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768–1834), the family was considered "a church within the church," since "the Christian home was to be a center of worship and Bible study in which children could actually experience the full range of Christian religious affections and come to a living faith in Christ" (DeVries 2001, 333). Francke claims that the primary goal of parents is to lead their children to godliness with an emphasis on reading and studying the Bible (especially the Gospels), living out the Word in their lives, and praying with and for their children (Bunge 2001, 264–70). He explains that only extreme emergencies may require the use of the "rod." He praises God if it is not used at all and warns against extreme forms of punishment (Bunge 2001, 267). Schleiermacher believes that parents need to devote all their energy and enthusiasm to live out an authentic living

faith and present Christ through the whole manner of life at home and in the godly way they relate to their children (DeVries 2001, 333). He enumerates ways parents could damage children's emotional health: minimizing and not taking the children's concerns and interests seriously, failing to respond empathically to their emotions, parents having mood swings and failing to control their own emotions, and parents attempting to live their dreams through their children (DeVries 2001, 342). Horace Bushnell (1802–1876), an American Congregational Pastor and theologian, also writes much about children's nurture in the faith. He claims that "if the parents live in the Spirit as they ought, they will have the Spirit for the child as truly as for themselves, and the child will be grown, so to speak, in the molds of the Spirit, even from his infancy" (Bushnell 1896, 227–40).

A few theologians theorize about and recognize the different stages of the life cycle in relation to sin, salvation, and accountability in their writings. Augustine proposes six stages: infancy, childhood, puberty, young adulthood, middle age of the *seniores*, and old age, with non-innocence at infancy and increasing accountability as age progresses (Stortz 2001, 83–86). Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), an Italian Dominican priest, sees the human capacity to grow in virtue and wisdom even though tainted with original sin. His developmental stage theory is based on the child's ability to reason and make responsible choices and therefore have accountability: *infantia*, *pueritia* (dawning of rational thought, around age seven), and *adolescentia* (Traina 2001, 112–20). Luther alludes to children's developmental stages in relation to sin as marked with the seven-year crises: a child under seven has not developed real thoughts; at fourteen, the sex drive is awakened, and thereafter, the child becomes aggressive and defiant of authority (Strohl 2001, 144–45). Francke does not categorically mention stages of childhood, but he distinguishes children, *kinder,* being under twelve, and young people, *jugend,* being around twelve to fifteen, with regards to their special needs and difficulties (Bunge 2001, 269). Karl Barth (1886–1968), a very influential twentieth-century Swiss Reformed theologian, addresses children's being more than their nature. He describes children as needy beginners with a "sheer readiness to learn," characterized by play and having "freedom in limitation" (Werpehowski 2001, 392–93). This

theorizing of early theologians on developmental stages and characteristics of children seems to be a precursor to contemporary developmental theories, such as that of theologian James W. Fowler's (1940–2015) faith development from birth to old age.

Early theologians substantially admonish parents for their crucial role in the children's nurture in the faith and development of godly character. They have also pointed out the difficulty of doing so, and some see the role of the church and schools as supporting parents in their endeavor. Some created catechisms for parents to use. A few also proposed theories of the development of children based on their observations, experience, and in response to the issues of their times.

Biblical/Theological Perspectives and Psychology

The use of humanistic theories as bases of PEd programs is a valid concern. The PEd research base expanded in the 1990s because of family breakdown, youth and family violence, and alcohol and drug use, which were problems needing interventions (Karpowitz 2001, 3–11). PEd studies proliferated due to the recognition that children's problematic behaviors previously addressed with therapeutic intervention, institutionalization, or juvenile detention, could be traced back to the parent-child relationship (NREPP 2015, 1–2; Haslam et al. 2016, 2). PEd showed more promise in dealing with children's problematic behavior than just treating the child alone. Some programs on the list of EBPPs have come from Alfred Adler's and Carl Rogers' therapeutic interventions that have developed into prevention parenting programs. So, does one reject these and solely use the Bible and its perspectives on childrearing, integrate the two together, or subordinate the humanistic perspectives to the Bible?

Psychology Today

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines psychology as the science of mind and behavior. Psychology has become a complex field with many branches, depending on the sources and institution, and the field keeps expanding. *MedicalNewsToday* lists the following branches: Clinical (integrates sci-

ence, theory, and practice to understand, predict and relieve maladjustment, disability, and discomfort), cognitive (how people acquire and process information), developmental (human development across the lifespan), evolutionary (how behavior is affected by psychological adjustments during evolution), forensic (applied to criminal investigation and the law), medical (how behavior, biology, and social context affect health and illness), neuropsychology (structure and brain function in relation to behavior and psychological processes), occupational (work performance and organization function), and social (impact of social influences on human behavior) (Nordqvist 2015). One blog lists 32 branches, while the American Psychological Association and Wikipedia have 50+ divisions. There are branches that are considered pure science (which increases understanding of one's world, believed to be ethically neutral), and there are those called applied science (which seek to solve problems regarding human activity) (Gale 2005). Thus, psychology today has become a complex conglomeration of many views and perspectives, some very helpful in understanding people, and others being outright unbiblical in their propositions (e.g., evolutionary, humanistic). Thus, the same question that is raised in using PEd based on humanistic theories is part of the bigger controversy surrounding the use of the Bible and psychology among Christian educators, psychologists, and psychiatrists.

Views on the Use of the Bible and Psychology in Helping People

These arguments and conflicting views have been developed because of a number of issues. First is the use of psychology by Christian psychologists and counselors who use humanistic ideas that leave God out and seek solutions that do not deal with sin. Second is that pastors, Christians, and theologians throughout the centuries before modern psychology counseled people until psychologists and psychiatrists took over. The arguments have developed into a number of views and approaches to the problem.

Non-integrationists: "Sola Scriptura"

The non-integrationists champion the sufficiency of Scripture for all the issues of life (2 Pet 1:3–4) and all categories of problems. This group is also

sometimes labeled as anti-psychology/anti-psychiatry as they view these as psycho-heresy (Bobgan and Bobgan 2012, 5–7) or the religion of self-worship rather than a "science" (Vitz 1994, 1–2; Benner 1998, 41–46) because it relies on foolish human wisdom (1 Cor 1:18–25, 2:4–6; 1 Tim 6:20), which is an idolatrous practice (Jer 2:11–13). For them, the Bible alone, backed by God's power and the Holy Spirit's work, is sufficient to deal with the real needs and problems of people that can only be met in Christ (Bobgan and Bobgan 2012, 10–12). Jay E. Adams, Martin and Deidre Bobgan, and Jim Owen are known advocates of this view. They point out the failure of psychiatry and psychology in truly helping people as the moral dimension and God are excluded in the picture (Bobgan and Bobgan 2012, 20–24; Adams 1970, 1–17), whereas Christians have used God's Word as sufficient for centuries before the advent of these fields (Johnson 2010, 11–14; Benner 1998, 28–34). They sound the alarm on "Christian" psychology heavily influenced by humanistic presuppositions that have invaded churches and seminaries and see this as a threat to biblical Christianity (Owen 2004, 22; Bobgan and Bobgan 2012, 7–12; Adams 1979, xi–xii). The Bobgans are "not referring to the entire field of psychological study" but only to that part that deals with "man-made systems of understanding and treatment," which includes "psychotherapy conducted by psychiatrists, psychologists, marriage and family counselors, and social workers" (Bobgan and Bobgan 2012, 26–27). Adams also does not disregard science and "welcomes it as a useful adjunct" but uses "strictly biblical approaches" to his *nouthetic* (Greek for admonish or instruct) counseling ministry (Adams 1970, xxi). Natural science methods of the hard sciences such as astronomy, physics, chemistry, and biology, contributed to this view and were applied to the study of human beings, who possess spiritual and psychological features not found in the natural factual sciences (Johnson 2010, 17).

Integrationists: "All truth is God's truth"

The integrationists believe that God reveals his truth in his word, the Bible, and in his world, his creation (Murray 2013, 205–206), both of which can be studied and investigated. A number of writers trace the important role

that Christians have had in the development of soul care, education, hospitals, and the natural sciences long before modern psychology and psychiatry came into the picture (Johnson 2010, 10–19; Myers 2010, 50; Entwistle 2015, 40–44; Benner 1998, 35). Modern psychology's humanistic worldview simply has taken over the field "with its vast output" and its "broad range of topics" (Johnson 2010, 25). Integrationists are dedicated to combining their knowledge of Scripture with their knowledge of human behavior that they observe in real-world settings. There are a number of views on the integrationist camp. The book edited by Eric Johnson, *Psychology and Christianity: Five Views* (2010), describes five different views in this camp and the ongoing dialogue on those views.

The levels-of-explanation approach (LOE) addresses human nature within the biological and scientific framework of psychology, where scientists are able to contribute to the discipline regardless of worldview differences. Its proponents maintain the importance of reality that is a "multilayered unity" (physical, biological, chemical, psychological, social, philosophical, and theological), each of which has a corresponding discipline of diagnosis and treatment, and studies appropriate for each (Johnson 2010, 33–34; Myers 2010, 51–53). David Myers shows how Christians have benefited from the much research in the social sciences that supports biblical family values and practices (Myers 2010, 62–70). They, in turn, have influenced contemporary psychology in areas of forgiveness, psychology of religion, spirituality, and values in therapy (Johnson 2010, 34). David Myers, Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, Warren Brown, and Malcolm Jeeves, as well as Christian academicians in Christian and secular colleges, are proponents of this view. However, critics say that they give more weight to science and use it as a lens in understanding Scripture (Jones 2010, 83). This perspective presents a truncated approach to the science of the person and does not address the prescriptive aspect of that science (Coe and Hall 2010, 90–95).

The Integration View believes that both the Bible and psychology address in different ways the problems of human nature. In explaining this view, Stanton Jones affirms the Scriptures as authoritative for everything necessary for a full life in Christ (2 Pet 1:3); however, it "does not provide

us all that we need in order to understand human beings fully," while psychology gives "practical tools for understanding and improving the human condition" (Jones 2010, 101–2, 110–15). In this view, there is a wide spectrum that supplements the biblical teaching with sprinklings of psychology and those that adopt the psychological methods with a sprinkling of prayer and Scripture (Keller 2010, 3). Stanton posits elements of an integrative approach for Christian counselors and psychologists as follows: anchor oneself in biblical truth by being students of the Bible and theology to shape one's work; commit to the highest scientific standards and in rational argumentation of one's scientific work; pay attention to the tension between biblical and scientific data where substantive issues may require a clear stand for biblical truth; seek to conduct one's profession shaped first and foremost by Christian convictions; and be tentative, patient and humble toward improved understanding (Jones 2010, 116–17). Many Christian counselors and authors and most Christian schools that offer counseling graduate programs embrace the integration view. Bruce Narramore, James Dobson, Henry Cloud, and John Townsend, Minirth and Meier, Gary Collins, Stanton Jones, Mark McMinn, and Steve Sandage are some of those belonging in this category, together with the Christian Association for Psychological Studies (CAPS) and the American Association of Christian Counselors (Johnson 2010, 34–35). Critics, however, say that this approach lacks a clear methodology of integration (Coe and Hall 2010, 137–38), a "Christianized" version of psychology that has science as its starting point (Roberts 2010, 134–35), and this approach zeroes in on the usefulness of science but does not address the fatal flaw of psychotherapies' view of reality and how people change (Powlison 2010, 143–46).

The next approach is the Christian psychology approach. It traces its roots to the Bible as a rich source of deep psychological thought for Christians since the early church. The Society for Christian Psychology exists to promote the development of distinctly Christian psychology (including theory, research, and practice) that is based on a Christian understanding of human nature" (christianpsych.org). It seeks to retrieve Christian psychology from Scripture and the understanding of the person from Christian

historical tradition and aims to develop a psychological theory that is distinctively Christian (Roberts and Watson 2010, 174–75). Basically, these psychologists fall somewhere between an integration approach and a biblical counseling approach since there is the willingness to use certain psychological terms and techniques (Keller 2010, 3). This model is often criticized because there is no real practical application for this view as to how to construct a complete psychology from Scriptures and Christian tradition alone (Jones 2010, 185). Larry Crabb, Dan Allender, Neil Anderson Tremper Longman III are named as belonging to this view (Johnson 2010, 37)

The fourth view is the transformational psychology approach put forth by John Coe, a theologian, and Todd Hall, a psychologist. Instead of trying to integrate two things, the Bible and psychology, they argue for a spiritual formation approach to psychology and theology, starting with a spiritually transformed psychologist doing the process, method, and product afresh in the Spirit (Coe and Hall 2010, 200–201, 212–16). The Christian psychologist starts with the basic tenets of faith as ontological realities and legitimate data of science, then considers all relevant material—Scriptures, creation, existing psychological/scientific/theological reflections, and theories—to come up with a unified new kind of psychology (Coe and Hall 2010, 204–207). In this view, psychology is a descriptive and prescriptive process of investigation for the purpose of changing people, and it looks to soul care as a primary point of practice (Coe and Hall 2010, 220–25). Critics of this view call this goal too ambitious, lacking concrete examples and realistic application in the field, and so they question some of its assumptions and assertions (Myers 2010, 227–29; Jones 2010, 230–34; Powlison 2010, 242–44).

The Biblical Counseling view, the continuation of Jay Adam's nouthetic counseling with some distinct difference, sees counseling as a theological discipline (Powlison 2010, 1–3; Jones 2010, 276). David Powlison states that the Christian faith *is* a psychology and Christian ministry *is* a psychotherapy (Powlison 2010, 245). He proposes a model that is focused primarily on the place of Scripture and theology and the manner in which biblical principles can be involved in the care of individuals in a therapeutic/counseling

setting (Powlison 2010, 257–58). Some of the positive claims of the proponents of this view are that they have: (1) rebuilt biblical counseling on biblical presuppositions resulting in more biblical aims and methods; (2) reclaimed pastoral care usurped by secular counseling; (3) provided theological and practical resources for the church and trained Christians to use the Bible to address a vast range of problems; and (4) emphasized the necessity of the Holy Spirit, prayer, and the Christian community to effect long term transformations (Murray 2013, 204–205). Critics say Powlison's psychology has no clear definition (Myers 2010, 273–75) and offers no style of counseling for non-Christians.

In summary, the non-integrationists want to do away with modern psychology and strictly use the Bible alone as sufficient to counsel people, while the integrationists have varied perspectives in a continuum on how to go about the integration process. There are those who want to impact modern psychology with academic excellence incorporating biblical values and ideals (LOE), while others want to create a Christian psychology with Christian terminology and thinking (Christian, Biblical, Transformational), or take what both offer and use them in one's practice (integration view). The integration and LOE use the academic definition of psychology, while the others give it different or hazy meanings. Some of the good things being advocated by these views are:

1. Be a good and astute student of the Bible and historical Christian tradition, as well as the sciences and their historical and theoretical foundations to understand the issues and make educated valuations.

2. Consider the perspectives and merits of the different viewpoints and yet have a critical eye to see the weaknesses.

As Eric Johnson puts it, "It would be a serious mistake to assume that there is only one correct position among the five such that the others are wholly in error" (Johnson 2010, 292).

Implications for Transformative Filipino Parenting Education

What is the bearing of all these views on the Transformative Filipino Parenting Education (TFPEd) program our team seeks to implement among parents in low SES communities? The TFPEd will not make use of the lessons based on the humanistic theories but will only learn from the strengths and weaknesses of the PEd programs and processes in order to guide the processes towards evidence-based practice. Since parenting is culture-based, issues confronting Filipino cultural ways and beliefs in parenting need to be addressed. The Philippine population is composed of 80.6% Roman Catholics, 3.2% Evangelical and Bible-believing Christians, and at least 4.8% Bible-using religious groups (Philippine Statistics Authority 2015, 28). The high level of spirituality (personal relationship with God) and its religious expression (public rituals and *fiestas*) are evident not only among adults but also among the youth aged 18–25 years old (Batara 2015, 9–11; Cornelio 2016, 59) and among children (Pajaron 2013, 33–34). Because of this, the Filipino PEd has more affinity with pieces of evidence from the burgeoning field of faith-based parenting program studies, where religion is an independent variable affecting family relationships and functioning (Vermeer 2014, 405-407) than with humanistic EBPPs that dominate the field. The biblical and theological perspectives on childrearing will become the appropriate foundation for the TFPEd program because of the strong cultural trait of being *maka-Diyos* (Godward) that permeates the Filipino psyche. Moreover, parenting is a very difficult and challenging responsibility considering the multi-faceted needs and multi-dimensional aspects of children's development. The parents' own stresses, struggles, and family circumstances with which they have to deal compound the difficulty level even more. Teaching parents information and skills without dealing with the thoughts, motivations, and intents of the heart may lead to temporary behavior change but may not last for the long haul. Transformation, a change of heart and mind that results in a change in actions, is brought about by establishing a personal relationship with God and by being empowered by the Holy Spirit. These are essential to being able to love unconditionally and give sacrificially for the benefit of others (2 Cor 5:17–19; 1 John 4:10–19; Eph 5:18–6:4). The internal transformation as a result of the

Triune God's work in the lives of the parents is sought while facilitating transformative learning approaches, strategies, and experiences in the TFPEd program.

Using the biblical framework, however, does not discount the helpful contribution of the wisdom that has been gained from years of studying children and parent-child relationships that give flesh to principles found in Scriptures. Feminist theologian Bonnie Miller-McLemore gives an engaging discussion on the merits of Psychology in helping understand and sympathize with children and their needs, yet also points out its lack of moral and religious understanding of the complicated nature of children "and the ambiguities of parenting" (Miller-McLemore 2003, 51). Parents are to attend to the child's development in all domains (physical, intellectual, socio-emotional, spiritual, moral) as exemplified by Jesus (Luke 2:52). The developmental theories of Piaget, Erikson, Kohlberg, Fowler, and Gardner could serve as guides on parenting practices according to the children's ages and stages. The book of Deuteronomy gives prominent attention to way-of-life teaching and sensorial experiences that arouse children's curiosity and facilitate their learning, which is advocated by Albert Bandura's cognitive social learning and Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural models. The importance of family embedded in a nurturing faith community and nation is identified in the Scriptures as essential to the child's growth in faith. This biblical perspective justifies Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, where the wider environment exerts an influence on the child and vice versa. The findings in neuroscience on the rapid development of the child's brain in the early years would caution Filipino parents to avoid false assumptions that children have no sense until four years old and instead lay a good foundation of interaction and habits (Prov 22:6) starting from infancy. In other words, we make use of academic research and scientific findings that somehow affirm and complement biblical principles and design to become more effective in helping parents understand their children.

Bible scholars and theologians continue to mine Scripture for fresh perspectives on children and childhood, while psychologists, educators, and scientists continue to write books and peer-reviewed journals on their findings on motherhood, fatherhood, and parent education. As encouraged by

the different approaches, we strive to be experts on children and parenting and hone our biblical framework in the field of actual parent education and parenting experiences. Using a Bible-based parenting program that strives to be transformative and evidence-based and satisfies the standards of the secular world, which we are trying to reach and impact, is a move to fill a great need in our society. We echo P. J. Watson:

> The work of Christians in the social sciences, therefore, is to use scientific methods to intrusively and explicitly promote biblical perspectives on what persons and cultures should be. Scientific methods include qualitative and quantitative forms of analysis that Christians can use to transform the world in ways that are compatible with a biblical worldview. (2010, 283)

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The Meaning of Worshiping in "Spirit and Truth" (John 4:23)

Kengoro Goto

One of the familiar stories in the New Testament is that of the Samaritan woman in John 4. This story is found only in the Gospel of John,[1] so understanding it can lead to understanding the distinctives of Johannine theology.[2] More broadly, Johannine literature consists of the Gospel according to John, the three Johannine Epistles, and the Book of Revelation.[3] Therefore, in order to determine what Jesus meant by worshiping in "Spirit and truth" in John 4:23, we must consider the broad implications of what "according to John" means. To view John's purposefully reconstructed scene of the woman at the well from the perspective of Johannine theology and to draw an exegetically sound answer for what Jesus meant by worshiping in "Spirit and truth" in John 4:23, this paper explores the following three points: (1) the background of the story of the Samaritan woman, (2) the meaning of John 4:23 in its context, and (3) the consistency of Johannine theology drawn from Johannine literature.

Background of the Story of the Samaritan Woman

To capture the meaning of John 4:23 and the whole story of the Samaritan woman accurately, exploring the background of the Samaritan-Jewish relationship will be helpful. Before the historic breakup of the nation of Israel,[4]

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[1] Jan Van der Watt, *An Introduction to the Johannine Gospel and Letters* (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 84.

[2] The Gospel according to John is considered distinct from the Synoptic Gospels and reflects Johannine theology.

[3] The authorship of each writing is still disputed; the Apostle John and his community are the primary candidates.

