

Auli Vähäkangas, Sivert Angel, Kirstine Helboe Johansen (Eds.)

Reforming practical theology

The politics of body and space



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INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY
OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY
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Cover image: Lars Danbolt

The cover picture is taken outside Oslo Cathedral in a ritual event that commemorated the victims of the Norwegian terrorist attacks on July 22, 2011. Eight people died in a bombing in Oslo and 69 young people died on nearby Utøya island. These events left their mark on the IAPT conference, too.

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Preface

For the first time the Conference Proceedings of the *International Academy of Practical Theology* are being published in Open Access. For this purpose the new series *International Academy of Practical Theology. Conference Series* (IAPT.CS) was founded after the conference, which took place in Oslo, 20–24 April 2017. The contents and results of the conference are documented in this series and we are happy to present the first issue.

In the IAPT.CS we will also document the scientific work of the biannual meetings of the IAPT. We are thankful and proud that we have succeeded in presenting the contents of academic research for a general and international readership free of charge and in the public domain, and also available independently from local resources, including access to libraries or by purchasing the books. In this way the Open Access strategy implements the explicit wish of the members of the Academy to make the results of research accessible and to increase the visibility of the *International Academy of Practical Theology* as an organization and communication platform for mutual academic exchange and international discourse in Practical Theology.

This has been made possible through the meritorious support of the Tuebingen University Library (Germany) within the framework of the Specialised Information Services (Fachinformationsdienste) for Theology and Religious Studies, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). The Tuebingen University Library owns a repository of data and provides the Open Access infrastructure (Open Journal Systems) according to established standards for long-term access to publications and the exchange of metadata with national and international servers and library registries. Specifically, we want to thank Axel Braun and Martin Faßnacht, who supported this project in terms of both technical and library-oriented aspects.

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the IAPT, Birgit Weyel (Tuebingen) was responsible for the website. Without the unfailing and competent assistance of Johannes van Oorschot and Manuel Stetter (both Tuebingen) the development of the website would not have materialised. We are very thankful for their contribution to our good work.

The logo of the IAPT.CS was designed by the company *grafik.design.werbung*. Bernd Rudek (Balingen/Germany). The typesetting was done by Francesco Punzo, from the company *typoscript GmbH* (Waldorfhäslach/Germany). We appreciate his extraordinary professional and precise work very much.

Open Access Publishing means publishing without a publisher. The Executive Committee of the IAPT consequently deliberated upon the question of reviewing and made the decision to establish a double peer-review system that will guarantee the quality of the publication in terms relevance to the conference topic, coherence of the volume, fair representation of the society as well as originality, scientific reliability and academic standards. We are convinced that it is the academic community which has to negotiate the criteria of academic standards and to review the results of research in a cooperative, helpful communication process. The Open Journal System provides an excellent framework for that.

Last but not least, we would like to thank the editors of this first issue for their openness and work with regard to the challenges of publishing this first volume in OA.

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the International Academy of Practical Theology

Trygve Wyller (President)
Birgit Weyel (Member at large)

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Introduction

Auli Vähäkangas, Sivert Angel and Kirstine Helboe Johansen

The 2017 IAPT conference took place in Oslo, which during that year celebrated the 500-year anniversary of the Lutheran reformation. With this Nordic story as a context, and with participants from all over the world, the conference asked how practical theology should be done now, in light of the reforming processes, whether spiritual, social or cultural that face us globally and locally. Are there reforming experiences and values to be learned or unlearned? Keynotes, roundtables, and paper and poster sessions discussed the conference theme “Reforming: Space, body, and politics” and presented practical theological contributions to major reforming processes going on in our world and assessed how practical theology as a discipline might be reformed.

Both in Catholic and Protestant theological traditions, the relationship between theology and politics has been a central question. Issues like social justice, climate change and citizenships are at the center of national and international politics. Correspondingly, these issues confront practical theology with the question of how politics reforms theology and how theology reforms politics. The classical ways of discussing this, for example via the concept of the two kingdoms or the Church’s social teachings, have been challenged by ways of thinking derived from contextual theology, prophetic theology, public theology and a theology of the people. At the conference, challenges from the intersections of politics and theology were explicitly tied to questions of body and space. Through their varied theoretical perspectives and the range of empirical material they present, the papers included in this volume express the diverse ways in which today’s practical theology is responding to these challenges. Our Brazilian colleagues, who will host the next conference, have written the very last paper in the book. It thus offers a bridge from the Oslo confer-

ence in 2017 to the conference that will be hosted in São Leopoldo in 2019.