[4] Aaron's two sons died around the thirteenth century BCE, and after Solomon died around 930 BCE, the united kingdom of Israel split into two kingdoms, the northern

the Israelites knew the seriousness of properly approaching the Lord. According to Leviticus 10, Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, suddenly died by God's consuming fire because they offered in their worship unauthorized fire in the presence of the Lord. The Lord said, "'Among those who are near me, I shall be proved holy, and before all the people, I will be honored.' Aaron remained silent" (Lev 10:3).[5] Later, both Jews and Samaritans shared this same unforgettable memory of *properly approaching and worshiping* the Lord, the Most High God.

At the time of Jesus, the Jerusalem-Gerizim controversy was already recognized as part of "the ancient dispute"[6] between Jews and Samaritans. According to Kuate, in 721 BCE, the Samaritans were deported to Assyria. After their return to Samaria, they accepted pagan idols and married pagans. This made the Jews angry because the Samaritans violated the Mosaic Law. Later, in 587 BCE, the Jerusalem temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and the people in the kingdom of Judah were deported to Babylon. In 538 BCE, they also returned and started rebuilding the destroyed temple of Solomon. The Samaritans tried to participate in this rebuilding by giving offerings, but the Jews did not accept them because they never wanted themselves to be corrupted. This Jewish rejection triggered the decisive split between both sides and led to the establishment of the Samaritans' own temple on Mount Gerizim in Samaria.[7]

Bultmann points out that the Samaritans found their basis of establishment and authority for their temple on Mount Gerizim from Deuteronomy 27, where Moses commanded that the Israelites should establish an altar on

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kingdom of Israel (with its capital as Samaria) and the southern kingdom of Judah (with its capital as Jerusalem).

[5] בְּקֹרֹבַי אֶקָּדֵשׁ וְעַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָעָם אֶכָּבֵד וַיִּדֹּם אַהֲרֹן (Lev 10:3b [BHS]) Translations from BHS and NA[28] are by Kengoro Goto, unless otherwise attributed.

[6] D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 224-225.

[7] Joseph Kuate, "Towards Christian Foundations of Dialogue: Jesus' Encounter with the Samaritan Woman (Jn 4:1-42)," *Grace & Truth* 35, no. 2 (Oct 2018): 36.

Mount Gerizim for the Lord so that his blessings might gush out from there. Though the Samaritan temple was destroyed by Hyrkan I in 128 BCE, the Samaritans' worship on Mount Gerizim was never quenched, even up to Jesus' time.[8] Scaer points out that this controversy developed further because of Moses' commandment to build an altar on Mount Gerizim. The Samaritans considered Mount Gerizim as a holy place because that is where Jacob saw a vision of the gate of heaven in Genesis 28.[9] Thus, historically, "Samaritans restricted their sacrificial worship to this mountain, just as the Judeans confined all sacrificial worship to the temple in Jerusalem."[10] Both sides insisted on their own legitimacy based on their own Torah. Although Jews and Samaritans shared many common beliefs, the Samaritans accepted only the Torah from the *Tanakh* as their Scripture. This narrow canon also amplified the importance of Mount Gerizim and was used by the Samaritans to claim legitimacy.

Because of this historical background, hostility and discrimination existed between Jews and Samaritans, as evidenced in the Gospel of John. The Samaritan woman at the well unhesitatingly showed that animosity existed between these groups when she said, "Jews do not associate with Samaritans" (John 4:9c [NIV]).[11] This implies that *loving* as the core principle of the entire law (cf. Gal 5:14; Lev 19:18; 1 Cor 13) was totally lost in their formal worship. A few chapters later, the Jews even said to Jesus, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?"[12] Since Jesus did not acknowledge "his Jewish audience as the seed of Abraham, Jesus

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[8] Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 189.

[9] Peter J. Scaer, "Jesus and the Woman at the Well: Where Mission Meets Worship," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (Jan 2003): 9.

[10] Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 100.

[11] οὐ γὰρ συγχρῶνται Ἰουδαῖοι Σαμαρίταις (John 4:9c [NA[28]]). "συγχρῶνται" is a compound word of σύν and χράομαι, and literally means "to use jointly" something or implicitly means "have an association."

[12] οὐ καλῶς λέγομεν ἡμεῖς ὅτι Σαμαρίτης εἶ σὺ καὶ δαιμόνιον ἔχεις; (John 8:48b).

was in their eyes no better than the Samaritans, who on account of their worship on Mount Gerizim and their encroachment on Israel's national existence, were avoided by Jews as despisers of true religion and as enemies."[13] Barrett points out that "the Samaritans who claimed to be sons of God, were regarded as mad (possessed)" by the Jews, [14] and they were fearlessly applying this principle to Jesus, who was revealing himself as the Son of Man![15]

Thus, it would be reasonable to say that the Jerusalem-Gerizim controversy and the hostility and animosity between Jews and Samaritans continued for centuries, and there seems to have been no solution and hope. However, according to the Apostle John, Jesus had existed since "before Abraham was born" (John 8:58) and knew all the claims of both Jews and Samaritans. He was about to show them the meaning of *true worshipers* whom the Father seeks.

The Meaning of John 4:23 in Its Context

To begin with, the Samaritan woman must have been shocked at being spoken to by Jesus, a Jew, because this was something Samaritans had to avoid. To break through this kind of centuries-long deadlock, Jesus seems to have intentionally rested beside the well of Jacob and to have spoken to the woman, leading her to a deeper understanding of who he actually was and the meaning of true worship. Jesus revealed the core point of worship in vv. 21-24, but she did not seem to have understood what he meant (cf. v. 25). So, he needed to add v. 26, "I am he (Messiah)."[16] Though sometimes Jesus'

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[13] Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 318.

[14] Charles Kingsley Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 350.

[15] By the time of Jesus, Jews already well immersed themselves in their apocalyptic expectations. Therefore, the Son of Man in John's gospel could have been taken by them as the son of man in Dan 7:13-14. Jesus was revealing *who he actually was* throughout John's gospel but most Jews did not understand it and rather tried to stone Him (see also the end of ch. 8).

[16] In v. 25, λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ γυνή· οἶδα ὅτι Μεσσίας ἔρχεται ὁ λεγόμενος χριστός· ὅταν ἔλθη

teaching was not immediately understood by his original audience, fortunately, a reader of the text can consider it *exegetically*. The following section focuses on examining what Jesus meant by John 4:23 in its context based on Johannine theology.

In v. 22, Jesus pointed out the Samaritans' incomplete understanding of God while comparing the Samaritans with the Jews who found out who Jesus was through his self-revelation. Verse 23 begins with "Yet" (ἀλλ᾽) because now Jesus' self-revelation was reaching the Samaritans by virtue of God's great mercy and grace. This was so that the Samaritans, who were long discriminated by Jews, also might know who Jesus was and worship the Father *properly*.

Although the so-called Johannine literature consists of the Gospel of John, the Johannine Epistles (1-3 John), and the Book of Revelation, the authorship of each writing is still debated. Scholars also debate Johannine eschatology that is evidenced in each of these writings. For instance, whereas the Gospel of John emphasizes the eschatological time as a *present reality*, the Book of Revelation emphasizes it as a *future reality*. If this is so, the statement of Jesus at the well, "a time is coming and has now come"[17] (John 4:23, NIV), would vividly express the significance of accepting the eschatological time as a *present reality*.

What Jesus brought to the Samaritan woman as *present reality* was the eschatological reality in which "the true worshipers will worship [or prostrate themselves before] the Father in the Spirit and truth" (John 4:23b).[18] Jesus did not compare "true worshipers" with the opposite concept of "false worshipers" because his intention here was not to condemn those who had not yet received the revelation of who he was (the Μεσσίας or χριστός). He seems to have wanted the Samaritan woman not only to *notice* the meaning of "true worshipers" but also to *become* a true worshiper herself. Before

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ἐκεῖνος, ἀναγγελεῖ ἡμῖν ἅπαντα. Then in v. 26, λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἐγώ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι.

[17] ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστιν (John 4:23a) seems to emphasize the immediacy and advent of *the hour*.

[18] οἱ ἀληθινοὶ προσκυνηταὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ πατρὶ ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ (Jn 4:23b)

Jesus' revelation at the well regarding worship (John 4:23), Jews and Samaritans must have thought that only their own traditional and cultic worship was genuine and authentic and was what the Father sought and accepted. Therefore, another option for what Jesus, the Revealer, meant by "*the true worshipers*" could have been a totally new and radical presentation for both. According to the Johannine community, Jesus was saying that only the worship by "the true worshipers" would be satisfactory before the Father. The Johannine community emphasized that in the already inaugurated eschatological era, anachronistic and unsatisfactory worshipers needed to be upgraded by Jesus.

Since Jesus defined "the true worshipers" as those who "worship the Father in the Spirit and truth," the meaning of worshiping "the Father in the Spirit and truth" also has to be clarified. According to the flow of the story of the Samaritan woman, it would be clear that Jesus and the woman were talking in vv. 20-21 about the site or location to worship. Therefore, "in the Spirit and truth" (v. 23b) would also need to be understood primarily in terms of the concept of the "site or location" proper for true worshipers. In the story of the Samaritan woman, possible sites or locations for worship could be (1) in (ἐν) Jerusalem, (2) on (ἐν) Mount Gerizim, or (3) in (ἐν) spirit and truth.

Jerusalem and Mount Gerizim were considered holy places for each group of followers since their prayers and bloody sacrifices had been continuously offered in both places. Jews and Samaritans thought that through their own sacrificial system and procedures, they could approach and please the Lord. Jews were even proudly claiming that "*in Jerusalem* is the place where they ought to worship"[19] (v. 20b) and denying Samaritans' worship altogether as improper. However, Jesus disagreed with their approaches (v. 21) and proposed a third way (vv. 23-24) in which the worshipers should worship the Father in (ἐν) spirit and truth (vv. 23-24).

Jesus' disagreement can be confirmed by his later statement in John 14:6, where he clearly revealed the impossibility of worshiping (coming to)

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[19] ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐστὶν ὁ τόπος ὅπου προσκυνεῖν δεῖ (John 4:20b).

the Father without Jesus by saying, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except *through me*."[20] Ephesians 2:18 also agrees with John 14:6 by saying, "through him, we both have access in one Spirit to the Father."[21] It is discernable that "through him [Jesus Christ]" and "in [ἐν] one Spirit [of Christ]"[22] are equivalent and interchangeable for Paul. According to the chronological order of the books of the New Testament, it is possible that John the Apostle could have already had Pauline Christology and pneumatology in mind when he wrote his Gospel as his summary and evaluation of forerunning accounts and theologies. Thus John (cf. John 14:6) and Paul (cf. Eph 2:18) could theologically agree with the point that "through Jesus," people could approach the Father and worship him *in a full sense*.[23]

It is also important to know that John uses *literary devices* in this account to affect his readers based on the theology he embedded in this story. John prefers to use at least (1) *dualistic concepts*—truth and lie (cf. John 8:44), light and darkness (John 1:5), etc., (2) *hendiadys*, and (3) *repetition* such as ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ ["in spirit and truth"] in v. 23 and v. 24. These all emphasize the point he is trying to make. In particular, (2) hendiadys seems to be the key to understanding v. 23. As Ridderbos comments, "'Spirit'—here linked with 'truth' in a hendiadys as with 'grace and truth' in 1:17—refers to the time of salvation that has come with Christ and to the

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[20] ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωή· οὐδεὶς ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εἰ μὴ δι' ἐμοῦ (Jn 14:6b).

[21] δι' αὐτοῦ ἔχομεν τὴν προσαγωγὴν οἱ ἀμφότεροι ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα (Eph 2:18).

[22] Paul here would have meant "one Spirit" as πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ (cf. Rom 8:9).

[23] John and Paul, who argued much about Christology in their writings, would have wanted to emphasize that before Jesus, only the Levitical sacrificial system was given to the Israelites as a means of grace but it was not satisfactory in the eyes of the Father; according to Johannine and Pauline theologies, it rather functioned as a prototype of Christ's Atonement and its decisive effects. Thus, in addition to their argument of accessibility to the Father, their stress on Jesus' function in worship also should be understood in the light of the contrast between the systemic limitation (in the OT) and the inaugurated eschatological liberation (in the NT by Jesus).

concomitant new way in which God wants to relate to human beings."[24] If so, πνεύματι and ἀληθείᾳ (vv. 23, 24) are no longer separable (cf. also 1 John 5:6 saying, τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν ἡ ἀλήθεια, "the Spirit is the truth"). Rather, πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ as one of the emphatic Johannine expressions of hendiadys can denote one reality of *Jesus,* whose Spirit is true and through whom one can have access to the Father.

Investigating the grammatical points of the original Greek text is also important for understanding v. 23 and Johannine theology. For instance, in the phrase, ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ ("in spirit and truth," vv. 23-24), ἐν is not repeated for each noun but only one time before πνεύματι ("spirit"). Carson points out, "Both in v. 23 and in v. 24, the one preposition 'in' governs both nouns. There are not two separable characteristics."[25] This use of ἐν would also support the idea of oneness drawn from the Johannine hendiadys. In addition, the range of the meaning of ἐν also does not discount my interpretation; ἐν can mean *in*, *on*, *at*, *by*, *with*, *among*, *during*, *through*, or *within*, and which of these is meant depends on the context and Johannine theology. In my opinion, ἐν in v. 23 and 24 can be translated as "through" since the Johannine hendiadys of these verses can denote *Jesus*, and "through Jesus" matches Johannine theological emphasis on "who Jesus is" presented throughout his gospel. Thus, for John, worship ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ ("in spirit and truth") would have been equivalent to worship "through Jesus*,*" who is the only way for approaching to the Father (cf. John 14:6). John 4 and 14 beautifully agree with one another, and this would be a key point of Johannine theology.

The Gospel of John emphasizes eschatology as *present reality* since John believed that it was already inaugurated by Jesus. John did not change his view of this since in John 14:16, he introduced ἄλλος (another) παράκλητος (Advocate/Helper) and ensured his readers that worshiping the Father "through Jesus" would last forevermore through ἄλλος παράκλητος. According to John 14:16-17, ἄλλον (another) παράκλητον (Advocate/Helper) is the

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[24] Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, 163.

[25] Carson, *The Gospel According to John,* 225.

same as τὸ πνεῦμα (the Spirit) τῆς ἀληθείας (of truth). The unique Johannine saying, *the Spirit of truth* (John 14:17; 15:26: 16:13; 1 John 4:6), could be a paraphrase of "*the Spirit of Jesus*" by Luke and Paul (cf. Acts 16:7; Phil 1:19). *Another Advocate* is *the Spirit of truth*, in Johannine expression, and is the Spirit of Jesus, as Jesus says, "You know him, for he abides with you and will be in you. I will not forsake you as orphans; I am coming to you."[26] Thus, it is clear that another Advocate, who is the Spirit of truth, is equivalent to "the Spirit of Jesus" through whom one can still offer his or her worship to the Father forever.

Throughout the Gospel of John, the author, John, describes Jesus using various kinds of metaphors such as the word, the light, the living bread, the way, the truth, the life, and others, so as to tell his readers who Jesus is from various aspects of his richness and wonderfulness. This Johannine way of expression would also have been employed for the Spirit. As Barrett comments, "One of the characteristic Johannine titles of the Holy Spirit is τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας (cf. 14.17; 15.26; 16.13)."[27] For John, the Spirit of truth was equivalent to Jesus, and John wanted to emphasize Jesus' rich nature in the Spirit rather than just following a Pauline understanding and expression.

The last part of v. 23 says, "for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks" (NIV).[28] Jews and Samaritans may have focused too much on their own *cultic worship* rather than the *eschatological worship* already inaugurated by Jesus, the Revealer,[29] and they did not seem to have seriously considered what kind of worshipers the Father desires. If their cultic worship had been sufficient for the Father, Jesus would not have brought the new way, that is, worshiping the Father "*through Jesus.*" Ridderbos admits

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[26] ὑμεῖς γινώσκετε αὐτό, ὅτι παρ' ὑμῖν μένει καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσται. Οὐκ ἀφήσω ὑμᾶς ὀρφανούς, ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς (John 14:17c-18).

[27] Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John,* 238.

[28] γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ τοιούτους ζητεῖ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας αὐτόν literally means that "For the Father seeks such people who worship Him."

[29] Bultmann, *The Gospel of John,* 190.

that through "Christ the way to the Father is being opened in a totally new manner (14:6), the limits of the old patterns of worship are being broken through, and the true worshipers are being brought together in a single fellowship."[30] At about noon at the well of Jacob, who was the father of both lines, Jesus graciously revealed to the Samaritan woman, who was despised by Jews, the Father's will, which neither Jews nor Samaritans could even imagine, and was calling her also to become a true worshiper *through Him.*

Consistency of Johannine Theology Drawn from the Johannine Literature

In addition, the point presented by Marshall supports the consistent claim of Johannine theology that the interrelation between worship and salvation is crucial in the story of the Samaritan woman. Marshal argues that according to John 3:16-17, 6:45 (which is Jesus' interpretation of Isaiah 54:13), and 12:32, it is obvious that Jesus offered *salvation to all*.[31] If so, *anyone* who has believed in Jesus and been saved is able to worship and approach the Father satisfactorily "*through Jesus*" and is thereby considered *a true worshiper* whom the Father seeks, regardless of ethnicity, gender, status, or religious background. This Johannine consistency would have had a serious impact on Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles at that time. Jesus' ministry that had started at Galilee (John 2) was now reaching the well of Jacob in Sychar in Samaria.

The Johannine Epistles also keep this Johannine theological consistency. For instance, John 3:16 says, "so that *whoever* believes in him may not perish but have eternal life."[32] This seems to echo at least the following verses: 1 John 5:12, "*one* who has the Son has life;"[33] 2 John 9b, "*one* remaining in the teaching has both the Father and the Son;"[34] and 3 John 11b,

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[30] Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John,* 164.

[31] I. Howard Marshall, *A Concise New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Academic, 2008), 198.

[32] ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ᾽ ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον (John 3:16b).

[33] ὁ ἔχων τὸν υἱὸν ἔχει τὴν ζωήν (1 John 5:12a).

[34] ὁ μένων ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ, οὗτος καὶ τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱὸν ἔχει (2 John 9b).

"*Whoever* does good is from God."[35] These verses agree with the claim within Johannine theology that God welcomes *anyone* willing to follow *Jesus*. This implies that anyone can also be saved and be *a true worshiper*.

Though the authorship of the Book of Revelation is disputed because its apocalyptic style is very different from other Johannine writings, including this book in my discussion is meaningful since it also provides points showing Johannine theological consistency related to John 4:23.

Revelation 3:7 says, "the Holy One, the True One says these things" (ESV).[36] Mounce comments about this verse, "In Jewish culture, the Holy One was a familiar title for God (e.g., Isa 40:25; Hab 3:3; Mark1:24; John 6:69; *1 Clem.* 23:5). Here it is joined with 'the True One' and applied to Christ."[37] Jesus' nature as "ἀληθινός" (True) agrees with both John 14:6 and the earlier comments on John 4:23. Revelation 19:11 also supports this point by stating that the Apostle John saw "the one sitting on it [the throne], called Faithful and True."[38] As for this verse, Roloff writes, "Leading the army is the Christ. . . . Jesus proves himself faithful to his promises."[39] Thus, in the Book of Revelation, the truth is also equivalent to and interchangeable with Jesus. The consistency of this in Johannine theology is crucial for understanding John 4:23.

In addition, Revelation 21:22 discloses a very important point by saying, "I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (NASB).[40] John of Patmos did not see any earthly temple "building"

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[35] ὁ ἀγαθοποιῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστιν (3 John 11b).

[36] Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἅγιος, ὁ ἀληθινός (Rev 3:7b).

[37] Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 99.

[38] ὁ καθήμενος ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν [καλούμενος] πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός (Rev 19:11b).

[39] Jurgen Roloff, *The Revelation of John* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 217.

[40] ναὸν οὐκ εἶδον ἐν αὐτῇ, ὁ γὰρ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ ναὸς αὐτῆς ἐστιν καὶ τὸ ἀρνίον (Rev 21:22). That ἐστιν is used for ὁ κύριος, ὁ θεὸς, ὁ παντοκράτωρ, καὶ τὸ ἀρνίον might have been the Johannine way of reveling the richness of Jesus' nature.

but recognized "*the True Temple,*" which was *Jesus Himself.*[41] If so, what Jesus said in John 4:23 would make sense. Worshiping in truth does not mean that true worshipers need any physical place for worship, but rather it stresses the need for "*the True Temple,*" which is the Lamb, Jesus himself. Thus, John 4:23 seems to mean that the Father seeks true worshipers who worship him not by certain obsolete forms of cultic rituals done without Jesus in Jerusalem or on Mount Gerizim but "*through Jesus*" since he as the Lamb is "*the True Temple*" in the eschatological era, which has already begun. Thus, Johannine theological consistency underlying the story of the Samaritan woman also would be worth considering.

Conclusion

The unique Johannine story of the Samaritan woman gives rich insights into the topic of *worship*. Clarifying through exegesis what Jesus meant by worshiping in "Spirit and truth" in John 4:23 is not an easy task because of the purposeful and theological reconstruction of the scene by John. The three approaches of this paper have enabled some conclusions. First, *the historical background of the story of the Samaritan woman* shows the importance of conducting appropriate worship before the LORD. The centuries-long dispute between Jews and Samaritans, also known as the Jerusalem-Gerizim controversy, and the formal worship without mutual *love* showed that there was an acute need for a new way of Worshiping God.

Second, *the meaning of John 4:23 in its context* shows Jesus' intentional approach to the woman at the well. This approach broke through the historically deadlocked situation. His revelation of the eschatological time as *present reality* opened the upgraded and fullest way of worship. The Johannine use of literary devices and grammar also contributed to expressing

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[41] Remember, John the Apostle reports at the beginning part of his gospel that John the Baptist viewed Jesus as the Lamb of God, saying, ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου (cf. John 1:29b). Thus, the depiction of Jesus as ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ could also be one of Johannine theological keys penetrating the Johannine literature, and supports my argument regarding the necessity of Jesus for appropriately approaching/worshiping the Father.

John's theological claim about the necessity explained by Jesus in approaching and worshiping the Father in an acceptable way. Examining a variety of depictions regarding Jesus in John's Gospel brings the reader to a deeper understanding of the meaning of John 4:23. Finally, Jesus' revelation of the Father's will—even to a Samaritan woman—proved the reality of the advent of the eschatological time.

Third, the *consistency of Johannine theology,* evident in various testimonies from the Johannine literature, shows the extension of mercy through the salvific ministry inaugurated by Jesus. This ministry led to welcoming true worshipers out of every group of people. John and/or the Johannine community depicted Jesus as ἀληθινός and reconfirmed the impact of Jesus, the Lamb, in the worship in the eschatological era. Therefore, according to Johannine theology, to worship ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ is to worship the Father *"through Jesus"* who is "*the True Temple*" in the eschatological era already inaugurated. By taking this new way as revealed by Jesus as the *present reality*, the Jerusalem-Gerizim controversy and the hostility and animosity between Jews and Samaritans would be settled before the Father, who seeks true worshipers to be upgraded. The Johannine community even reminds us that the time has come when *anyone* willing to worship the Father *through Jesus* can become a true worshiper. It also invites us to become true worshipers in our own times and places.

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Hospitality in the Teacher-Learner Relationship

Ernesto Sebastian Lozano Fernández

Introduction

I was probably in my third year of primary school when a teacher gave instructions for an activity that we needed to work on. The professor asked if we all understood the instructions. It was not clear to me if I should ask or not. I decided to wait a few minutes to see if any of my classmates were in the same dilemma. In the end, I took courage and went to her desk while she was writing some notes and told her very softly how I understood the instructions. She stood up from her desk and said in a loud voice, "Ernesto understood it this way . . . is he right?" All the class said, "no," after which she told me, "You were the only one, so I won't take more time; ask your classmates for instructions." All the class laughed loud enough for me to be embarrassed. That was probably the last time I asked a question of a professor during my primary years.

On another occasion, in the same school, with a different professor but with the same classmates, we received instructions to bring a certain material for an activity. The professor asked for two matchboxes. One student rose from his seat and asked, "Filled or empty boxes?" We all laughed (including myself), while others made a bullying sound, like telling him how stupid he was for asking the question. The professor stood and said, "I think I have to clarify that question . . . please bring two matchboxes with matches." We all were in silence and embarrassed. We all thought that the boxes were to be empty, that we were going to use the boxes, but not the matches. This particular student was brave to stand and ask, but we did not value his question.

Although the examples given above are somehow "childish" behaviors, similar reactions happen at every level of education. Professors mock stu-

dents' questions or misunderstandings, and students react towards questions of peers. There is often a sense of fear in classrooms. Things like fear between student and professor or lack of empathy in the classroom make education a painful process. Through this essay, I will expand upon the meaning of hospitality, its application in education, and how it affects the learning space. In addition, I will provide examples and show how this can help in the process of transformation, not only from the professor's perspective but for learners and the community.

Hospitality and the Scripture

Hospitality should not be a foreign term for Christians. However, this is not true in many cases. Hospitality is rooted in the Bible, in both the New and the Old Testaments. The Bible relates its importance and the reasons for its practice.

In the Old Testament, Leviticus 19:34 says, "The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God" (NIV). The foreigners usually did not have rights in a land that was not their own. The lack of rights deprived them of freedom. "Aliens were kept ethnically apart." Those attitudes towards foreigners are not only old attitudes. They remain until now (Milgrom 2004, 244). Joe M. Sprinkle says that although some people may have brought different "pagan practices," that did not justify mistreatment by the Israelites. The Israelites, based on their experience in a foreign land, should have been able to demonstrate "empathy" (Sprinkle 2015, 131).

In the New Testament, Romans 12:13 says, "Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." In focusing on matters of hospitality, Paul was concerned when missionaries depended on the "hospitality of others" (Matera 2010, 292). Andrew B. Spurgeon and Chiu Eng Tan refer to hospitality as "fellowship." Such fellowship should be a genuine and "non-hypocritical" fellowship. The literal Greek translation for hospitality is "love for a stranger." This means that hospitality is not only for other Christians or relatives but for those who are not family members or friends. Paul's message about hospitality is that it is not optional but a mandate (Spurgeon and Tan 2013, 274-275).

The main example of hospitality in the Bible is Jesus. Jesus represents the hospitality of God by his obedience and becoming a human in heart. Jesus demonstrated hospitality by going to people and interacting with the unwanted and sinners. Furthermore, Jesus shared meals with the people and sat down to listen to their stories. When persons accepted Jesus into their houses, they welcomed the Spirit of God and "became empowered by the same Spirit." With the Spirit, they also became hospitable to the stranger (Yong 2008, 101, 106).

When accepting Jesus, we accept the "Christian obligation to be hospitable" and to share with strangers, as Jesus did. Biblically, we are called to preach and pray as well as practice the sacraments. However, those practices do not lead us to be holy people if we do not practice hospitality. "Hospitality is part of [Christians'] holiness, as they have learned to welcome the stranger as the very presence of God" (Hauerwas 1986, 108-109,146). To be Christian is to be the representative of God and his word to the world. Grant Zweigle, in *Worship, Wonder and Way: Reimagining Evangelism as Missional Practice,* quotes Bryan Stone as saying that the church of today should be a church transformed by the Holy Spirit "through core practices such as worship, forgiveness, hospitality, and economic sharing" (Zweigle 2015, 64). Such hospitality is not only to be extended to the members of the body of Christ, as Zweigle says. Evangelism is to share the gospel with non-Christians. Hence, hospitality is also for them (Yong 2008, 115).

We can see that hospitality in the Bible demonstrates love to the stranger, openness, respect, empathy, honesty, and other values. These may be practiced in church but rarely in classrooms or in education. Christian and non-Christian educators should retain those practices inside a classroom, with students, who are strangers, not only to the educator but to a certain subject. What is the meaning of hospitality when applied to a setting where not many people consider it appropriate? In a context like mine in Peru, authority in the classroom is represented by power or even dictatorship, not hospitality. The following section addresses the different implications of hospitality.

Hospitality

The word hospitality may have different connotations. There are not many people who have attempted to bring hospitality to an educational space like a classroom or to a professor. Hospitality, in my culture, is limited to a house setting or to a small group of people assigned to be hospitable so other people around can feel comfortable.

In the small town of Santa Rosa, thirty minutes away from my city, there is a particular practice. Family or friends are gathered in the house during the afternoon as part of their routine or for a visit. At 6:00 pm, when near the sunset, the head of the house stands up, turns the lights on, and approaches each member of his or her family or friends, shakes hands, and says, "Good evening." This is an indication that a person is welcome to stay for more time or even for dinner.

But hospitality goes beyond welcoming people whom we know. Hospitality means a way of living so as to be able to know others and to allow oneself to be known. In the Benedictine heart, hospitality means love demonstrated through practice. This can mean opening up space and being vulnerable. "To receive others is to expose myself to all sorts of frightful dangers of attachment and rejection." But to be hospitable is to be complete, and this only happens when we let other people "in" (Homan and Pratt 2008, 1-14).

Although hospitality implies the open doors of our houses, this is not the only way in which hospitality can be expressed. Henri J. Nouwen, in *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life,* says that in order to be hospitable, we need to become a "stranger to ourselves." To know what we are lacking is to be humble. To be ourselves in that particular position is to allow us to understand others more. Hospitality is extended to the space as well as to the person who offers it. Hospitality is to create a space in which strangers can move freely like a friend rather than "an enemy." Nouwen says that the intention of hospitality is not to change people or to side with them necessarily, but rather to give them the space "where change can take place." Many people believe that when someone is hospitable, he or she is inviting the guest to be like them. But in fact, hospitality allows the guest to see what he or she can do on his or her own. The process

of being hospitable is not an easy one, and in many cases, it requires abandonment (Nouwen 1973, 63-77).

Hospitality has been practiced throughout history as a priority. The Desert Fathers were early Christian hermits and monks whose practices included fasting and ascetic life. Although these practices included separation from others as part of their rules of life, love to others was more important than "knowledge, solitude, and prayer." Overall, hospitality was a "top priority" (Merton 1970, 3-17).

To be hospitable is to live in community, and that community should be a community of forgiveness. Nouwen says that forgiveness is what holds community life together (Nouwen 2006, 119-120). One cannot experience hospitality or even provide it if there is no forgiveness. At many times, I was offended by the community in which I live now. It is hard for me to feel welcomed in a space where people who have offended me are present. I always thought that I should be the one asking for forgiveness, but the reality is that I am the one who should forgive and enter a place with freedom in my heart and mind. Matthew 18:21b-22 says, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." To be hospitable is to forgive.

The communities in which we are to set examples of hospitality can be communities of problems. As there are problems among secular communities, there are problems in Christian ones. Dietrich Bonhoeffer says that, after all, Jesus "lived in the midst of his enemies." Our work as Christians is to bring peace in the midst of problems (Bonhoeffer 1954, 17).

Hospitality has different implications. To be hospitable is to practice service. We are called to "be" servants and not to "act" like servants. To be servants is to be listeners in our place, where we host others. It is not just to open doors or places. There are many people that are willing to open spaces but with conditions. To listen is not reserved for the ones who are trained to listen. Richard J. Foster says that we do not need to provide "right answers" but just to hear. To be good listeners to others, we have to have had good experiences in listening to what God wants to say to us (Foster

1978, 137-139).

How can hospitality be extended to educational settings? Is it possible to apply it in classrooms by welcoming the stranger, showing respect, empathy, and love, opening doors, listening, and other practices of hospitality? Are the students to be treated as part of our families? Can instructors guide students towards this? If so, how will this create transformation in educational settings? In the following part, I will extend the concept to classrooms, with teachers as hosts, learners as visitors, and instruction as trust.

Hospitality and Education

There are two main texts that talk about hospitality in the educational setting. Both books were written by Parker Palmer. The first one is *To Know as we are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*, and the second, *The Courage to Teach*. Both sources are the basis for the composition of this essay. I first encountered Palmer in the "Transformation Across Adolescence" class under the guidance of Dr. James Hampton. Palmer brought light to me by showing that the educator's role is not only what is usually the expectation worldwide, i.e., to give information or even to be a model for others. The "Spirituality and Transformational Learning" class, under the guidance of Dr. Floyd Cunningham, was very helpful in understanding the meaning of the spirituality of the instructor.

One of the reasons for educators to understand hospitality and to see the importance of spirituality in their lives is because, at many times, they do not have an idea of the high importance that this attitude has for students. Palmer relates this as "the pain of disconnection." Students are eager to learn or to receive guidance. What Palmer wants is to change "traditional education," which is shaping the student to a certain mold (Palmer 1993, x). This is similar to what Paulo Freire refers to as the "banking concept of education." The banking concept is the process of depositing, in which students are mere receivers, static, and with no option to think or to create. The change that Freire wants toward the elimination of the banking concept is to liberate the educational system, "reconciling the poles of contradictions so that both are simultaneously teacher and students" (Freire 1984, 58).

The purpose for a teacher in finding his or her spirituality is to be able to create openness. As presented above, hospitality is this openness, and when there is openness, like in its regular setting in the classroom, it welcomes "diversity and conflict." It is in the authentic spirituality of the teacher where truth is found, regardless of what that truth is. In traditional education, fear is reigning, while in truth conveyed with hospitality, fear is gone (Palmer 1993, xi).

The previous statement represents the educational system in Peru and other contexts. A few years ago, there was an article in a Peruvian newspaper about racism in private schools. Students with certain family names were accepted as students, while others, regardless of their economic status, were not accepted. Private schools are known for being expensive, and not all people are able to send their children to those schools. However, there are people, who with hard work, are able to increase their economic situation and so create new opportunities for their children. Private schools were not willing to receive people from the highlands or jungle; they wanted people from the urban areas and, in many cases, with a certain skin color.

Palmer says that "to teach is to create a space in which obedience to truth is practiced." And practice does not come from repetition or memorizing, as traditional education mandates, but brings students to the area of reality in the community. "This may mean working with materials, creating artifacts, and solving problems" (Palmer 1993, xii,xvii).

One of my experiences mentioned above created fear, and the other created courage. I was embarrassed for asking a question about something I did not understand and was put down in front of the whole classroom. I also remember that there were other people who asked questions, and their questions were right and were answered. The second experience did not help me to get through the embarrassing experiences that I had. From that point, I decided to keep the questions only in my own mind.

There was a time, in my graduate education at APNTS, when I faced a different fear, the fear of talking. I came from Peru, where English is not an official language. The official language is Spanish. When I came to the Philippines, I needed a new language. Although I studied some basic English

before, I did not have the platform to practice. I needed to learn a new way to speak in a new culture. A certain group of people decided that the way I spoke was "funny." I lacked certain pronunciations. I had a different accent than the others. This attitude created in me a sense of rejection and fear of talking for a semester. I avoided participating with others or even asking questions in class or interacting with people. Even nowadays, due to that experience, I feel a lack of confidence when speaking or even writing in English. I decided to stay in fear rather than to learn, "boxed and tied." In this case, fear was not imposed by a professor but by peers, learners who were walking with me in the process of learning (Palmer 1993, 39).

Fear is more common than people think, and fear is present not only in the students but also in educators. Many people think that educators, especially those with years of experience, do not face fear when, in fact, fear is present every single day. I had never thought that arrogant teachers, who entered a room full of power, are usually hiding their fear, but Palmer, in *The Courage to Teach,* says that "arrogance is often a mask of fear" (Palmer 2017, 51)

I remember the first time I was asked to teach in a Sunday school class. All the students were adolescents and younger than I. I prepared for over a week for my class. I entered the room with fear and no idea what the students were going to think about me. They were used to one teacher, and she was not able to be there for a few weeks. They really loved her. The students looked at me and took their places immediately. I entered pretending to know all with "arrogance," looking at the students as not knowing anything, as "empty vessels." After an opening prayer, introduction, and a few words, I ran out of words and ideas and had no more to say. The students noticed my fear, and this turned into an opportunity for them to take over the class with noise, laughs, comments, and more. Although I prepared for my classes well and since have improved, I still have fear in facing them.

Hospitality in education requires certain aspects such as humility, care, personal relationship, listening, and silence. The following section addresses those issues in the classroom setting.

Humility

When people open their houses to provide hospitality to a stranger, the first thing is to introduce the place. Introducing the house is intended to make people feel comfortable and at home. The same should happen in education.

Humility in hospitality is part of the spiritual feature of a professor. It is in humility that I am able to see everyone and their needs and requirements. It is in humility that I no longer see myself alone with what I want to provide (Palmer 1993, 108). It was in humility that the Desert Fathers were able to find God since humility was their first commandment. Matthew 5:3 says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (NIV). When a person forgives, it represents humility (Merton 1970, 52-53).

As Christians, we are to follow Jesus' life. Jesus represented humility in his teaching, in the way he talked, and how he told his disciples and followers to obey his example. The Beatitudes are one example, but Jesus taught humility in many other ways. Andrew Murray, in *Humility: The Beauty of Holiness*, writes that Jesus offered himself as a teacher. In Matthew 11:29, Jesus says, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (NIV). Murray says that it is in humility that we find salvation. Humility in Jesus was not only through words but in actions. In his role as leader, he demonstrated humility by washing others' feet and serving at the table. Actions demonstrated Jesus' role as a servant. Servanthood is to be practiced by all and engraved in our words and actions (Murray 1973, 24-28).

Hospitality "means receiving each other, our struggles, and our newborn ideas" (Palmer 1993, 74). It is not possible to do such things unless we learn from Jesus and become servants who are able to accept diversity in a room full of people with different struggles, needs, points of view, and voices.

Care and Personal Relationship

I was in high school when I experienced something that I still have not

forgotten. I was not a tall person, like other peers my same age. I started to grow mostly between the last year of high school and the first year of college. I could easily get lost among primary-level students. My parents were afraid that something could happen since I was small and thin. My father went to pick me up every afternoon at the school, and we walked together. For some reason, one day, I decided to walk home by myself with a friend and stop by his house to pick up some books I needed. My father did not find me, and my classmates told him I had already left. He returned home, which was ten blocks away. When he did not find me at home, he returned to the school, and my classmates were still there. My classmates saw my father worried about me and so decided to divide into groups and follow different ways that I could have taken. When I finally arrived home, I found my father with almost twenty classmates waiting outside my house. Some started to cheer, and others ran to see me. Next to my father was my Physical Education instructor, who heard I was "missing." I was embarrassed. It was not until years later that I started to value the care of the group.

The relationship between teacher and student is as important as the one the students have with their parents. It is in a classroom that students expend considerable time. Many of the professors become "insensitive" to the life of students, basically only caring for grades and papers. Professors tend to believe that they can know their students by the things they write. It is not surprising that students pull back from their superiors, creating a "resistance to learning." Teaching, according to Nouwen, is the perfect space to eliminate such resistance. It is in teaching that teachers have the great advantage of creating a space where "students and teachers can enter into a fearless communication with each other." Care and relationship are presented when teachers allow learners to participate when the teacher can let the learner know that "they have something to offer." Then, they are no longer passive learners. This is an opportunity to develop hospitality. The learner can share what is experienced in his or her life. It is in the classroom where the host helps the guest to find his or her "hidden talents," touching their reality (Nouwen 1973, 84-88). Palmer also says that the "personal relationship between the knower and the known" invites students "by

interacting with the world, not by viewing it from afar" (Palmer 1993, 35).

Listening

Among the things that a good host can provide besides shelter is the act of listening. Many learners are eager to talk, but because of fear, they do not. Hosting means sharing. Lecturing demands that the learner only receives. Listening in my context is more submission to authority than healing. This means that the professor is right, and the student is forced to listen. There is no healing, which means that there is no listening to the student's story, life, or experience. In a classroom, students should be able to find a place to express things they are not able to do in other contexts. A professor would stand in the front and say, "Listen to me if you do not want to be in trouble," or, "Listen to me, if you don't want to fail your exam." That is the only way that instructors will use "listen" as part of the process of education. In other words, if students do not listen to what teachers want to say, they fail in the educational process.

In contrast, part of the Benedictine rules to achieve spirituality in the life of a teacher was the art of listening. Monks were called to be listeners, but listening not on the "intellectual comprehension" level but attentiveness to different aspects of life. It is important to learn how to listen because it is in listening that a person is able to hear "screams, and the sound of another's suffering." If we are not listening to the pain of the world, we are not practicing love. "Listening is the core meaning of hospitality. It is something we can give anyone and everyone" (Homan and Pratt 2008, 208-212). Listening is not an easy process. It requires practice; in fact, listening is part of the "life-long process of learning" (Waal 1984, 41-43).

Listening is not a practice commonly given by teachers, at least in my context. If listening is practiced, it can provide tremendous impetus to transformation. When we learn to listen to others, we are learning about ourselves. This is because we can learn from all. Educators do not just offer a voice but provide a platform for listening (Palmer 1993, 101).

Silence

Silence is often considered ignorance. But this is not true in most cases. When we learn to listen, we can hear things from the silence in a room. Palmer says that "we need to abandon the notion that 'nothing is happening'" (Palmer 1993, 80). Silence should be taken as an advantage rather than a disadvantage. It is in silence that reflection can be found. In my context, professors want quick answers to questions, answers that demonstrate knowledge, ability, and capacity. Professors want quick results as well. That demonstrates that they are good at teaching.

When students do not respond, teachers have the tendency to consider them as obstacles. Parker calls these types of students "students from hell" and the setting a "classroom coma," or death with no interaction. Professors have to be aware of the conditions behind students' reactions. Those students are full of fear, often marginalized, speechless in their own homes. It is necessary to open space for these students to express themselves (Palmer 2017, 40-46).

Physical Hospitality

When I finished high school, I was sure that I wanted to study architecture. Many pastors called me to supervise, advise, or design classrooms. Most of the churches had Sunday school classes. Some churches adapted their churches for community projects such as Compassion International or for schools.