Body politics and the reforming of the church

The first section of the book deals with papers on the body and reforming the church. Embodiment is increasingly regarded as a source of theology. In bodily actions and interactions, theological as well as cultural concepts and norms are enacted and these enactments may be the primary point of access as to what a church, a congregation, a neighbourhood or a family is. The relationship between bodily actions and norms is expressed clearly by bodies that are somehow queer according to standard (and often implicit) norms and that may experience the encounter with these norms as devastating.

The reformation of bodily practices within and outside of churches are informed by cultural developments, such as the increased understanding of the need to recognize the great variety of bodies and bodily behaviours, by societal developments associated with migration and pluralisation, and by theological developments prompted by the voices of hitherto marginalised positions. The papers in this section of the volume discuss how this situation challenges a reformation of practical theology, but also spiritual practices and practices in churches.

The two first papers deal with the future of the discipline of practical theology. Swinton argues for an attentiveness in the sense of refounding as constitutive of practical theology, whereas Mager argues that practical theology should mirror faith in a dialectic of listening-responding and seek God beyond the limits of religious institutions.

The next eight papers in this section deal explicitly with the body as a theme for practical theology.





Demasure, in her keynote paper, investigates discourse on sexual abuse and points to shifts in the connected theoretical perspectives. Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner, Armin Kummer and Finley Lawson highlight gendered bodies as fuel for theological re-thinking. In creating a meeting between Susanna Wesley and Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, Stevenson-Moessner points to both a theology of embodiment beginning in incarnation and to women's perspectives as a theological resource. Kummer argues for the necessity of specific male perspectives in a contemporary setting where masculine identity is under reconstruction. Criticizing Boolean accounts of gender, and theological dependency on such accounts, Lawson focuses on queer bodies, arguing that non-Boolean accounts of personhood must be incorporated into theological thinking.

Raymond Webb and Mary Moschella deal with structural violence, Webb via an example from El Salvador and Moschella through a discussion of the phenomenon of mass incarceration in the United States. Joyce Mercer, Auli Vähäkangas and Suvi-Maria Saarelainen deal with healing practices for threatened bodies performed by the church. Mercer studies "recovery memoirs" as a way of healing addicted and recovering bodies, while Vähäkangas and Saarelainen examine embodied experiences during life-threatening illness and point to the healing potential of relationality and ritualization. In the section's last paper, Júlio César Adam suggests that a hermeneutics of lived religion and the study of Brazilian pop culture and cinema might offer practical theology possibilities for rethinking the relationship between church and society.

The politics of space and church: Migration and the space of theological education

Space is an important theoretical concept for research in practical theology, but it also points to urgent themes in today's society, the most prominent of them being migration, which sets the political agenda in many parts of the world. Migration challenges practical theology to reflect on space, since it is a case of demanding space, giving up space and reclaiming new spaces. At the same time, it constructs spaces that reform religion, theological education and churches. The papers in this section make varied contributions to a practical theological discussion on how migration reforms practice and

thinking and on the intersections of politics and theology in the discourse that takes place within contested spaces.

A theoretical paper by Johann Meylahn introduces the second section of the book. Here, Meylahn explores the relationship between bodies and space, when bodies are mixed in shared but contested spaces and categorized as belonging or not-belonging. He calls for a theologizing with excluded and marginalized bodies. A keynote paper by Federico Settler disputes the fact that focusing on migrants' beliefs and practices makes possible a greater appreciation of the agency of migrants in reforming religious spaces and their own mobile futures. In his paper, Settler gives two interesting examples of migration spaces, one from South Africa and the other one from France.

The papers by Ana Thea Filipović, Tibor Reimer and Vhumani Magezi discuss the role of churches within a political space in their respective contexts. Filipović and Reimer examine the denotations and metaphors of space used to interpret and understand the role of religion in Central and Eastern European societies after the fall of the communist regimes. Magezi discusses the Church's critical role in transforming leadership within the context of bad governance and gives interesting examples from the case of South Africa.

Theo Pleizier and Tone Stangeland Kaufman, Hans-Günter Heimbrock and Trygve Wyller as well as Constanze Thierfelder discuss migration in the European context. The focus of Pleizier and Kaufman is on reforming preaching, while Heimbrock and Wyller focus on how ecclesiology is challenged through migration. Thierfelder's approach is historical; she studies the French Protestant migration of the 18th century, but additionally utilizes a psychoanalytical approach in her analysis.