When I visited the different spaces in churches or schools, I was surprised by the conditions. Churches decided to build three classrooms in space big enough for one. There were windowless areas in classrooms and bathrooms, dark hallways, stairs with no handrails, no areas for recreation, and the list could go on. The main purpose was to fulfill what organizations were requiring. In other cases, such as for-profit schools, administrators filled the rooms with chairs so more students could fit. The more students in a classroom, the more money the school could generate. As an architect, I highly criticized the infrastructure not only for safety reasons but because it demonstrated the lack of care for students. When I offered my critique, the answer from the church leaders usually was, "Thank you for coming; we will let you know."

Parker says that the physical setup of the classroom highly affects the learning process. A room where the strangers do not have the possibility of interacting does not create hospitality but irritation, especially when the classroom is to "be a place where every stranger and every strange utterance is met with welcome." Parker says that pain is present in the process of education. Such pain should be removed. The place is to be part of the healing process.

The classical physical arrangement in the educational system in Peru is in all levels the same, with small changes depending on the age of the students. For example, in kindergarten, children are in a circle of tables in groups of four, six, or more, and the instructor is at the front. At the primary level, the students mostly gather in groups of two, with the instructor in the front. With high schools, colleges, and even graduate schools, we have individual desks with instructors in the front. This represents the "front-classroom authority structure." Front-classroom authority is when the power and the knowledge come from one person, i.e., the instructor, not the student. The student adds zero value or no knowledge to the environment or to the learning experience. The teacher should not create hospitality with words only. It is important where he or she locates him or herself in the room. When a teacher sits in the circle and talks, "we are all being invited to create a community of learning by engaging the ideas" (Palmer 2017, 74-75).

Palmer, in *The Courage to Teach,* describes six "paradoxical" aspects that work in the teaching process space. "The first one is the space should be bounded and open." This suggests that the space should be open for everyone to talk, with materials that all can access, and bounded because limitations help people to have a focus. A space that does not have limits becomes a complicated one to manage. One example of this is confidentiality. In openness, everyone has the freedom to talk, and in boundaries, whatever is shared stays among the people in it. The second paradox is that "the space should be hospitable and charged." As much as we want to create freedom in the mind of the students with a space, the classes need to have an essence. Learners come to learn and find that information comes from different sources. The third paradox is that "the space should invite the

voice of individuals and the group." Education does not only come from books and teachers. People learn from contributions from different sources. The individual voice is important, but the group is as important. When educators make decisions based on one rather than the group, there is an expectation to fail. The fourth paradox is that "the space should honor the 'little' stories and the 'big' ones." This one talks about respect. There is a tendency to get lost in big stories or big issues so that educators have the tendency not to pay attention to the small ones. The fifth paradox is that "the space should support solitude and surround it with the resources of community." If learning does not take place using the community that surrounds us, then learning is only an individual act. It is important to know what is happening around us to see the reality. Learning in community "helps us see both barriers and opening to the truth that lives within us." The last paradox is that "the space should welcome both silence and speech." Silence is considered in my context, and in many others, a sign of ignorance. But "silence itself can be a sort of speech" that allows us to think deeper (Palmer 2017, 76-80).

Conclusions

We are called to be hospitable, not only in our way of living in our homes but in our actions. Those actions are extended towards educational settings by developing spirituality in the life of the educator. The classroom becomes the place in which students are comfortable, fearless, and welcomed.

Classic education is inhospitable. It does not allow people to enter with new ideas and does not allow the voice of the student to be valid. There are, in many instances, no boundaries. Hospitality, on the other hand, is a welcoming setting in which everyone is welcomed and treated in ways that are not expected.

It is in classic education where the lack of spirituality in the teacher prevents connection with the learners. Teachers are the highest and only source of information. It is in hospitality where the learner finds the space for interaction. Coming from different oppressive settings, including homes and previous institutions, hospitable classrooms, and professors, will allow learners to be transformed in their way of thinking and acting.

Hospitality is an art that allows education to be painless and enjoyable. "To teach is to create a space in which obedience to truth is practiced" (Palmer 1993, xii). Such obedience is not forced. In obedience, we learn humility, care, and relationship and come to listen.

Educators should learn to take advantage of fear and silence. It is in those aspects that learning is generated.

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Do Children have a Vocation?
Exploring the Theology of Vocation with a
"Child in the Midst"

Sheryl Grunwald

When I started school, I fell in love with my first-grade teacher and determined, as a six-year-old, that I wanted to be a teacher just like her. If anyone asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, my answer would always be, "A teacher!" In my free time, I played school, teaching my little sister and neighbor children. When I became a teenager, I begged the Sunday school teachers to let me help them teach the younger children, eventually becoming experienced enough to teach my own class. I tutored other students throughout high school. My dream finally became a reality when I received my teaching degree from a university and began teaching in a Christian elementary school. One might say that I had realized my "calling."

Clearly, there were stirrings of that call or "vocation" throughout my childhood and adolescence, although my faith tradition did not use the term "vocation." My God-given gifts and abilities were unfolding and developing, and I sought out ways to exercise them, grateful for my parents and church family, who supported my endeavors. Although their modeling and mentoring were not always intentional, they certainly did not deter me from serving. They helped me to see that I had a purpose and was able to make a significant contribution even though I wasn't an adult, even though I didn't know all the answers.

In Ephesians 2:10, Paul writes, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Paul's words describe an aspect of vocation that speaks of living out our faith as disciples in a much more comprehensive way than simply a career. This verse, and the broader theology of vocation, must be read with

a "child in the midst." Are children created to do good works *as children*? Does this verse apply to children, or is it something we simply prepare them to do in the future? In my personal story, was my vocation simply something to which I aspired and then grew up to fulfill, or did God have good works for me to do as a child?

Throughout the history of the church, theologians from both Catholic and Protestant traditions have written about calling or vocation in the Christian life,[1] but the majority of those writings appear to overlook or exclude children. Bringing a child "into the midst" raises several questions that this article hopes to address. Do children have a vocation? (It is my belief that they do.) If so, what is the vocation of children? How do Scripture and theologians talk of vocation in general, of the vocation of children, and what aspects of their teaching can be applied to children? What are the implications for families and the church? How might we better encourage children in their vocation? Exploring these questions about children and vocation will help establish a deeper theological foundation that can inform the practical side of child-rearing and ministering with children.

The attempt of this article to answer the question of the vocation of children begins by defining vocation. It then moves to a description of the theology of vocation based on Scripture and tradition, seeking, at all times, to allow the "child in the midst" to inform the theological reflection. It looks at examples of children in the Bible who reflect a sense of vocation, followed by an exploration of what theologians have written specifically about the vocation of children. Using Scripture and sources from tradition, the article identifies several dimensions of children's vocation. Finally, it suggests some implications for parents and the church.

What is Vocation?

The word vocation comes from the Latin word *vocare*, which means "to call." "Vocation" and "calling" essentially have the same meaning. However, interpretations of the concept of vocation vary. Some people use the word

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[1] For an overview of key theological writings, see William C. Placher, ed., *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

vocation to describe the job they do: their career or occupation, similar to my experience. Others who are preparing for full-time ministry talk about a "call" to ministry, a special word or sign from God that leads them to full-time "vocational" service. Still, others focus on whatever gives them purpose, meaning, or fulfillment in life. While each of these interpretations applies to the concept of vocation, the full meaning is much broader and deeper, encompassing our entire lives. As Christians, central to our idea of vocation is the notion "that God is calling us to a life centered in Christ and to ways in which we meaningfully participate in and contribute to God's work in the world."[2]

For Christians, vocation, in its general sense, is based on Jesus' teaching in Mark 12:30-31 (cf. Matt 22:37-39): "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." The call to love God and love our neighbor, a general calling, is common to all believers, regardless of age, gender, or class. It is a call to be a child of God, to follow Christ as his disciple, and to live out our faith daily in the world. "It has to do with God's presence in the world and with how he works through human beings for his purposes. For Christians, vocation discloses the spirituality of every-day life."[3] Vocation begins with the worship of God and moves to participation in his redemptive work in the world, "to enjoy, hope for, pray for, and work toward God's shalom. This is what it means for Christians to be in Christ and to follow Christ."[4] Simply put, our general vocation is to love God and love others.

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[2] Marcia J. Bunge, "The Vocation of the Child: Theological Perspectives on the Particular and Paradoxical Roles and Responsibilities of Children," in *The Vocation of the Child*, ed. Patrick McKinley Brennan (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 32.

[3] Gene Edward Veith Jr., "Vocation: The Theology of the Christian Life," *Journal of Markets & Morality* 14, No. 1 (Spring 2011): 119, accessed September 21, 2017, http://www.marketsandmorality.com/index.php/mandm/article/view/ 14/12.

[4] Douglas J. Schuurman, *Vocation: Discerning our Callings in Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 18.

But vocation also has a more nuanced personal application. God also calls people to "particular" vocations. The terms may vary: "offices," "stations," "roles," or "places of responsibility," but in every case, it is a call for people to use their gifts, talents, and abilities to serve the well-being of others in their sphere of influence, whatever that sphere of influence may be. "God's call to be a Christian must qualify every aspect of life: marriage and family, employment relationships, political life, as well as the life of the church. The call to love and serve the Lord, made active in a person's life, transforms all spheres and activities into so many callings."[5] Therefore, the particular calling or vocation, or the way an individual loves those who are closest at hand, will manifest itself differently for every person. It becomes the channel for each person to express his or her love and faith in a concrete manner. As Luther strongly asserted, "God does not need our good works, but our neighbor does."[6]

In looking at general vocation from the perspective of loving God and others and understanding a particular vocation as living out our faith with those in our spheres of influence, it seems very natural to apply the doctrine of vocation to children. Although their expression of faith may not look like adults' love, children can love God with all their hearts as they grow as disciples. Children are quick to love, and they are able to express their love in practical ways, serving others who are closest to them—their parents and family members, friends, neighbors, and teachers. When the definition of vocation is limited to a religious calling or an occupation, it excludes children who do not yet have a role as a worker or are too young for vocational ministry. The broader, more encompassing definition demonstrates the reality that children can have an active role as disciples of Jesus, impacting their world. Vocation *does* apply to children!

A Theology of Vocation

Historically, the doctrine of vocation developed as a result of the Protestant

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[5] Ibid., 35.

[6] Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1957), 10.

Reformation, becoming a distinctive and influential feature of both the Lutheran and the Reformed wings of the Reformation. "According to this doctrine, all relational spheres—domestic, economic, political, cultural—are religiously and morally meaningful as divinely given avenues through which persons respond obediently to the call of God to serve their neighbor in love."[7] Viewing vocation in such all-encompassing terms marked a significant shift from the understanding of the Catholic Church, which saw vocation solely as the calling to serve within the church as a priest, monk, or nun. As the Reformation spread throughout Europe, support grew for the expanded doctrine of vocation that included all Christians. "*Every* Christian had at least two vocations: the call to become part of the people of God (Luther called it 'spiritual calling,' the Puritans later called it 'general calling') and the call to a particular line of work (for Luther, 'external calling,' for the Puritans, 'particular calling')."[8]

While both Martin Luther and John Calvin wrote on the doctrine of vocation, Luther, by far, was the most prolific. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, based on 1 Peter 2:10, formed a key foundation for his theology of vocation. Luther wrote:

> For whoever comes out of the water of baptism can boast that he is already a consecrated priest. . . . It follows from this argument that there is no true, basic difference between laymen and priests, princes and bishops, between religious and secular, except for the sake of office and work. A cobbler, a smith, a peasant—each has the work and office of his trade, and yet they are all alike consecrated priests and bishops. Further, everyone must benefit and serve every other by means of his own work or office so that in this way, many kinds of work may be done for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the community, just as all the members of the body

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[7] Schuurman, 4.

[8] William C. Placher, "Every Work a Calling: Vocations after the Reformation, 1500-1800," in *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation,* ed. William C. Placher (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 206.

serve one another [1 Cor 12:14-26].[9]

Luther emphasized that all believers are called to love God and serve their neighbor, expressing their faith in works of love. No occupations or states of life were superior or more spiritual than others; all could benefit the church and the greater community. While today it may not seem to be a radical thought, the idea that "any station in life (and by '*Stand*' or station, Luther meant family role as a parent, grandparent, child, and so on, as well as a job) could be equally a place from which to serve God constituted a great breakthrough toward equality."[10] Galatians 5:6 also supported the equality of all: "For in Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." For the Reformers, faith expressing itself through love was the essence of living out one's vocation for every believer.

Scriptures describing the body of Christ and spiritual gifts, including Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and 1 Peter 4:10, also have been used to give support to the doctrine of every believer having a vocation. In *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation,* Martin Luther refers to 1 Corinthians 12:12, writing, ". . . all Christians are truly of the 'spiritual estate,' and there is among them no difference at all but that of office. . . . We are all one body, yet every member has its own work, whereby it serves every other, all because we have one baptism, one gospel, one faith, and are alike Christians."[11] He even goes so far as to use the image of the body to speak about believers' role in all of society, suggesting that throughout society, every person has a calling that is part of a greater whole.[12] Using the image of the body powerfully illustrates the equality of believers; every part

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[9] Martin Luther, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation," in *Luther's Works,* American Edition, 55 vols. ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehman (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg and Fortress, and St. Louis: Concordia, 1955-86), 44:129-30.

[10] Placher, 207.

[11] Luther, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation," in *Luther's Works*, 44:128.

[12] Marc Kolden, "Luther on Vocation," *Journal of Lutheran Ethics* 1, No. 2 (October 2001), accessed Sept 22, 2017, https://www.elca.org/JLE/Articles/1015. Kolden is referring to *Luther's Works,* 45:100.

is different, but all are interdependent. They need one another, and each part must do its work to make the body function according to its design. God gifts each believer differently, with the purpose of building up the whole body. Paul even uses the terms "calling" and "gift" interchangeably in his passages on spiritual gifts, possibly suggesting that the specific gifts and offices of the church are also callings.[13] Therefore when believers use their spiritual gifts as part of the body of Christ, they are fulfilling their vocation.

When a child is put in the midst of the theology of vocation, based upon the doctrines of the priesthood of all believers and the body of Christ, all that is written readily applies to children as well as adults. If all believers are priests, any child who is a believer also is a priest. The work of children is consecrated to God. And if children are believers, they are part of the body of Christ. They may be one of the weaker parts, but Paul writes that those parts are indispensable (1 Cor 12:22). The body cannot say to a child, "I don't need you!" because we are one body. Additionally, since children are a part of the body of Christ, they are gifted by God to serve. First Peter 4:10 says, "*Each one* should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." Saying "each one" includes children, for they are part of the body. Children DO have a place in the theology of vocation!

The challenge in practically applying a theology of vocation to children is that vocation largely has been thought of and written about in adult terms. At least three factors contribute to such a view.[14] First, most theologies of vocation emphasize discernment, a cognitive skill, rather than the experiential. Children lack such capacity for rational thought because of their developmental limitations. Second, children do not have the same

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[13] Schuurman, 30.

[14] Kiara A. Jorgenson, "Wild Rumpus Revisited: the Benefits of Outdoor Play in the Vocation of the Child," *Word & World* 35, no. 4 (September 2015): 359, accessed Sept. 21, 2017, http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=0cece324-c917-4816-8e11-21e361ed07db%40sessionmgr4010.

freedom of choice as adults. Third, children have limited influence on others. They cannot bear the same level of responsibility or be as capable as adults. Therefore, the question with which we need to wrestle is: What does vocation look like in practical terms for people who have no job and are still growing and developing, possibly unaware of the gifts they have been given? In order to answer the question of children's vocation, Scripture, tradition (what theologians have specifically written about the vocation of children), and developmental theory must be considered.

The Vocation of Children in the Bible

Samuel embodies the concept of vocation as it applies to a child. Even before God called him in 1 Samuel 3, we learn that "Samuel was ministering before the Lord" (2:18), "the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with men" (2:26), and "the boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli" (3:1). Samuel, a boy, is serving the Lord and serving Eli. We do not know the specifics of the tasks, but he has favor with people, meaning his service has an impact on the people around him. His growth in favor with God makes his heart open and receptive to God when God calls him for a specific task. The fact that he runs to Eli when he hears the voice demonstrates that Samuel is fulfilling his general vocation in serving Eli. And Eli's discernment helps Samuel understand God's call. Samuel is only a child, but God speaks both to him and through him, anointing him as a prophet even when young. Samuel's life displays both a general and particular vocation.

Naaman's servant girl is less known, but she still embodies the concept of vocation. In 2 Kings 5:3, the Israelite girl, captured in war and made to be a servant, tells her mistress, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." This short passage shows, first, that the young girl has faith in God. Second, she is expressing her faith in love, even in what must have been a difficult circumstance for her. She did not have to tell Naaman about the prophet Elisha, but she demonstrated love and compassion. Ultimately, her act of compassion leads to Naaman's healing and his belief in the God of Israel.

A third child living out his vocation is David. In 1 Samuel 16, the

prophet Samuel comes to Jesse's home to anoint the next king. Jesse doesn't even think of bringing David to the sacrifice but leaves him out tending the sheep. The Lord has to remind Samuel that "the Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (16:7). When David finally is summoned, Samuel anoints him to be king, and the Spirit of the Lord comes upon David in power from that day forward (16:13). In the anointing, David discovers his specific calling, something that would unfold in the future, but the Holy Spirit comes upon him and empowers him as a child. As David's story continues in 1 Samuel 17, the story of David and Goliath, David's repeated referral to his God and the demonstration of his unwavering faith in God (17:26, 36,37, 45-47), express his general vocation of loving God. The simple fact that he serves as a shepherd and is obedient to his father in taking food to his brothers (17:17-20) gives evidence of the chores or tasks that are a part of his childhood, giving him an opportunity to act out his faith in love for others.

One final example of a child living out his vocation is found in the New Testament: Jesus. Luke 2:39-52 records the incident of twelve-year-old Jesus being found in the temple with the religious leaders. When questioned by his parents, Jesus replies, "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" (2:49). In reflecting on this passage, John Carroll suggests, "Though the details are hidden from us, the narrative intimates that Jesus' emerging sense of vocation springs from his religious formation within a household where fidelity to God's ways matters."[15] As a child, Jesus expresses that general vocation of loving God. However, "a less than submissive reply to his mother exhibits his awareness that he is God's Son—and that this filial role transcends his family ties to Joseph and Mary. This is the family to which he belongs, the one that defines his identity and vocation

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[15] John T. Carroll, "What Then Will This Child Become?: Perspectives on Children in the Gospel of Luke," in *The Child in the Bible,* ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), Kindle, Loc. 2229.

and claims his allegiance."[16] Even though Jesus has an awareness of his particular vocation, he returns with Mary and Joseph and "was obedient to them" (v. 51). Like Samuel, "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men" (v. 52). Jesus fulfills his vocation as a child in being obedient to his parents and in finding favor with those around him.

Theologians' Perspectives on the Vocation of Children

Throughout church history, there has been a minimal focus on children in general, and theologians have been virtually silent on the topic of the vocation of children. Martin Luther is one theologian who reflected on children quite deeply and also incorporated them into his theology of vocation. In declaring that baptism welcomes everyone into the vocation of priesthood, he destroyed all barriers, including age.[17] Time and time again, he included children in his list of those who are called. "Every person surely has a calling. This includes kings who govern, mothers who tend babies, fathers who earn a livelihood, pupils who apply themselves to studies, and children who honor parents."[18] It is easy to see that, for Luther, vocation referred not simply to a person's occupation but to all relationships, situations, and involvements. Because Luther believed that everyone has a calling, including children, he wrote on the roles, duties, and responsibilities of children, regardless of age, that would benefit the family and the community.[19] He firmly believed that the first responsibility of children was to their parents, showing them love, honor, and obedience. We see this in his *Large Catechism*, written to help parents and the church raise children in the faith. In this and other writings, Luther demonstrated a belief that children could

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[16] Ibid., Loc. 2250.

[17] Timothy J. Wengert, "Luther on Children: Baptism and the Fourth Commandment," *Dialogue* 37 (Summer 1998): 186, accessed September 22, 2017, http:// web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=ad04e0ee-537b-4d28-b0e4-72c777cf8b b4%40sessionmgr103&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=ATLA00009858 05&db=rfh.

[18] Luther, "Lectures on Genesis 17:9," in *Luther's Works*, 3:128.

[19] Bunge, "The Vocation of the Child," 36.

love God and love others, living out their faith in practical ways as was fitting to their role. Luther even extended his views on vocation to education. "Excellent schools help develop the gifts of young people so that they can live out their particular vocations and take up particular roles or offices that serve others and contribute to the common good."[20]

William Perkins, a seventeenth-century English scholar, also referred to children. In *A Treatise on Vocations,* Perkins declared, "Every person, of every degree, state, sex, or condition without exception, must have some personal and particular calling to walk in."[21] In considering children, Perkins wrote,

> It is the duty of parents to make a choice of fit callings for them before they apply them to any particular condition of life. And that they may the better judge aright for what callings their children are fit, they must observe two things in them: first, their inclination; secondly, their natural gifts. Touching inclination, every child, even in his first years, does affect some one particular calling more than another. Second, the natural gifts which parents are to observe in their children are either in their bodies or in their minds.[22]

Although Perkins was looking more at the eventual occupation of the child, his call for parents to attend to the gifts and inclinations of the child showed remarkable sensitivity to the way children have been uniquely created.