The final six papers treat the question of theological education in societies with increased religious diversity. Even though Friedrich Schweitzer's focus is on religious education, he proposes a need for broadening the discipline beyond traditional paradigms to include a multi-faith approach. Edward Foley continues this discussion by incorporating plurality into liturgical education. Pamela Couture, Pamela McCarroll and Nevin Reda give an interesting example of their own institution, Emmanuel College of Victoria University at the University of Toronto, in highly multicultural Canada. They focus on the shifting realities that contribute to a pedagogy formatted for a multi-religious edu-



cational community. Marilyn Naidoo discusses the space of theological education in South Africa in the light of racial transformation. Eric Stoddart's chapter concludes that reforming bodies under surveillance is an additional task for theological education. The final paper, written by Valburga Schmiedt Streck, Júlio César Adam and Nilton Eliseu Herbes from Faculdades EST in São Leopoldo, Brazil, discusses the contribution of Faculdades EST to Latin American theological practices.

We are proud of this volume of reforming practical theology, which includes important openings in the field from thirty-one scholars of practical theology. The authors represent a wide range of denominational and cultural backgrounds as well as various sub-disciplines. Six of the chapters are co-authored, which adds an additional dialogue to the volume. We, the Nordic editors of this volume, wish you an enjoyable reading experience.

Reforming, revisionist, refounding: Practical theology as disciplined seeing

John Swinton

My focus in this chapter will be on the act of looking and what exactly it might mean to *perceive* something. By perception I mean the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses. The act of perceiving something is difficult and complex. The key point I want us to bear in mind throughout is this: *the ways in which we perceive something will determine what we think we see and what we think we see will determine how we respond to that which we think we see*. A primary mark of our age is uncertainty and fragility regarding our perceptions of the world. In a time when “fake news” and “alternative facts” seem to be the order of the day, it is sometimes difficult for us to know exactly what it is that we are looking at when we look out on the world and how we should properly respond to what we think we are seeing. In this Chapter I want to work with the delicate and complex tension between looking at something and perceiving it and to draw out some of the ways in which this tension relates to practical theology.

Perceiving the world faithfully

Let me begin with a perspective on practical theology that will help give a basic shape to the conversation that follows: Practical theology is a critical reflective discipline that seeks to explore the world through the lens of theology, with a view to enabling faithful thinking, accurate theological perception and authentic Christian practice. Developing attentive, disciplined perception requires a deep re-forming of how we go about looking at things and how we discern and assess our perceptions of the things that we look at. For the purposes of this paper I will focus on three concepts that are central to that endeavour: reforming, re-visioning and refounding. These three concepts, as we shall see, enable the practical theologian to perceive and to re-conceive the world in quite particular ways.

Let me begin with a basic observation: *It is quite possible to look at things and not to see them*. What I mean by that is simply that the frame of reference one uses to observe something will, to a greater or lesser extent, determine how we perceive any given

John Swinton is Professor in Practical Theology and Pastoral Care in the School of Divinity, Religious Studies and Philosophy at the University of Aberdeen. The foundation for much of John's research and teaching has emerged from his background in nursing, ministry and healthcare chaplaincy. He has published extensively within the areas of ageing, dementia, mental health and illness, spirituality, human well-being and the theology and spirituality of disability.

situation. The act of *looking* and the act of accurate *perceiving* are not necessarily synonymous. It is quite possible for two people to look at the same situation and to perceive it quite differently. One of the tensions within, for example, the practical theologian's use of the social sciences, is the fact that the social sciences contain their own world views, assumptions, plausibility structures and cosmologies and even theologies, many of which sit uneasily with orthodox Christian theology, but all of which deeply impact upon how we look and what we see. There is a world of difference between looking at a





group of people praying and seeing these actions as aimed towards their creator, as they cry out faithfully in an attempt authentically to participate in God's plan of redemption for the world, and looking at a group of people engaging in a communal ritual – prayer – and seeing how this action seems to bring certain psychosocial benefits in terms of personal wellbeing and social cohesion. Theological perception and socio-psychological perception both emerge from reflection on the same phenomenon, but they conceive of it quite differently. One interprets what they see in terms of creation and creatureliness, the other perceives the phenomenon in terms of “the world.” Both are in some sense correct, but there is a significant layer of interpretation that is not available to the psycho-social look. It is precisely this missing layer that is fundamental for accurate theological perception.

Barth on miracles

Robert Sherman observes that in his discussions on miracles, Karl Barth argues that there is only one reality: “the kingdom of heaven has come near” (Mt.4:17). The historian, the psychologist the ethnographer and the psychiatrist are not looking at a different world from the theologian. There is no “divine course of events occurring alongside a broader creaturely history” the natural and the “supernatural” are not in fact distinct realms. All of reality is God's reality. That being so, miracles are not the “occasional interruption of a mundane order” (Sherman 2005, 98). There is no mundane order to break into. There is only one history: God's history. All events are open to a variety of inter-relations, all of them which may contain truth and significance. The difference is that Christians have an extra level of interpretation which situates all events within a broader, more all-embracing framework. It is this framework that allows them to perceive the event as an act of God (Barth 1956).