August Hermann Francke, another German theologian, followed Luther's teaching on vocation. Francke believed that every person has a special calling or vocation and that every person has unique gifts and abilities to be

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[20] Ibid., 36.

[21] William Perkins*, A Treatise of the Vocations* (London: John Haviland, 1631), 750-76. Quoted by William Placher, *Callings,* 266.

[22] Ibid., 271-2.

used to glorify God and serve others.[23] Francke wrote quite positively about children, desiring to discover a child's unique gifts and talents so that the child could develop those talents to bring glory to God and to serve others around him.[24] He showed an acute awareness of the work of the Holy Spirit in children, believing that the Holy Spirit is working in children, even when they or adults were not aware of it. "Francke also believes that it is almost easier for the Holy Spirit to move in the hearts of children than in the hearts of adults and that children can have rich spiritual lives. . . . Thus, children are able to accept the call at any time, even when they are young."[25] In Francke's understanding, the vocation of children was Spirit-led as they utilized their gifts and abilities.

As the Reformation spread across Europe, many churches and scholars began to write catechisms and household manuals, guiding parents in what was considered the "duties" of the Christian child. The vocation of the child, according to these writings, consisted of two main types of duties: "(1) the duty of the child to love God, neighbor, and self and thereby to become beloved to others; and (2) the duty of the child to be loved by parents, guardians, and others."[26] The second "duty" was more of a call to parents and caregivers to nurture children. In the society of that time, roles for children were delineated quite clearly. While children had household duties and chores to perform, those duties were still seen as an expression of loving God and loving their neighbor, those with whom children had most intimate contact.

Having looked briefly at Scripture and what theologians have written

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[23] Marcia J. Bunge, "Education and the Child in Eighteenth-Century German Pietism: Perspectives from the Work of A. H. Francke," in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 268. Bunge is quoting from *Ordnung und Lehrart, 165-167.*

[24] Ibid., 271.

[25] Ibid., 270.

[26] John Witte and Heather M. Good, "The Duties of Love: The Vocation of the Child in the Household Manual Tradition," in *The Vocation of the Child*, ed. Patrick McKinley Brennan (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 268.

about vocation, including the vocation of children, it can be asserted more strongly that children, indeed, do have a vocation. But what does a child's vocation look like? How do children live out their specific calling to love God and love their neighbor? The reality of practicing that love will look different for children than for adults. In *The Vocation of the Child*, Marcia Bunge creates an excellent summary of eight dimensions of the vocation of a child, drawing from Scripture and tradition.[27] These eight dimensions, presented in a slightly different order than what Bunge proposes (and with the addition of one other dimension from outside Bunge's work), form a framework from which to explore the specific practical applications of vocation to children.

Nine Dimensions of the Vocation of Children

1. Fear and love God. The Bible is clear that everyone, including children, should fear (or revere) the Lord, and Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30; cf. Deut 6:1-5; 14:23; Prov 1:7; 14:26-27; Matt 22:37). Loving God is a child's first and most essential vocational duty. When children understand they belong to God, and when they cultivate that relationship daily, their outward activities become a tangible expression of that love.

> The foundation of a child's Christian vocation is the love of God. . . . The child truly loves God by living a life in profound, awe-filled reverence to God. This love for God involves a tenderness of feeling and a deep personal attachment to God that flows from God's power and majesty as the giver and sustainer of life. Love of God, in accordance with the first commandment . . . leads a child to honor of parents.[28]

A child's love and reverence for God will not be expressed in the same manner as an adult's love for God, but that does not mean it is any less sincere. Children have a simple way of worshipping and connecting with

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[27] Bunge, "The Vocation of the Child," 40-50.

[28] Witte and Good, "The Duties of Love," 189.

God, and their relationship with him can be nurtured in ways appropriate to their understanding and level of development.

2. Honor and respect your parents. The fourth commandment says, "Honor your father and mother" (Exod 20:12, cf. Deut 5:16; Lev 19:3; Eph 6:2-3). In his *Large Catechism*, Luther explains what honor looks like.

> For it is a much higher thing to honor than to love. Honor includes not only love but also deference, humility, and modesty, directed (so to speak) toward a majesty hidden within them. Honor requires us not only to address them lovingly and with high esteem but above all to show by our actions, both of heart and of body, that we respect them very highly and that next to God, we give them the very highest place.[29]

The concept of honoring parents, in Luther's view, has three facets. First, it means esteeming them and valuing them as "the most precious treasure on earth." Second, not criticizing or speaking discourteously to them shows parents' honor. Third, children honor parents through their actions by serving them, helping them, and caring for them when they are old, sick, or poor. [30] By loving and serving parents, children fulfill the command to "love your neighbor as yourself," since parents are their closest "neighbor." But honor also is a child's response to everything parents do in caring for her. "It is our duty before the world to show gratitude for the kindness and for all the good things we have received from our parents."[31] The vocation of honoring parents carries on throughout childhood into adulthood.

3. Obey your parents. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Eph 6:1; cf. Col 3:20; Deut 12:28). Obedience speaks of submitting to parents and doing what they say. Christian household manuals and

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[29] Martin Luther, *The Large Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther, 1529: The Annotated Luther Study Edition*, ed. Kirsi I . Stjerna (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 315.

[30] Ibid., 315

[31] Ibid., 319.

church catechisms from the earliest traditions have articulated the duty of children to obey their parents. *The Book of Common Prayer* (American Version, 1789) describes the child's vocation in the following way: "To love, honour, and succor my father and mother: To honour and obey the civil authority: To submit myself to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors, and masters: To order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters."[32] Luther's *Large Catechism* states that there is no work greater and nobler than obeying father and mother,[33] but he also expands the definition of "parent," identifying four types of parents that should be honored and obeyed: parents by blood, parents of a household (speaking to servants), parents of the nations, and spiritual parents.[34] When asking children to obey, there is an assumption that they are still learning, not yet able to discern right from wrong, so they need to learn from and follow the example of those in authority, including their parents.[35] Traditionally, obedience is normally what is thought of when considering a child's role or vocation.

4. Disobey your parents and other adult authorities (Ez 20:18-19; Luke 21:16-17). Surprisingly, part of a child's vocation is *not* to obey her parents when parents' words go against God's law or if the wishes of parents or others in authority would cause her to sin. Luther wrote, "If God's word and will are placed first and are observed, nothing ought to be considered more important than the will and word of our parents, provided that these, too, are subordinated to God and are not set in opposition to the preceding commandments."[36] Bunge reminds us, "All children are made in the image of God, and even as young children, they are active moral agents with growing moral capacities and responsibilities of their own. Since they are made

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[32] The Protestant Episcopal Church, *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York, 1789), x.

[33] Martin Luther, *The Large Catechism*, 317.

[34] Ibid., 324.

[35] Marcia Bunge, "The Vocation of the Child," 41.

[36] Luther, *The Large Catechism*, 317.

in God's image, they are to honor God above all things."[37]

5. Learn about and practice the faith. Moses told the Israelites, "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children" (Deut 6:6-7a, NIV; cf. 11:18-19, Ps 78:4; Prov 22:6; Eph 6:4). Even from an early age, children can learn the Word of God, pray, worship, and obey God. However, when it comes to learning about the faith, children cannot fulfill this vocation without the help of adults. Parents and other adults are commanded to teach children the Word of God and to model faith in practical ways for their children, and children should be encouraged to ask questions about faith as they seek to make it their own. Several prominent theologians, including Chrysostom, Luther, Calvin, Schleiermacher, Francke, and Bushnell, have emphasized the importance of the parents' role both in teaching faith and modeling faith to children.[38] Many of the early catechisms were written to help parents instruct their children in the faith, and some include very strong admonitions to parents to take their vocation seriously in raising godly children. "Think what deadly harm you do when you are negligent and fail to bring up your children to be useful and godly. You bring upon yourself sin and wrath, thus earning hell by the way you have reared your own children, no matter how holy and upright you may be otherwise."[39] Children's faith is both caught and taught, and parents play a key role in helping children fulfill this dimension of their vocation.

While teaching children is important, parents and other adults must remember that children may practice or express their faith quite differently than would a mature adult. For children, life is filled with wonder, awe, creativity, and spontaneity, and those qualities will inform their faith expressions. Since discipleship is a life-long process, adults must encourage

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[37] Bunge, "The Vocation of the Child," 43.

[38] Descriptions of each theologian's teachings on the roles of parents in faith formation are outlined in The Child in Christian Thought, edited by Marcia J. Bunge.(Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001).

[39] Luther, *The Large Catechism*, 326.

the growth they see in a child's life, even if the child is not yet spiritually mature.

6. Teach adults and be models of faith. In Matthew 18:1-5 and 19:13-15 (cf. Mark 10:13-16), Jesus overturned the conventional understanding of children, presenting them as those from whom adults could learn. In his teaching, Jesus used children "as moral witnesses, models of faith for adults, sources or vehicles of revelation, representatives of Jesus, and even a paradigm for entering the reign of God. Jesus identifies himself with children and equates welcoming a little child in his name to welcoming himself and the one who sent him."[40] When adults take time to observe and listen to children, they become open to the lessons God may want to teach them through children. Bonnie Miller-McLemore describes it in this way: "One thing children do is form adults. . . .They help us see things we have never seen before. They renew our hope. They reinvigorate adulthood."[41] Because children see God and the world differently than adults, God can use them to help adults understand him and his kingdom in unexpected and different ways.

7. Contribute to family well-being by doing chores. Although Bunge does not mention this dimension of children's vocation, many of the catechisms and household manuals call upon children to work in the context of their families. Luther exhorted children, saying, "If you do your daily household chores, that is better than the holiness and austere life of all the monks."[42] Even though children in twenty-first-century western culture generally have few responsibilities in supporting their family, the picture is quite different in other parts of the world, especially in rural areas. In many cultures, chores are an important or even an essential part of children's support of their family. All children can be guided to understand their work at home as a way to serve the good of their family and community. Miller-

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[40] Bunge, "The Vocation of the Child," 48.

[41] Janel Kragt Bakker, "The Vocation of Children: An Interview with Bonnie Miller-McLemore, Parts One & Two*,*" in *Bearings Online* (April 21 & April 28, 2014), accessed September 22, 2017, http://collegevilleinstitute.org/bearings/ vocation-children/.

[42] Luther, *The Large Catechism*, 322.

McLemore comments:

> When the family is seen as a working unit or a domestic church, chores in childhood are understood as contributing to family justice and solidarity as well as the common social good. They are, in other words, one piece of a greater whole that includes work, love, and play in fluctuating balance among its members. . . . In this context, chores gain vocational meaning.[43]

When children see their chores genuinely and meaningfully contributing to family life, not just a punishment for misbehavior or doing "busy work," doing their chores becomes vocational.

8. Go to school and study diligently for the future. Although this particular dimension of vocation is not mentioned in Scripture, tradition often has emphasized the responsibility or duty of children to go to school, to study diligently, and to cultivate their gifts and skills so they can love and serve others, including society in the future. Luther was one of the first to passionately write about universal education, giving every child the opportunity to learn. In his *Large Catechism,* Luther writes, "For if we want capable and qualified people for both the civil and the spiritual realms, we really must spare no effort, time, and expense in teaching and educating our children to serve God and the world."[44] In *A Sermon on Keeping Children in School*, he chastises parents for wanting their children just to learn to make a living and not giving children the opportunity to study, saying, "Certainly we must either be crazy or without love for our children."[45] For Luther, the act of keeping children out of school is a sin to children, but it also wrongs the wider community by withholding (human) resources that

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[43] Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, "Children, Chores, and Vocation: A Social and Theological Lacuna," In *The Vocation of the Child*, ed. Patrick McKinley Brennan (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 309-10.

[44] Luther, *The Large Catechism*, 326.

[45] Luther, "A Sermon on keeping children in school, 1530," in *Luther's Works,* 46:141.

could be of service to the church and society.[46]

Most children today have the opportunity to go to school and learn. In some senses, school is children's work because it consumes so much time in their lives. But school also becomes a context where they can live out their faith and love for their neighbor, contributing to the life of their classroom community. Doing well in school also has implications for children's future. Through studying and learning, children grow in knowledge, but they also develop skills, aptitudes, and awareness of interests that will serve them in the future.

9. Play and be in the present. Children are gifts of God (Ps 127:1-3) and sources of joy (Gen 21:6-7; Luke 1:14). It seems odd to think of play as a vocational responsibility, but a great deal of a child's way of being in the world is determined through play, especially unstructured play (as opposed to organized sports). Developmentally, it has been said that play is a child's work, particularly for younger children. As children enter fully into play, they live in the present, unencumbered by concerns of life. Their hearts are open and more attuned to the voice of God. Children's play can enliven families and the community, providing a positive social impact on others.

Although children are called to utilize their cognitive and moral abilities and their gifts and talents to serve others in the future, they have a critical role in enhancing and vitalizing our communities *now* through play and contagious zeal for life. Children have tremendous power to influence with their laughter, curiosity, and joy for simple things.[47]

The Bible even includes images of children at play in future visions of restoration and peace (Zech 8:5; Isa 11:6-9). As such, while children's play gives us joy, it also is a picture of hope for God's future.

Recognizing the multi-dimensional vocation of children *as children* endows them with significance and dignity. They have much to contribute to

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[46] Jane E. Strohl, "The Child in Luther's Theology," in *The Child in Christian Thought,* ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 151.

[47] Jorgenson, "Wild Rumpus Revisited," 360.

others. But at the same time, it must be remembered that children are not adults; they have limitations and cannot be autonomous.[48] For children to fulfill their vocation as children, they need the help of adults. Therefore, to help children to live out their vocation fully, several implications for parents and the faith community must be considered.

Implications for Parents

Parenting is a vocation as well. Luther saw parenting as both a temporal and a spiritual calling wherein father and mother serve as priests and bishops to their children, acquainting them with the gospel, nurturing them in faith, and helping them develop their gifts to serve others.[49] He called it "the noblest and most precious work."[50] The teaching of children may come in formal settings, such as family devotions, but more often will come in the serendipitous teachable moments of daily life. While parents have an obligation to teach children spiritual truth, they also are to model faith and be good examples to their children.[51] More than anything else, children need to see examples of a vibrant, living faith in Christ, and parents are the examples children watch most closely.

While church tradition has written much on the need for parents to be the primary teachers of faith to children, in recent years, with more parents working outside the home and with the rise of the Sunday school, many parents have abdicated their role as primary spiritual nurturers, leaving it to the children's ministry of the church. In cultures that place a high value on education, sport, or financial success, parents are more likely to invest their time and energy making sure children gain other skills and abilities than helping them develop a deeper walk with God. Spiritual nurture is not always seen as a priority. Many parents lack the confidence or capacity to

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[48] Elmer J. Thiessen, "The Vocation of the Child as a Learner," in *The Vocation of the Child*, ed. Patrick McKinley Brennan (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 386.

[49] Luther, "Estate of Marriage," in *Luther's Works*, 45:46.

[50] Ibid., 46.

[51] Bunge, "The Vocation of the Child," 41.

talk about faith with their children, answer their questions, listen to their wondering, and help them see that their gifts and talents are to be used for God's glory. Yet creating that openness for dialogue and encouragement is a critical aspect of spiritual nurture. "Try to leave a lot of space for children's gifts—recognizing, affirming, welcoming, and cultivating their particular gifts. Sometimes these aren't easy to recognize or see, but it is wise to invite and nurture and make space for them."[52] As parents take their role seriously to nurture the faith of their children, both through modeling and teaching, they will assist their children in fulfilling their vocational roles.

Implications for the Church

The vocation of children also has significant implications for the faith community. Most obvious is the need for the whole faith community to embrace the call to nurture the faith of children, including them more fully. In many churches, children have been taken out of congregational life, only experiencing the children's programs. There is merit to teaching children in age-appropriate ways, but if children never interact with the rest of the congregation, they miss having the experience of learning what it means to be the church. Because children learn through experience and modeling, they must participate to fully embrace the faith. Janel Kragt Bakker says:

> Participation in the liturgy provides children with both the stories and the vocabulary to explore what it means to be not just children but children of God. Participation in the liturgy, in other words, helps children learn who they are. The liturgy is a gift of space—both place and time—in which God's people can come to meet God, and through participation in the liturgy, children are given the tools they need to enact and embrace their relationship with God, becoming—in community with adults—who they already are.[53]

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[52] Bakker, "The Vocation of Children: Pt. 2."

[53] Mindy G. Makant, "Bearing Gifts and Receiving Burdens: a Theological Approach to Ministry with Children," in *Journal of Childhood and Religion* 3, no. 3 (2012), 17, accessed

Children need the church so they can learn how to worship and be in community with other believers as part of the body of Christ. But the church also needs to be willing to make space for the questions, the curiosity, the energy, and even the noise that children will bring.[54]

Because children are part of the body of Christ, it is important to consider the roles children play and the gifts they bring to the body. Too often, children are overlooked, dismissed, or not taken seriously. When the church treats children as such, they communicate that children are unimportant. However, in doing so, the church also misses children's unique insights and perspectives. The gifts children bring may look quite different than what adults consider spiritual gifts. "Children . . . contribute to the human capacity for doxology and wonder, since their own delight in discovery proves contagious for those who watch and listen. While these may be the contributions of the "weaker" members of the body, they are by no means negligible."[55] The body of Christ is incomplete without the contributions of children.

My personal experience is a reminder that children's emerging gifts and abilities also need to be utilized and encouraged within the faith community. Children are eager to serve and be useful, and the church can provide opportunities to help them understand how service to and with others is a fulfillment of their vocation. Their zeal, energy, and compassion for people, with mentoring and guidance from adults, can be a great asset for any faith community.

Conclusion

Children do have a vocation in the present, *as children*, not just when they

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September 21, 2017, http://childhoodandreligion.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Makant-Nov-2012.pdf.

[54] Ibid., 16.

[55] Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "Finding a Place for Children in the Letters of Paul," in *The Child in the Bible,* ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), Kindle, Loc. 3027.

grow up. Scripture and tradition support this assertion. Exploring the vocation of children has sought to deepen awareness and understanding of the significant roles they play in their families, faith community, and beyond. God first calls children to himself, and then he calls them to love and serve him and others in ways that are appropriate for their age and development. Those with influence in the lives of children—parents, teachers, and Christian adults—have a role to play in teaching and modeling faith, answering questions, encouraging gifts and abilities, and providing children with the freedom to respond to God and to the opportunities they see before them to live as his children in their world.

When viewed from the perspective of Christian vocation, children are not an investment or achievement from which one expects a return. They are not slaves to adult bidding. They are a gift that one hopes will flourish. Part of that flourishing involves work . . . done in the best of circumstances for the good of creation and its redemption. Christian theology encourages us to consider children's call to contribute to the common good around them.[56]

As children live out their vocation, loving God and loving their neighbor in ways specific to children, they give glory to God. Asking a child, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" is not sufficient; let us also help them see their vocational significance here and now.

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[56] Miller-McLemore, "Children, Chores and Vocation," 322.

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Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare:

A Theological Assessment of its Premises and Practices

Simone Mulieri Twibell

With the impact of globalization, the rise of Eastern spirituality, the emergence of the New Age Movement, and the influence of Pentecostalism around the world, evangelicals have exhibited an ever-increasing interest in matters related to the spirit world. The last several years have seen an explosion of books and articles published from a variety of perspectives regarding the task of engaging unseen forces in spiritual warfare through prayer. As a result of this increased awareness of the spirit world, controversial trends and strategies have begun to emerge in evangelistic efforts. One such methodology has come to be known as "strategic-level spiritual warfare" (SLSW).[1] In the context of Christian mission, several leading missiologists[2] reasoned that if demons can interfere with the lives of individuals, entire geographical locations and people groups can be held captive by "territorial spirits" (Wagner 1996, 26). Thus, in order for the light of the Gospel to penetrate the hearts of individuals and enable receptivity to the gospel, these evil powers need to be exorcised (Kraft 2015, 241).

After SLSW reached the pinnacle of its fervor in the 1990s, the impact of this movement began to wane, and many key books by pivotal leaders went out of print (Wagner 2012, 27). Its teachings, however, have begun to resurface in various corners of the world, infiltrating city-wide prayer movements and cross-cultural efforts (Van Der Meer 2010, 160). In the last several years, for example, Destiny Image Publishers has released anew some

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[1] Charles Kraft calls it "cosmic-level warfare" and presupposes the existence of a rank of higher-level satanic spirits that oversee the work of demons on the earth.

[2] For example, Peter C. Wagner, Charles H. Kraft, and George Otis, Jr.

of the most influential books on SLSW and "resurrected" the writings of key contributing authors (Wagner 2012, 27).[3] With this renewed emphasis on territorial spirits, the reinvigoration of prayer movements around the world, and an increasing awareness of the spiritual realm, this paper is a timely contribution to this subject. As such, the purpose of this assessment is to analyze SLSW practices under the lens of Scripture, providing a brief evaluation of its methodology, hermeneutical approach, and a concise critique of its missional strategy.

Although popular writers on the SLSW movement are prolific, few academic analyses have been devoted to the careful theological evaluation of this mission strategy. It would be beyond the scope of this paper to describe and examine many of the success stories claimed by SLSW advocates or seek to provide a historical basis for such an approach. Several scholars have attempted to reconstruct the historical legacy behind SLSW, which will be helpful to those interested in historiographical work.[4] The primary focus of this paper, however, is to discuss and evaluate the main tenets of SLSW from a theological perspective and offer an effective biblical alternative to this approach.

Accordingly, this assessment is divided into three parts. Section one provides a brief introduction and overview of SLSW by tracing its developments, key terminology, and initiatives with the intention of identifying advocates and critics involved in the debate. Section two looks at the practices and principles of SLSW in light of Scripture in order to construct a proper theological discourse. Finally, section three presents a way forward, highlighting several missiological implications and practical considerations in the construction of a theology that takes seriously both spiritual and human realities. The goal in this final section is to synthesize the complexities juxtaposed in the intersection of spiritual and human experience through the

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[3] See for example, Wagner (2015) *Breaking Spiritual Strongholds in Your City* and Wagner (2012) *Territorial Spirits*.

[4] For example, Chuck Lowe (1998), Michael S Reid (2002), and Gerald Ediger (2000).

implementation of biblical principles that guide us back to the basics.

Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare

Several individuals have served as key proponents of SLSW,[5] but perhaps none equal the contribution of Peter Wagner. Widely recognized as the leading SLSW voice, Wagner wrote extensively, edited various compilations, and convened conferences in an effort to foster dialogue and further research on this topic.[6] In an attempt to clarify the issues involved, the Spiritual Warfare Network,[7] led by Wagner, identified three levels of spiritual warfare: ground-level, occult-level, and strategic level (Wagner 1996, 22). Strategic level warfare is unique in that power confrontations occur against "demonic entities assigned to geographical territories and social networks" (Beilby and Eddy 2012, 179). The assignment of these "territorial spirits" is to keep groups of people in spiritual bondage and oppression, provoking diseases, natural disasters, human trafficking, economic misfortune, and all other possible manifestations of evil in our world (Beilby and Eddy 2012, 179; Wagner 1990, 77).

According to SLSW advocates, these territorial spirits can be identified through "spiritual mapping," a technique by which the strongholds of satanic entities may be recognized and dismantled. In fact, George Otis, Jr. argues that this method allows individuals to gain vital information, such as the names of the evil spirits, in order to "release us to economic and effective action" (1991, 84). Hence, spiritual mapping provides the pathway

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[5] Cindy Jacobs, Peter Wagner, Charles Kraft, John Dawson, Ed Silvoso, George Otis, Jr., Paul Yonggi Cho, Michael Green, and, more recently, Rebecca Greenwood.

[6] See for example, Peter Wagner, ed. (1991), *Engaging the Enemy: How to Fight and Defeat Territorial Spirits,* Ventura: CA, Regal Books; Peter Wagner, ed. (1990), *Wrestling with Dark Angels,* Ventura: CA, Regal Books; Peter Wagner, ed. (1993), *Breaking Strongholds in Your City: How to Use Spiritual Mapping to Make Your Prayers More Strategic, Effective and Targeted*, Ventura: CA, Regal Books. Peter Wagner (1996), *Spiritual Warfare Strategy*, Shippensburg: PA, Destiny Image; and Peter Wagner (2012), *Territorial Spirits,* Shippensburg: PA, Destiny Image.

[7] The Spiritual Warfare Network grew out of the Lausanne II movement and was led by Wagner until its disintegration. It was subsequently renamed as the "Apostolic Strategic Prayer Network" (Holvast 2009, 145).

to discovering the identity of demonic entities which plague communities and cities around the world. As Wagner explains, "Our prayers can be more precisely targeted through skillful spiritual mapping" (1996, 31). The more precise the prayer, the better the results.

Though many critique spiritual mapping due to its recent arrival in the missiological discussion, Charles Kraft believes that this technique is simply a modern term for the biblical concept of surveillance. For example, when God instructed Moses to send spies into the Promised Land before the people could enter, surveillance was key. Wagner further argues that by exercising this skill, a new "spiritual technology" may be introduced, resulting in a boost to the missionary enterprise while at the same time allowing the hearts and minds of unbelievers to be open to the gospel (1996, 30). Wagner points out that spiritual mapping is not a strategy that will necessarily save the lost but will contribute to the removal of obstacles the enemy has placed in their way. He affirms,

> No one has been saved through pulling down strongholds or binding the strong man. Only the preaching of Christ and Him crucified, followed by repenting and experiencing personal faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord, can bring the new birth and life eternal (Wagner 1996, 26).

Wagner is encouraged by the optimistic remarks of Kjell Sjoberg, a seasoned intercessor and SLSW proponent, who insists that "individuals exist today with a gift for prophetic espionage . . . [and with] a hunting instinct to track down the enemy's manipulations" (1996, 31).

Another equally important aspect of SLSW is "identificational repentance," the act of identifying with and representing a certain group of people before God in prayer. In so doing, the intercessor repents for the sins of their forefathers so that God may, in turn, heal their land (Kraft 2015, 259; Beilby and Eddy 2012, 187). Advocates note that Nehemiah utilized this approach, setting in motion "a redemptive beachhead" by which an entire nation turned from devastation to salvation (Otis 1999, 251). More recently, advocates of SLSW have gone so far as to claim that God is now calling "spiritual terrorists" who will engage in this type of warfare prayer to demolish the strongholds of the devil and set the captives free (Cerullo 2015,

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Kraft remains highly positive about the SLSW approach based on its perceived results. As an example, Kraft points to the ministry of Carlos Anacondia, an Argentine crusade evangelist who publicly confronts the spirits before preaching and whose evangelistic impact has been truly significant (Moreau et al. 2002, 194). Likewise, Wagner identifies Anacondia as the "most effective citywide interdenominational crusade evangelist of all time," an individual whose ministry "to the uninitiated might appear to be total confusion. But to the skilled . . . it is just another evening of power encounters" (2002).

Both Kraft and Wagner discuss the spiritual transformation of the Guatemalan town of Almolonga as a demonstration of the incredible results of spiritual mapping. After breaking the power of the territorial spirit *Maximon*, a Mayan deity who had been worshiped for years in Guatemala, a radical transformation began to take place in the town. Bars closed down, businesses took on biblical names, and churches were built to house thousands of new converts (Wagner 1996, 212). Even the agriculture was impacted, invigorating the town's economy as the size and quality of the produce increased exponentially. Carrots were the length of a man's arm, and cabbages grew to the size of a basketball (Kraft 2015, 261). Allegedly, many stories of this nature are recorded as examples of the benefits gained through warfare prayer to bind the "strong man" who gives oversight to a territory in the unseen world.

Indeed, many efforts are currently underway to challenge territorial spirits with the hope of unleashing spiritual revival and socio-economic reinvigoration. The majority of these are categorized as "prayer initiatives," and the most common of them are "prayer journeys." These trips, taken nationally and internationally, consist of engaging in prayer and reconciliation walks to lay the groundwork for spiritual mapping or to conduct "strategic bombing" (Moreau et al. 2002, 263). In her book *Authority to Tread,* Rebecca Greenwood shares her personal experience leading several of these prayer journeys and discusses the positive results observed in Russia, Ukraine, and Houston. Greenwood concludes that in each of these places, both the political and social atmosphere began to change after the group

arrived and specifically challenged the spirits (2005, 145).

In another text, Greenwood offers a peculiar narrative that supports her assertion (Beilby 2012, 193-198). Gathering in Wichita, Kansas, she and a group of intercessors specifically sought to bind the spirit behind the abortion clinic of Dr. George Tiller. At the time, Tiller was considered the leading abortionist in America for performing illegal late-term abortions. After the initial training of her group of intercessors in 2005, a trip in late 2007 proved pivotal in the assignment against the "territorial spirit." After receiving revelation through a dream of the spirit's name, the group stood in front of the clinic and prayed fervently to bind *Lilith*. Greenwood shares positive results from this effort, as evidenced by the reduction in abortions performed at this clinic and the overall decreased abortion rate throughout the state. To the shock of many, two years later, Dr. Tiller was fatally shot in his home church by an anti-abortionist, resulting in the closure of his clinic (Beilby and Eddy 2012, 193-197). Although Greenwood laments the death of Dr. Tiller in her narrative, she also affirms that "the largest city in Kansas remains abortion free" mainly due to their prayer efforts (Beilby and Eddy 2012, 197).

Despite these apparent successes, the SLSW movement has attracted its fair share of critics. While most Christians would not deny the reality of spiritual conflict, many remain concerned with certain emphases within SLSW teachings. Chuck Lowe's *Territorial Spirits and World Evangelisation?* is undoubtedly the most thorough and sharp critique regarding the existence of territorial spirits and the practices of SLSW. Lowe believes that, apart from having no biblical support, most of the success stories behind these efforts are merely based on hypothetical speculations that do "not pass scrutiny" (1998, 144). Priest, Campbell, and Mullen have also offered an incisive critique, concluding that SLSW "doctrines" are without a solid biblical foundation and appear to be based on anecdotes (Rommen 1995, 19-21). Furthermore, they insist that caution is warranted against the unilateral acceptance of the positive results attributed to their methodology (Rommen 1995, 41). As they note, SLSW proponents often appeal to pragmatism leading to conclusions that are based on questionable empirical evidence. David Powlison, Professor at Westminster Seminary, also concludes that some practices behind SLSW seem speculative at best and mythological at worst

(Beilby and Eddy 2012, 205).

Aside from a lack of scriptural evidence for many of the practices behind SLSW, some critics have other reasons for questioning their tenets. Samuel Escobar remarks,

> What I find questionable in the idea of "territorial spirits" and "spiritual warfare" is the quantifying rationality of American technological culture being uncritically applied even to the understanding of demonic activity and prayer . . . . A strange form of Zionism is sometimes propagated through evangelical media (2003, 59-60).

Still, other scholars have formulated a less irenic response in their assessment of SLSW but nonetheless remain wary of the entire approach. For example, missiologist Scott Moreau disagrees with the emphasis placed on spiritual mapping as a method to "smart-bomb" the enemy. He argues that "prayer is not intended to be a vehicle of violence, but a means of fellowship, growth, and strength" (2002, 267). Nevertheless, he remains convinced that the idea of territorial spirits may be biblically based and that some of the teachings of SLSW have served to stimulate zeal and renew interest in prayer within the church.

Biblical scholar and professor Clinton Arnold adopts a similar position. While affirming the reality of demonic spirits associated with territories, especially nations, Arnold concludes that Christians are not called to engage these spirits in spiritual warfare, nor do they have the authority to do so (1997, 164). Preferring the term "empire spirits" to better exemplify the function and nature of these demonic powers, Arnold describes in depth the biblical foundation behind the ontological reality of territorial spirits (1997, 153). Arnold's position will be discussed in further detail in section two.

Clearly, SLSW has awakened an army of critics. Generally speaking, these critics base their evaluation of SLSW on whether the practices behind this methodology are scriptural and warrant the attention and acceptance they have received over the last few decades. Although much has been written at both the popular and scholarly levels, few academic studies have been

devoted to assessing the theological rationale and biblical roots for the practice of SLSW.

One such academic study, conducted by Michael Reid, set out to close this gap.[8] Reid focused on whether SLSW has a sound biblical and theological foundation and follows a legitimate tradition throughout church history. To complement his study, Reid surveyed a group of pastors in England regarding their beliefs associated with SLSW practices. He found that 50% of the interviewees believed in territorial spirits, a conclusion which he asserts must be corrected due to its lack of scriptural evidence (Reid 2002, 237). Another significant study, originally written as a doctoral dissertation,[9] charts the emergence and decline of the SLSW movement, describing the legacy of "spiritual mapping" in the United States and Argentina both from a theological and anthropological perspective.

Yet another recent article considers the current impact of SLSW teachings in Africa, revealing how certain African intercessors believe that "the evils of slavery still have a spiritual effect on the descendants of the slaves" and that they must "undo the effects of the slave trade" through prayer, identificational repentance, and spiritual mapping (Van Der Meer 2010, 161). The writer also notes that many charismatic leaders prefer to spend all night in prayer, fighting territorial spirits, instead of addressing the evils of society at the socio-economic levels (Van Der Meer 2010, 162). Clearly, these practices require careful theological reflection, especially in cultures that are more naturally attuned to demonic influences and inclined to address issues from a strictly spiritual perspective.

Evaluation

While many of the elements contained in SLSW are not devoid of questionable, concerning, and even controversial features, any evaluation must begin by reflecting on the positive contributions this movement has offered

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[8] Michael S. Reid, *Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare: A Modern Mythology?* (2002) Fairfax, VA: Xulon Press.

[9] René Holvast, *Spiritual Mapping in the United States and Argentina, 1989-2005: A Geography of Fear* (2009) Leiden: Brill.

to the overall missionary enterprise. Several biblical scholars and missiologists have pointed out that SLSW has led to a deeper appreciation for fervent prayer, a zeal for unity, reliance upon the Holy Spirit, and a passion to save the lost (Arnold 1997, 160; Pocock et al. 2005, 190; Moreau et al. 2002, 266). The motives behind this approach seem pure and honorable, stemming from a deep desire to bring the gospel to dark places and set people free from the grip of the enemy. As Peter Wagner affirms, "If I have 10 more years to serve God, I want them to make a difference in the number of souls that are saved around the world. My interest in warfare prayer is directly proportional to its effectiveness in enhancing evangelism."[10] Despite the mixed views and perspectives on SLSW methodology, one cannot deny that God has used this movement to heighten the Church's corporate awareness of the presence of satanic powers and awaken His people to take a proactive stand against the enemy's schemes. As one team of missiologists concurs, "Questionable elements do not nullify a legitimate movement of God" (Pocock et al. 2005, 190).

Much can be said in response to this ongoing debate, but the purpose here is to offer several preliminary questions regarding the methodological and phenomenological aspects of SLSW. First, the question must be raised as to whether territorial spirits do in fact exist and, if so, whether Christians have been given the authority to engage and combat these spirits through warfare prayer. Even SLSW advocates are cognizant of the inherent dangers related to the confrontation of demonic powers without the "legal right." Peter Wagner himself points out the risks of this type of ministry, describing the perils many have faced for entering into the SLSW methodology lightly, without due spiritual preparation, or with insufficient knowledge (1990, 86-88). In fact, as Rebecca Greenwood indicates, "Some individuals have experienced excessive and devastating counterattacks from the enemy as a result of warring against principalities" (2005, 124). Furthermore, Cindy Jacobs notes the myriad of spiritual pieces that must be in order prior

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[10] Quoted in Clinton Arnold (1997), *3 Crucial Questions*, p. 161.

to confronting high-level principalities. Specifically, Jacobs asserts the essential aspects of waiting for God's timing, fasting for extended periods of time, and displaying unity among the members of the church (1991, 242-244). Clearly, this type of engagement is a highly specialized ministry, one that requires an incredible amount of time, investment, preparation, training, and research in order to avoid the unnecessary backlash of the enemy's counterattacks.

A second question that naturally emerges from this conversation concerns the status of these spiritual powers after a confrontation. What happens to the evil spirits that are bound and cast out after their strongholds are demolished? Wagner believes that though territorial spirits may leave following a SLSW encounter, they are not completely destroyed. In fact, he argues that "the power of territorial spirits can be neutralized, but obviously not forever" (1996, 152). If SLSW methodologies do not ultimately result in the destruction of territorial spirits, one must sensibly consider whether Christians should be directing efforts and resources toward such a seemingly endless endeavor.

Third, although the results of the SLSW efforts seem remarkable, the attentive reader will wonder if these outcomes have, in fact, been the direct result of "spiritual mapping" rather than other unmentioned factors which may have played a role in unleashing the transformation behind these stories. In light of the prevailing chaos around the world, we should certainly rejoice when cities like Almolonga experience economic invigoration and spiritual renewal. Nevertheless, to attribute this transformation to a single cause (overcoming a city's territorial spirit) is to be reductionistic at best and biased at worst.

As such, it becomes imperative to be more integrative in the spiritual warfare approach, taking into consideration the interrelation among the spiritual, personal, cultural, social, and psychological aspects of human existence. Such an approach is clearly preferential to assigning causation to a single factor. After all, should we not also account for other factors that may have played a role in the transformation of a city or people group? Could

not other elements be involved in the explosive growth of churches, a renewed receptivity to the gospel, the stimulation of an economy, and the spiritual transformation of an entire city? Needless to say, we must develop a holistic perspective to avoid falling prey to the tendency toward providing simplistic and pragmatic answers that could potentially lead to overplaying one's position. Furthermore, success stories should not be primarily used to *prove* the validity of the SLSW efforts but rather as a *witness* to God's faithfulness in responding to the prayers and commitment of His people.

Fourth, Greenwood's case study in which she describes her Wichita experience is not bereft of ambiguity and tension. Certainly, it would be unfair to question the good intentions of these faithful intercessors. In addition, it is surely possible to believe that God used their prayers to help lower the abortion rate in Kansas. Several questions, however, still remain. If one is called to stand against a particular social injustice, is it sufficient to simply bind the evil spirit purportedly behind it, knowing that it could very well return at a later time? Were there not additional means by which Greenwood's group could have approached this situation, addressing intrinsic societal problems beyond just the spiritual? Is it possible that our subjective assessment of ministry strategies could be tainted by the extensive time we have committed to such efforts? Naturally, interpretive conclusions must be made with both caution and wisdom.

Finally, one must question the attention, emphasis, and centrality that have been placed upon SLSW methods by those who have adopted a certain "fanaticism" toward its methodology. Certainly, other missional strategies have proven efficacious in their efforts to bring the gospel to all nations prior to the development of SLSW. Wagner's affirmation that territorial spirits have the "ability to prevent the spread of the gospel" (1990, 77) leads us to wonder how it was possible to bring the gospel to the nations prior to the discovery of the SLSW strategy. Were previous efforts not also effective in bringing people from darkness to light? If other missional methods have clearly worked before, why centralize the SLSW practice as if it were the only effective means of evangelism? As Pocock states, "Does spiritual warfare deserve to be elevated to the dominant place it holds in the emphasis and orientation of some people and movements?" (Pocock et al. 2005, 199).

A more balanced perspective is unequivocally needed.

Notwithstanding the above critiques, what emerges as redemptive in the SLSW approach is the faithfulness of a God who sees the zeal of His people, hears their prayers, and honors their efforts. While Scripture clearly warns us that "people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6) and that "zeal without knowledge is not good" (Proverbs 19:2), the same Bible also cautions that "knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Corinthians 8:1), admonishing us to "never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11). Thus, in our critique of certain SLSW practices, we should refrain from unnecessarily sacrificing zeal on the altar of orthodoxy. Rather, we must "fan into flame the gift of God" (2 Timothy 1:6) as we keep our spiritual fervor closely tied to appropriate biblical perspectives and theological reflections.

Theological and Scriptural Analysis

At this juncture, it is essential to grapple with the theological and scriptural foundation propagated by SLSW advocates in their model. Attention will be given to the exegesis of key texts used to support SLSW theory and methodology. Moreover, the hermeneutical approach used by proponents of SLSW will also be briefly assessed.

To begin, the main questions directed toward SLSW's theological foundation are ontological and epistemological in nature. Does scriptural evidence exist that points to the reality of territorial spirits? If so, are Christians called to engage such spirits? Is the hermeneutical approach used to provide biblical evidence for SLSW reasonable? What is the role of experience in defining what is valid when considering concepts about which Scripture is silent?

At a time when an awareness of the spiritual world was steadily increasing, a monumental article by Paul Hiebert (1982) provided unintended fuel for the creation of theologies dealing with these spiritual realities. His clear call to develop a holistic theology that includes "a theology of ancestor, spirits and invisible powers of this world" was coupled with a warning that

such a theology could unintentionally lead to a "Christianized form of animism in which spirits and magic are used to explain everything" (1982, 420). Contrary to animistic worldviews, Hiebert advocated constructing a theology built on "the history of God and of humans, and their relationships to each other" without placing primary attention on the activities of the spirit world (1982, 420).

Without a doubt, the existence of this "middle level" constitutes part of the biblical worldview. As Ott and Strauss state, "Mission theology is incomplete without a theology of the excluded middle that is rooted in Scripture" (2010, 254). This theology must recognize the presence of spiritual forces and the manifestation of spiritual dynamics while emphasizing God's ultimate sovereignty and supremacy over creation, including the spirit world. Although it is natural to approach the biblical narrative with cultural lenses, it is vital to avoid falling "into the trap of adopting a cultural perspective on spiritual power" (Ott and Strauss 2010, 240). At the same time, however, a recognition of the reality of the unseen world undoubtedly constitutes a part of "the worldview of most of the peoples of the earth" (Ott and Strauss 2010, 252).
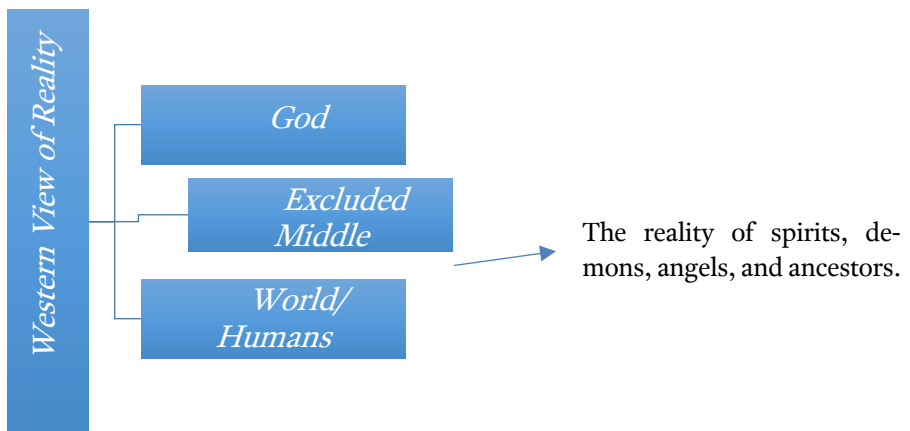

Figure 1: The Blind Spot of a Western View of Reality

Source: Adapted from Paul G. Hiebert, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle" in Missiology Vol. 10, January 1982, pp. 35-47.

It was out of a clear attempt to formulate a theology that emphasizes God's superiority over the excluded middle that SLSW came into existence. Critics of SLSW, however, claim that the majority of the teachings embedded in this methodology lack the requisite scriptural foundation and are based on dubious experiential evaluations. Particularly, many have expressed concern due to the close association of SLSW with animism and pagan worldviews, a danger against which Hiebert emphatically cautioned. Unfortunately, space does not allow for a comprehensive treatment of each biblical text used to support SLSW perspectives. Nevertheless, one key passage – Daniel 10 – is generally used to support the existence of territorial spirits. To a brief exegetical discussion of this pericope I now turn.

Biblical Evidence

The basic controversy surrounding the SLSW movement centers upon the concept of "territorial spirits" and the associated strategies for "binding" and "breaking" their strongholds. A key passage used to support the existence of such spiritual beings is found in Daniel 10. In this passage, Daniel has a dream and prays for three weeks that God will reveal the meaning to him (10:2). On the twenty-fourth day, an angel appears to Daniel, apparently as the result of three important actions: his attempt to gain understanding, his humility before God, and his consistency in prayer (10:12). In response to Daniel's faithfulness, the angel[11] says to him:

> Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come as a response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me because I was detained there with the king of Persia . . . . So he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece

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[11] Arnold points out that this angel was probably the angel Gabriel, according to Daniel 9:21.

will come" (Daniel 10:12-13, 20).

Several exegetical notes are necessary. To begin, it is interesting to note that the Hebrew word מַלְכֵי (translated "king" in English) is plural, thus raising significant questions as to their identity. While some commentators hold that the author is referring to a group of human kings (Contesse & Ellington 1994, 271), others are persuaded that their identity is rooted in the spiritual realm. Miller observes, "These 'kings' likely were spiritual rulers who attempted to control Persia," for "the concept of the angel's being 'detained with' the earthly kings of Persia seems untenable" (1994, 284).

Arnold points out that the Hebrew term שַׂם ("prince") translated as *archon* in the Septuagint, is a word used by Paul to refer to angelic powers (1997, 154). Furthermore, "Each nation was thought to have its own angel who served as its protector," acting on behalf of the saints (Contesse & Ellington 1994, 272, Miller 1994, 285). This perspective is reinforced by the fact that Michael is said to be the "chief prince" (10:13), "prince" of Israel (Daniel 10:21b), the "great prince who protects" the Israelites (12:1) and is also referred to as the "archangel" in Jude 9. Thus, it is possible that the words "prince" and "king" are actually used interchangeably in this context, leading to the conclusion that the "kings" and "princes" that detained Daniel's messenger were indeed dark angels. In light of this evidence, Arnold claims that there is "clear consensus among Bible scholars on this foundational point" (Arnold 1997, 154).

Thus, there is little doubt that the prince of the Persian kingdom referenced here is a dark angel, for as Miller asserts, "no human prince could have withstood" an angel of God (1994, 283). Miller further claims that this dark angel "was either a powerful angel assigned to Persia by Satan or Satan himself" (1994, 285). Furthermore, the cosmic battle presented in this passage involves dark angels wrestling against good angels, and these dark forces appear to have "specific connections to the successive empires of Persia and Greece" (Arnold 1997, 153). In addition, other passages in the Old Testament also suggest that angels have a certain degree of control over nations or people groups (Deuteronomy 32:8, Psalm 82, Isaiah 24:21). Hence, these dark forces appear to affect human relationships and exert

their oppressive influence over earthly governmental affairs (Boyd 2012, 156; Arnold 1997, 153, Miller 1994, 284). Not all scholars, however, are convinced. For his part, Lowe claims that it is erroneous to assume that these spirits ruled over the regions of Persia and Greece (1998, 33), an objection also shared by Priest, Campbell, and Mullen (1995, 68-76).

Thus, though there is strong debate regarding the existence and authority of territorial spirits, a few preliminary conclusions may be drawn. First, this passage does seem to indicate that there are ruling dark forces involved in a cosmic battle in the heavenly realms. Second, although it cannot be directly inferred that such beings form a hierarchical relationship in their rule over territories, the reference in Joshua 5:14 to the "commander of the army of the Lord" may point to some type of authority structure amongst high-ranking angelic beings (Howard 1998, 158). Finally, other biblical passages in addition to Daniel 10 (Deuteronomy 32:17, Psalm 96:5, Psalm 106:37-38, Rev. 18:2)[12] also suggest the existence of ruling spirits over nations and people groups, although little is said about the hierarchical organization or names of these entities and how they relate to one another.

Apart from affirming the ontological reality of dark angels that influence human affairs, it is important to note that Daniel 10 makes no mention of Daniel's desire to seek out information regarding their identity or location. Rather, these verses appear to teach us two specific truths that assist us in developing a holistic theology regarding God's role and our role in spiritual warfare. First, the three aforementioned actions that Daniel models elicit God's response, even though delayed. Daniel set his mind to gain understanding, humbled himself before God, and made earnest intercession for the people of Israel. He was not even aware of the cosmic battle being raged in the heavenlies, but his petitions were heard as soon as he began to pray (9:23). Second, the sovereignty, control, and superiority of God are clearly on display, both in this passage and throughout the entire book of Daniel. "He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven" (4:35).

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[12] Biblical Scholar Clinton Arnold provides a compelling case for the reality of evil spirits associated with territories and people groups through a detailed study of these scriptural passages.

He is infinitely higher than anything or any power, and his kingdom will be firmly established throughout the ages. As Scripture states, "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed" (2:22). Thus, primary attention should be given to the actions of Daniel in order to understand our role in seeking an appropriate response to spiritual conflict. Rather than devoting ourselves to myths, "which promote controversial speculations" (1 Timothy 1:4), emphasis must be given to the overarching triumph and superiority of God over the created order.

A final word is necessary concerning the extent of the believer's authority to "cast out" territorial spirits. To use Arnold's own description, "We do not have the right to directly command a demon to leave a city, territory or country" (1997, 165). Figure 2 illustrates the limitation of our delegated authority. After all, nothing in Scripture tells us that evil spirits will obey if an "open door" remains. As Arnold contends, where sin is present, the enemy has "an open invitation to stay" (1997, 166). Furthermore, passages such as Jude 8-10 and 2 Peter 2:10-12 seem to caution believers about speaking against angelic or fallen angels. Not even the archangel Michael dared to do so (Jude 9), and Peter admonishes believers who were "not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings" (2 Peter 2:10). Here, the word translated as "celestial beings" is the Greek κυριότητος, a term also used in Colossians 1:16 (translated as "powers" in the NIV) and in Ephesians 1:21 (translated as "dominions" in the NIV). Although it is not clear how these believers were accusing "celestial beings," Peter's clear warning to not rebuke territorial spirits should ring loud and clear.
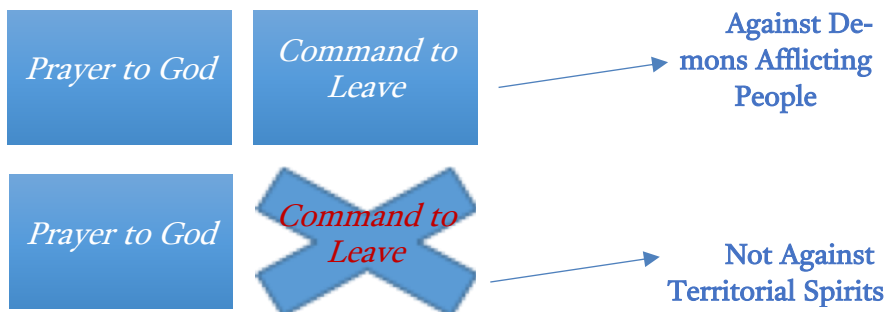
Figure 2: The Extent of a Believer's Authority

Source: Adapted from Clinton Arnold (1997), 3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare, Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, p.164.

Hermeneutical Approach in the SLSW Discourse

Most of the controversies surrounding SLSW arise from the hermeneutical approach its advocates use to defend their position. Although Wagner cites a number of passages as biblical support for his views, two examples will be offered here as representative of his hermeneutical approach. Unfortunately for Wagner, both instances clearly exhibit his unintended proclivity towards eisegesis.

In the first example, Wagner considers Paul's statement regarding "fighting with wild beasts in Ephesus" (I Corinthians 15:32). Wagner interprets this passage as an example of Paul engaging in strategic-level spiritual warfare, claiming that "beasts could well be territorial spirits" (1996, 204). A careful analysis of this passage, however, provides further insight into Paul's experience. While some biblical scholars believe that this phrase indicates that Paul was forced to fight with literal animals in the coliseum as a punishment for an alleged crime, others argue that his wording ought to be understood metaphorically (Thiselton 2000, 1251).

By examining more closely the surrounding context, however, the reader gets a closer glimpse at what Paul intends to communicate. In the verses immediately preceding the aforementioned text, Paul says: "And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? I face death every day – yes, as surely as I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord." (15:30-31). From these verses, Paul appears to face dangers, perils, and daily struggles throughout his missionary journeys. Thus, his fight against wild animals may be a metaphorical reference to both his physical sufferings and the continual resistance he experienced from spiritual forces. To ignore his earthly sufferings and argue that his struggles were caused only by the supernatural influences that were opposing him is an over-simplification of Paul's complex life situation. As Boyd poignantly remarks, "Throughout the Bible, 'earthly' and 'spiritual' battles were viewed as two dimensions of one

and the same battle" (Beilby and Eddy 2012, 135). Although little is known regarding the particular experience Paul is referencing, what is certain is that nothing in the text supports Wagner's conclusion that "wild beasts" are territorial spirits. Furthermore, regardless of the identity of these beasts, there is again no reference to the Christian's call to exert authority over them.

The second example of Wagner's method of scriptural interpretation is found in Acts 19. Here, Paul describes his ministry in Ephesus through power encounters. Interestingly, Wagner believes that Paul's reference to "fighting the beasts in Ephesus" might be linked to this story (1996, 208). In Acts 19, Paul is ministering in powerful ways, resulting in the healing of the sick and the freedom of those who had been demonized (19:11-12). As a result of Paul's teachings against idolatry, a great disturbance arises in Ephesus. Demetrius, a silversmith who makes silver shrines of Artemis (Diana), becomes fearful that his economic gains might be undermined, and the temple dedicated to their goddess might be discredited (19:23-27). Because Wagner believes that significant damage to territorial spirits on the strategic level is caused by power ministries on the ground, he offers the following interpretation of the text:

> Without overtly confronting Diana herself, Paul and the missionaries had weakened her authority so much that the silversmiths and others rioted. They, along with the general population of Ephesus, were alarmed that Diana's temple could be despised and her magnificence was being destroyed. Diana had been so powerful that many people thought the very fabric of their lives might be ripped apart if she were harmed (1996, 210).

It is evident that Wagner's creative explanation is based on mere presuppositions and not on direct observations from the text. First, far from exhibiting strategic-level spiritual warfare, Paul's ministry here seems to be contained to "ground level" warfare if, in fact, he did not overtly confront Diana. The text does not in any way indicate that Paul regarded Artemis as a territorial spirit or that he prayed against her. In fact, the opposite con-

clusion may be drawn. If doing God's work of teaching, healing, and deliverance weakens the power of territorial spirits at the ground level, then these methods seem to be a more effective means for overcoming the powers of evil than simply speculating about whether one has effectively bound a spirit in the heavenly realms. Second, Luke makes no connection between the riot and the weakening of Artemis' authority. Rather, the context points to Demetrius' concern for the loss of his economic benefit. The text indicates that his opposition to Paul was directly linked to his financial interest as a silversmith who received "good income from this business" and was worried that the trade "might lose its good name" (Acts 19:25, 27). Nothing in this passage makes the connection between Artemis losing power and the rioting of the people. Finally, Paul does not seem concerned with engaging in this type of strategic-level spiritual warfare at all. Rather, his interests lie in healing the sick, delivering the demonized, and preaching the gospel. Thus, the text does not offer any clear evidence of Paul encountering or confronting territorial spirits.

Conclusion

To bring this discussion to a close, several remarks are necessary. First, because spiritual conflict involves bringing people from darkness into light, issues arising from experiences not clearly addressed in Scripture must be carefully assessed by the "hermeneutical community of the global church" (Moreau et al. 2002, xxvii). Failure to do so allows individual experiences to create unnecessary controversies that distract the Christian community from our primary calling to evangelism and discipleship.

Second, many of the controversies surrounding the theological foundations of SLSW arise from an inappropriate hermeneutical approach. The biblical texts used to validate this theory do not present any clear evidence that SLSW was ever used to combat the forces of evil. Wagner himself admits that he has been "guilty of drawing some mistaken conclusions on more than one occasion" (1996, 61). Thus, speculating about what might have happened behind the scenes is not the correct approach to properly understanding and interpreting the biblical text.

Finally, Lowe notes that one other danger of this approach is to develop

strategies and theologies based on an "overextended middle" (1998, 110). By placing an excessive focus on subjective interpretations rather than on a balanced biblical perspective that seeks to glorify God, important elements clearly accentuated in the text might be neglected. Needless to say, the focus ought to be placed on *biblical* strategies that further the Kingdom of God and not on personal opinions or interpretations.

Missiological Implications

Despite the many controversies surrounding SLSW, this initiative has certainly encouraged the community of faith to take strides in the right direction. Not only has it made the evangelical church more aware of the urgency of intercession, the importance of corporate prayer, and the reality of the spirit world, but it has also stimulated the birth of new Spirit-led movements. The answer, however, does not lie in seeking to develop new methods, strategies, or techniques in order to gain knowledge for the sake of knowledge. Rather, the solution must be found in recovering practices that will lead to greater fruit in the Kingdom of God. The passion for the lost, the longing for God's presence, and the importance of unity in the body of Christ are among the redeemable elements of SLSW that should motivate the Church to rescue the timeless practice of intercession.

Thus, as we endeavor to follow the risen Christ and fully embrace his mission, how are we to proceed? First, the development of a more balanced and biblical perspective on spiritual warfare is essential. To under-emphasize the reality of spiritual conflict that many believers and non-believers experience around the world is to give the powers of darkness free reign while people remain oblivious to the attacks and counterattacks of the enemy. On the other hand, to place too much emphasis on the power of evil is to lose sight of the reign of Christ and, at the same time, runs the risk of finding a demon under every bush. We must resist these tendencies and carefully consider biblical principles to train disciples in the area of spiritual warfare. In so doing, we may be fully prepared to "resist the devil" (James 4:7) "when the evil day comes" (Ephesians 6:13). The inherent danger in teaching Christians to fight against principalities and territorial spirits "is that it can arm immature believers with information and models for which

they are not ready" (Friesen 2000, 145). Though certainly pure in intention, much of the SLSW material fosters ambiguity, confusion, and fear in the hearts and minds of its many readers. Emphasis on the authority that God has given Christians to combat the forces of evil as well as the power to live a holy life ought to be the primary focus of teachings on spiritual warfare.

Furthermore, we must remember that although there is a cosmic battle raging in the heavenly realm, "there is, however, no doubt about its outcome" (Hiebert 2000, 119). While the Church expectantly awaits the day when the full restoration of God's creation will finally be realized, we currently live in the tension of the *already* and the *not-yet* of our times. Because the powers of the old age are still present, the old and the new ages will continue to co-exist until the eschaton is fully realized. The church finds itself actively participating in this cosmic battle. Thus, we must be spiritually prepared to resist the oppressive forces of darkness and equipped to confront all forms of evil in the structural patterns that perpetuate demonic influences in our society, ideologies, and sinful human tendencies.

Second, we must recover the importance of prayer and intercession in our missional endeavors. In a thought-provoking article, Mike Breen proposes that if the missional church could be illustrated as a brand new car, discipleship is undoubtedly the engine. He writes, "No matter how beautiful or shiny the vehicle, without an engine, it won't go anywhere" (2011). Carrying the analogy further, if the engine of the Church is discipleship, then prayer is the fuel, providing the necessary energy to keep it going. Without filling the gas tank, the car might start, but it will not go very far. Thus, for the Church to be effective in its calling to evangelism and disciple-making, intercession must not be neglected. As Johnstone says, we must go "beyond the present controversy and get on with world evangelization by active intercession for the countries, peoples, and cities still in the thrall of the prince of this world" (Rommen 1995, 139).

From the experiences of countless missionaries and revivalists, we would do well to remember that methods and strategies will prove insufficient unless we recover the urgency of interceding for lost souls and for the brokenness experienced in our world. It is in intercession that we most

clearly see that God's chosen people do not exist for themselves. By humbling ourselves in dependence upon the Father and carrying each other's burdens, we realize that we "exist for the sake of God's glory and his mission, and for the sake of others toward whom God's mission is directed" (Goheen 2011, 26). It is important to remember, however, that though intercession is one of the most vital tasks of a missional church, it is rarely the *only* task. Proclaiming the liberating news of the gospel, reaching out to the destitute through acts of kindness, loving mercy, seeking justice, maintaining personal purity for the sake of the gospel, and striving for unity in the body of Christ are all examples of how Christians ought to be "oriented towards two fronts"—toward God and toward others (Goheen 2011, 26).

Finally, regardless of one's opinions about SLSW, each local church must commit to uniting with other believers and churches in order to deal with demonic oppression and influences at the city-wide level. In times of crises and social disintegration, the Church's influence should permeate the creases of a broken society by modeling a deeper spiritual life and greater unity among the various ecclesial bodies. The Great Commission in its entirety cannot be fulfilled by one individual or church. Therefore, we must work together to effectively be the light of the world.

In recent years, prayer movements have touched the lives of many as a spiritual revival has been birthed around the world. In her book *Desperate for His Presence*, Rhonda Hughey, director of Fusion Ministries, has documented the transformation experienced in several nations as a result of their focus on "pursuing God's presence as our greatest good and as essential to the healing, restoration, and transformation of our cities and nations" (2004, 11). As leaders unite their efforts to pray for transformation in their cities, Hughey observes that "this is not a 'trend' or the latest ministry strategy," but truly a powerful movement of God that is spreading to every corner of the earth to restore and rebuild cities (2004, 13). Hughey's focus is on city transformation that stems from "people unifying in vision and intercession, enabling the heavens to 'open' over a city" (2004, 28). In the last few years, perhaps like never before, a renewed vision for mobilizing people to pray for cities and their nations has been at the forefront of hundreds of

networks created to stimulate corporate prayer.

I personally have witnessed the effects of this renewed emphasis in my own city of Kankakee, Illinois. Recently, two lay leaders from two different churches in our city have brought congregations together across denominational lines with a fervent desire to see God's kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. One evening each month, members from twenty-three local churches gather to pray for revival and peace in the city. As a result of this initiative, prayer walks have been conducted around the schools, and a spirit of collaboration has developed among the various churches united in this effort. We know that God is glorified through our attempts to build bridges of hope. The following quote from one of the leaders illustrates this goal:

> *The benefits that we have seen from God's people getting together to pray are immeasurable. In addition to being able to pray more effectively for each other, breaking down walls based upon preconceived denominational and/or racial biases, and showing those outside of the Church that Christians can actually get along, we have experienced ways to effectively be the hands and feet of the body of Christ.*[13]

Just as the Israelites were to be "a distinctive people displaying an attractive lifestyle to God's glory before the surrounding nations" (Goheen 2011, 25), so also should the Church be a beacon of light in the darkness. As we look *upward*, seeking God's presence so that His work of restoration might flow to all peoples, and *outward*, reaching out to a desperate world devastated by evil, we become the light of the nations. Perhaps, only as we travel along the "narrow road" will the walls we have stealthily constructed around our "city on a hill" come down for all to see the glory of our King.

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[13] E-mail correspondence with Tom Cooke, one of the lay leaders behind these efforts, on July 22, 2016.

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2020 APNTS Thesis and Dissertation Abstracts

Bathula, Nehemiah. "Photovoice Empowerment of Young Women Rescued from Child Sex Trafficking in Rajamahendravaram, India: A Holistic Need Analysis." Doctor of Philosophy in Holistic Child Development, 2020.

This dissertation was an exploration of the lives of survivors of sex trafficking who were rescued and reintegrated with their families and communities in Rajamahendravaram, India. The study examined the holistic needs and challenges of these survivors after their rescue, using Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory to provide a multi-layered lens for understanding the needs of survivors and the church's role in meeting those needs. While many studies have examined the root causes of sex trafficking, research on the reintegration of survivors is relatively sparse, and there is a dearth of analysis regarding the church's role.

The researcher used a homogeneous sampling strategy for Phase I to select eight female survivors who were trafficked and rescued as children. Their ages ranged between 18 and 20 years old. The study utilized photovoice methodology, analyzing photographs taken by the participants and applying both open coding and axial coding to focus group discussions.

Phase I of this study revealed the unifying themes that represent deeply felt needs and attain benefits for survivors. In the ecological systems theory, each level depicts the need and challenges of survivors. Ultimately, these assets become benefits for the survivors. On the individual level, survivors went through physiological and psychological needs. These assets result in benefits for survivors where they experience physical and psychological wellness. On the relational level, it is highly focused on the need for connections and identity in the families, friends, and companions, as well as continued favor from God/god. These assets result in a deep sense of belonging where survivors experience acceptance in their families, gain friends and companions to walk with them and develop a sense of belief in God/god/spiritual wellness.

On the community level, survivors need community connection, resources for education, employment, and advocacy. Moreover, they need brokers who can connect them with needed resources for them to thrive in the community. These assets result in a sense of belonging in a community where survivors feel accepted and receive needed resources in the community. On the societal level, justice should be ensured for survivors regardless of caste, color, gender, and economic background. Survivors should not be treated as criminals; rather, they should be treated with utmost dignity in society. Moreover, there is a need for raising awareness to eradicate the issue of stigma toward survivors in the society. These assets result in transforming the attitude of the public toward survivors in the society. Moreover, the government should be prepared to address the challenges of trafficked survivors by offering the necessary support system, including helping survivors to obtain justice.

For Phase II, the researcher employed a homogeneous sampling strategy to select seven pastors in Rajamahendravaram, India. This phase began with the researcher facilitating an educational forum presenting the findings of Phase I to raise awareness of the needs and challenges of survivors of sex trafficking. Then the researcher collected data from the Phase II participants using focus group discussions. The data analysis again relied on open and axial coding.

The church has a crucial role to play in addressing the challenges and facilitating healing for survivors of sex trafficking. Providing material resources is a critical component for survivors to concentrate on other aspects of their lives. Churches may not be well equipped to provide material assistance for survivors due to the size of the congregation and shortage of resources. Nevertheless, churches and pastors need to be aware of government and NGO resources to support survivors and ensure their wellbeing. At times, this may include advocacy with local government and NGOs resources.

Moreover, churches should create a connection to survivors through facilitating a deeper connection to family, God, church, and community. Churches should create positivity and a sense of belonging by incorporating

survivors in church services and providing them with needed assistance. In addition to this, churches should create a robust relationship with families of survivors to address the challenges and facilitate healing for survivors of sex trafficking. In connection to spiritual needs, pastors should lead them to have a deeper connection to God by offering healing sermons, prayers, forgiveness and emphasizing the need for accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior. In addition to this, churches can be the means of grace for survivors by offering assurance and protection from the community.

Religious leaders/pastors should raise awareness in changing the stigma that is embedded in both churches and the community. Pastors can work to ensure acceptance in churches using the teachings of Jesus, especially breaking the barriers and ministering to survivors with love and compassion. To do this effectively, church leaders need additional training and the support of leadership teams who have the same calling, vision, and ministry philosophy.

Brombuela, Glenn B. "Organizational Commitment and Organizational Behavior: A Comparative Study of Grade 7 Teachers of Rizal High School." Master of Arts in Religious Education (Educational Leadership), 2020.

This study aimed to determine how organizational commitment and organizational behavior (work values) differ between two groups of Grade 7 teachers from Rizal High School based on their years in service. Moreover, a test of the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational behavior of the teachers was also done. In addition, this research followed the attitudinal approach of Meyer and Allen's Three-Component Model of Organizational Commitment as its theoretical framework.

This study employed the descriptive method of research, specifically a causal-comparative research design, and is purely quantitative. Three instruments were utilized in the present study to identify the teacher's demographic characteristics, organizational commitment, and working values of the Grade 7 teachers of RHS, namely: Personal Data Sheet,

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) that supports the Three-Component Model of Organizational Commitment (Attitudinal Approach) for organizational commitment, and Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ-21) that was proposed by Shalom Schwartz for work values. This study used Slovin's Formula and a stratified random sampling procedure to determine the respondents. The respondents were composed of 15 males and 46 females, with a total of 61 out of 68 RHS Grade 7 Teachers for the school year 2019-2020. The quantitative data gathered were tabulated and analyzed statistically, employing both descriptive and inferential statistics, namely: sample mean, independent sample t-test, and Pearson-r Moment of Correlation.

The study revealed that most of the Grade 7 teachers are female with equal distribution when it comes to age and years in service. In terms of age, the findings show that younger teachers are more committed than their older counterparts. Furthermore, all the age groups for both sexes with 1-8 years in the service group are affectively committed, while those age groups for both sexes with 9 or more years are normatively committed. Comparing the sexes, male teachers obtained higher means compared to their female counterparts. Thus, males were more committed than females. Moreover, both sexes with 1-8 years in the service group are affectively committed while both sexes with 9 or more years are normatively committed. The comparative analysis of the two groups based on their years in service regarding their organizational commitment revealed that those who have been teaching for about 1-8 years are committed to their job and effective (they want to commit) while those who have been teaching for about nine years or more are normatively committed (they feel obligated to commit).

In terms of organizational behavior, both groups have the same ranking for the higher-order work values, having self-transcendence as the top-ranking and self-enhancement as the lowest rank. However, it can be observed that the means of the 1-8 years in the service group are higher compared to the other group, which might suggest that those who have been teaching for 1-8 years have higher work values than the nine and above years. For all age groups, the results show that as teachers increase in age, the way they value work in terms of the given variables seems to weaken.

All age groups show a very high remark for universalism and security, which are the top ranks. However, they least value power and achievement. Regarding sex, the results show that Rizal High School Grade 7 male teachers uphold higher importance for values than their female counterparts. Both sexes have a very high remark towards universalism and security, while hedonism, power, and achievement got the lowest ranks, respectively. The relationship between teachers' organizational commitment and organizational behavior reveals that their level of organizational commitment affects their work values. Therefore, the more committed the teachers are to their job, the higher the values they uphold. Some recommendations include developing a school atmosphere that challenges teachers to continue personal growth and development and trying to involve the teachers with seminars and workshops as part of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Karumathy, Ponelyn D. "Proficiency Level of Selected Early Childhood Teacher-Education Graduates of Harris Memorial College: Implications to Curriculum Enrichment." Doctor of Philosophy in Holistic Child Development, 2020.

The present research was undertaken against the backdrop of the declared efforts of the Commission on Higher Education to improve the quality of education in the Philippines by setting the highest standards in regard to the objectives, components, and processes of the pre-service teacher education curriculum. The investigation put forward the following questions: Are graduates of HMC adequately equipped to serve as early childhood educators? How proficient are they in the four domains of (1) content knowledge and pedagogy; (2) learning environment; (3) diversity of learners; and (4) spiritual maturity and Christian witness?

A trifocal theoretical and scientific framework comprising the social constructivist theory of Lev Semenovich Vygotsky, the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) of DepEd, and Harold Burgess's Model for Analyzing Religious Education Curriculum served as the foundation for this research. Vygotsky's idea that highly proficient

teachers are essential in the educational ventures of children undergirded the theoretical framework of this work, whereas PPST and Burgess's model, through the discussion of Catherine Stonehouse, provided the bases of the four domains that were employed.

This investigation had a descriptive survey design that employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodology in gathering data through the self-evaluation of alumni, the evaluation by peers of alumni, and the supervisors of alumni. There were 90 respondents taken as samples through the sequential nested nonprobability-probability sampling method. Quantitative data were subjected to frequency distribution, weighted mean computation, Chi-square Test of Independence, and one-way ANOVA or Analysis of Variance. Qualitative data were processed through MAXQDA software for coding, clustering, and thematic analysis and interpretation. Results for the demographic characteristics of respondents revealed that the majority of the alumni had fewer than three years of teaching, while the majority of the peers and supervisors had four years or more of teaching and administration service. The majority of the alumni and peer respondents serve as preschool teachers, while exactly half of the supervisors function as principals, and the remaining half have the title of school administrators. Findings through the Chi-square Test of Independence established that there is no significant relationship between the number of years in the institution or the position of the respondents when tested against the proficiency ratings they conferred. The evaluation of the alumni, peers, and supervisors consistently indicated that the HMC graduates have high proficiency levels in the domains of content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, diversity of learners, spiritual maturity, and Christian witness, which means that the alumni are adequately equipped to serve as early childhood educators. The overall ranking of results showed that the HMC graduates were rated highest in spiritual maturity and Christian witness, second in the domain of learning environment, third in content knowledge and pedagogy, and fourth in the diversity of learners. The one-way Analysis of Variance confirmed that there is not any notable statistical variation between and among the evaluation of the alumni, the peer, and the supervisor respondents.

Lian, Ning Ngaih. "Toward Developing a Biblically Sound, Spiritually Formative, Contextually Appropriate Curriculum for Theological Schools in Myanmar." Doctor of Philosophy in Transformational Learning, 2020.

This study was conducted to examine the effectiveness of the spiritual formation practices in two selected theological schools (TSTS) in Yangon, Myanmar. It sought to understand the spirituality of the students and to propose a curriculum that is Biblically sound, contextually appropriate, and spiritually formative for the theological school students in Myanmar. The ultimate goal of theological school students is to develop a Christ-like character by loving God and loving others.

The descriptive study used a mixed-methods research approach involving survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Based on the transformational learning theory of Jack Mezirow and the experiential learning theory of David A. Kolb, the study examined the spirituality of the students in TSTS. The Christian Spiritual Participation Profile (CSPP), developed by Jane O. Thayer, was utilized to examine the spiritual growth of the students. The profile includes fifty survey questions under ten spiritual discipline categories. The interview questions were developed by the researcher based on the research questions.

The statistical analysis yielded the following conclusions in relation to the null hypotheses. The first null hypothesis ("There are no significant differences between men and women for spiritual practices") was accepted. Therefore, there were no significant differences when the participants were grouped according to gender. The second null hypothesis ("There are no significant differences in spiritual practices by the number of years of faith") was rejected. There were three areas of spiritual practices that showed significant differences. Older Christians are more practiced in terms of prayer, repentance, and worship than newer Christians. The third null hypothesis ("There are no significant differences in practice across the ten areas of spiritual practices") was rejected because prayer, repentance, and worship were used more among the ten spiritual practices. Stewardship, evangelism, and meditation were used less among the ten spiritual

practices. The fourth null hypothesis ("There is no significant difference between participants from the two different theological schools") was rejected. There were significant differences in the four areas of spiritual practice between the two schools. Theological School A (TSA) used prayer, meditation, Bible reading, and study less frequently than Theological School B (TSB). TSA showed more frequent use of service than the TSB.

The qualitative data shared the most-used spiritual formation practices in the two selected schools and their effectiveness. The interview data demonstrated that the spiritual formation course contributed to the spiritual life and vitality of the students by providing understanding and meaning of spiritual practices. Moreover, the spiritual emphasis week helped them to become stronger in their spiritual lives through the solid and powerful messages preached by the speakers. The interview responses pointed out the most helpful practices for the spiritual formation of the students in TSTS as Bible reading and study, prayer, fellowship, worship, discipleship, fasting, examen of conscience, and service.

Further study needs to be done in three areas: developing a Christian Spiritual Participation Profile in the context of Myanmar Christian churches; a review and comparison of the spiritual formation curriculum of theological schools of different faith traditions in Yangon; and a study on how to help students with different learning styles grow through their spiritual formation classes of theological schools in Yangon.

Montecastro, Gilbert P., II. "Filipino Pastors' Kids as Digital Natives: A Documentary Film." Master of Arts in Christian Communication, 2020.

This production thesis was geared towards producing a short documentary of Generation Z Pastors' Kids vis-a-vis their identities online and offline. This documentary exhibited the dynamics between their virtual life and physical life in accordance with their identity as pastors' kids. In addition, this short documentary aimed to serve as a ministerial and evangelical tool to better minister to Generation Z Pastors' Kids and Generation Z Christians as well.

This documentary adapted the contribution of Anthony Gidden's approach of Modernity and Self-Identity as the framework. This approach was employed to better demonstrate the identity influences and formation elements that contribute to the presentation of the pastors' kids' identity online and offline. The researcher selected three out of ten prospective pastors' kids in Baguio City without any specific denomination. This documentary applied the "Day in the Life" perspective wherein the researcher was equipped with an unobtrusive camera filming what a day looks like for the Generation Z pastors' kids. Subsequently, the researcher also conducted an interview with each participant. The researcher also utilized a reflexive journal where the researcher kept a log of the social media activity of the selected pastors' kids over a period of a month each. Moreover, the researcher handed out questionnaires that added to the log about the kids' social media accounts.

Therefore, the produced film of Generation Z or the Digital Natives exhibits the social media influences and socio-physical factors that contribute to their identity representation online and offline. The art of documentary filming proved to be a clear and effective medium to engage in ways to provoke taboo conversations in the Christian community. Thus, documentary filming is a feasible and distinct platform for creating dialogue. Hence, the following are suggested for a further documentary on this topic: 1) parental responsibility of the PKs must be the focal point in understanding and acknowledging that there is a known difference in worldview. Parents must be intentional in comprehending the worldview of their children to better attend to them; 2) church leaders and mentors must be proactively and constantly calibrating their ministerial methods and approaches to these PKs and individuals in this generation. Consequently, the researcher proposed the following: 3) extend research on the parents' or family's insight regarding the value of the family as a key factor in the respondent's development; and 4) expand the number of respondents for a wider pool of information with even number of gender identity.

Palosa, Sarah. "A Photovoice Documentation on the Observation and Perspective of the Youth about Online Sexual Exploitation of Children in Dasmarinas Community." Master of Arts in Christian Communication, 2020.

Online Sexual Exploitation of Children refers to a new form of sexual exploitation of children that threatens many young Filipinos today. Abusers and operators of this crime are hidden in the anonymity of technology. Identifying and investigating offenders is difficult. According to Interpol, an organization that tracks down criminals across borders, interventions against this crime are still few. There is a great need for awareness to reduce the number of cases in this country and the world. This study aimed to partake in the intervention against OSEC through raising awareness by means of youths' observations and perspectives in their communities, which are rising hotspots for this crime.

The method used in the study was photovoice, which also aims to empower the youth even more. The photos and narratives collected were compiled in a photobook that reached more than thirty-one people. The feedback from the respondents showed that the photobook achieved the goal of awareness, especially for those respondents who did not have any prior idea about OSEC.

Perez, Lorraine Llagas. "Engaging Readership with Christian Literary Narrative on Wattpad." Master of Arts in Christian Communication, 2020.

This production thesis was designed for writing a Christian narrative on Wattpad that was based on the Sexual Touch Boundaries and Scripture, a devotional on romantic relationships. Furthermore, the study aimed to initiate audience engagement with the uploaded chapters and document the process of the production.

This research followed the theoretical contribution of Stewart Hoover's idea on the Mediation of Meaning. The approach was used to initiate uncoerced engagement by merely presenting the narrative to the platform while the audience naturally engaged and made negotiations when urged.

A fictitious romance story with twenty chapters, prologue, and epilogue was uploaded on Wattpad and was promoted in Taytay First Church of the Nazarene Generation Congregation. As the chapters were uploaded, the readers engaged through reading, voting, and leaving comments or suggestions. The engaged audiences made negotiations by stating their opinions in the comment box at the end of each chapter. Negotiations made were addressed by the author making changes to the flow of the story. While in the process of uploading and writing, the researcher documented the process and maintained a version history log that could be used in future research. After posting the epilogue, the researcher released the version history and revealed herself as a researcher. As soon as the researcher was identified, the evaluation began.

The method of writing applied was effective since the readers were able to comprehend the story's flow of thought, considering the evaluations made. However, the plot was partly vague, making it lacking and unrealistic. Meanwhile, the kind of audiences the story had were binge readers and silent readers, thus making engagement inconsistent and affecting the negotiations. Nevertheless, the story had adequate engagements that were apparent with the number of reads, votes, and comments. It could be claimed that the production was successful in its aim to engage readership; however, it could be enhanced for better interaction with the audiences. Therefore, writing a Christian narrative on Wattpad is feasible. The following were proposed to be considered in future studies: 1) Wattpad stories generally use less than two thousand words per chapter to highlight plot and constrain excessive writing, 2) story promotion should be done continuously in Wattpad in order to acquire a wider audience, and 3) implementing a similar study, promotion should be emphasized as these have an effect on the resulting negotiation.

Thawn, Cing Sian. "The Concept of Self-liberation in Theravada Burmese Buddhism." Master of Science in Theology, 2020.

This thesis explored the self-liberation concept of Theravada Buddhism, with the hope that it can provide a foundation towards a dialogical exchange

between Buddhists and Christians in Myanmar. In order to provide a better understanding of the context, the thesis offered a brief historical background of Buddhist-Christian relations in Myanmar. By relying mainly on the translation of the Pali Tipitaka, along with a number of secondary sources from prominent Buddhist scholars, the self-liberation concept of Theravada Buddhism was discussed, beginning with the personal experience of Gotama, the Buddha.

The thesis was descriptive in nature. The research employed a basic qualitative method, integrated with the analytical and interpretive methods. Correlation and synthesis were performed and are presented in the final chapter with an emphasis on implications for interfaith dialogue.

The study produced some significant findings. Firstly, it discovered the true nature of self-liberation in Theravada Burmese Buddhism. It is neither focused on merit-making nor ritual performances. Rather, it is the attempt to fulfill the requirements for self-liberation in seeing all things as they are, which destroys all the defilements from one's mind to become an Arahant, a perfect one. Secondly, despite the differences in the means towards liberation between Christianity and Buddhism, and the seeming impossibility for a common ground to begin a theological dialogue, there are common doctrinal grounds as well as practical implications that will not only allow us to appreciate each other's religions but also share our divergences respectfully. Thirdly, it discovered the possibility of Buddhist-Christian dialogue concerning liberation through shared experiences as a means to make our dialogue clearer. Overall, it uncovered relevant and feasible ways to bring peace and make dialogue possible in the context of Buddhist-Christian dialogue through soteriological engagement.

Toyoda, Tsuneki. "Lot as Supporting Character: The Lot-Abraham Relationship in the Narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18–19)." Master of Science in Theology (Biblical Studies—Old Testament), 2020.

Lot plays a significant role as a supporting character in his relationship with Abraham, specifically in the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis

18–19). The researcher employed narrative criticism, focusing on stories in biblical literature. Through the stylistic and aesthetic literary structure, the author designed an approach to these stories with insights drawn from the secular field of modern literary criticism. This methodology aims at determining the effect that the narrative texts are expected to have on their readers and thereby reconstructing the meaning.

The study justified the significance of Lot's role as a supporting character in his relationship with Abraham in the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18–19) as follows: Lot's autonomous and active actions as a principal character, as a result, bore testimony for (1) the efficacy of Abraham's intercession with the LORD (18:23–32), (2) the fact that Abraham had already commanded Lot "to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice" (18:19), and (3) a partial fulfillment of God's promise with Abraham (18:19 [cf. 12:3], "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him"). The author, through such dramatic irony, represented the significance of Lot's role as a supporting character.

This study included recommendations for future related studies from narrative criticism as follows: (1) Sarah's role as a supporting character, (2) patriarchal supporting characters' roles, (3) Pentateuchal supporting characters' roles, and (4) the role of each supporting character in the Old Testament in the narrative.

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The Mediator provides a forum for dialogue about theological issues related to ministry in Asian and Pacific contexts. In keeping with this purpose, the editorial committee seeks quality papers related to Bible, theology, missions, evangelism, and church growth. Also welcome are reviews of publications, including books and music. Contact the editor for more information.

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5. Papers may be of any length, although authors may be asked to condense longer papers.
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