Barth denies the existence of a “divine course of events occurring alongside a broader creaturely history” or of a distinction between “a distinctly natural realm and a distinctly supernatural one.” Thus for Barth, too, it makes no sense to think of miracles as the “occasional interruption of a mundane order” (Sherman 2005, 98). We should therefore acknowledge that the same events are open to different interpretations; “the world and its workings do not interpret themselves, ... they do not supply their

own meaning” (Sherman 2005, 101). In Barth's view, scientists and historians must be permitted to offer scientific and historical explanations of these events, but Christians recognise that there is another level of interpretation. Here, Christians situate the event within a more all embracing framework which allows them to perceive the event as an act of God.

Bringing to the fore this theological hermeneutical layer is central to practical theology. As this layer is drawn out, so our perspectives on any given situation are changed. Such a change of perception does not necessarily invalidate other ways of interpreting the event, but it does place those interpretations in a quite different hermeneutical context which determines the aims and goals of the practical theologian in significant ways.

Reformation

In beginning to get into the issues surrounding how and why practical theology enables and facilitates such a change of perspective, we will now turn to the theme of *reformation*. In her book *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is changing and why*, theologian Phyllis Tickle, points to the ways in which the church moves towards radical reform every 500 years (Tickle 2008). Her basic thesis is that every 500 years, the Church goes through what she describes as a “rummage sale,” during which it cleans out some of its previous forms of spirituality and replaces them with new ones. This does not mean that previous forms of spirituality become obsolete or invalid. It does however mean that particular ways of thinking about theology and practice lose pride of place as the dominant form of Christianity. The historical reforming rhythm she seeks to capture runs through Constantine in the late 4th early 5th century, the Great Schism of the 11th century, the Reformation in the 16th century, and now the Postmodern era in the 21st century. Each of these epochs have been significant points of reference for substantial changes. For Tickle, our understanding of church and gospel is always emergent and inevitably dialectical. The old does not disappear and the new does not fully disconnect from its historical roots. Rather, it is as the old and the new come together in dialectical interchange that new ways of seeing the world and being Christian begin to emerge.

Importantly, Tickle draws our attention to the fact that it is very difficult to know the full implica-

tion of any of these reformations until after the fact. The law of unintended consequences means that powerful movements don't always have the outcomes that their movers and initiators intended. Luther's intention was to reform the Catholic Church in response to some clear injustices and unfaithful practices. His intention was *not* to form a new way of doing or being church. His protest and reform was intended to bring the church back to faithfulness; to give it a new perspective. The consequences of his protest and reform turned out to be quite different from his original intention. Reformation is always and inevitably ambiguous.

The ambiguity of reformation is summed up quite poignantly by Stanley Hauerwas in his reflections on Reformation Sunday. In Hauerwas' view:

Reformation names the disunity in which we currently stand. We who remain in the Protestant tradition want to say that Reformation was a success. But when we make Reformation a success, it only ends up killing us. After all, the very name 'Protestantism' is meant to denote a reform movement of protest within the Church Catholic. When Protestantism becomes an end in itself, which it certainly has through the mainstream denominations in America, it becomes anathema. If we no longer have broken hearts at the church's division, then we cannot help but unfaithfully celebrate Reformation Sunday (Hauerwas 2013).

Reformation contains lament as well as joy. Reformation relates to radical change that emerges from protest and a desire to re-form the church in ways that better represent the coming Kingdom of God. This is a laudable goal, but the positivity of the reformation dynamic easily slips into a theology of glory if the fragmentation of Jesus's Body that has been a consequence of the reforming impulse is not fully recognised. Hauerwas is correct in asserting that reformation is not an end in itself. If the perceived endpoint of reformation is simply a better form of Protestantism, Catholicism or any other Christian faction, then we have missed the point and overlooked the unifying eschatological force that should be driving our desire for protesting and reforming. When reformation fragments Jesus's Body, we need to recognise this fact in songs of lamentation that run in delicate and dissonant harmony with our hymns of glory. The reformers plea to be reformed and always reforming should contain a deep element that begs us to hold on to a desire for reconciliation and unity. Forms of reformation that re-wound Jesus's body are modes of protest that have forgotten how to look at the cross. That is why an

ecumenical organisation such as the International Academy of Practical Theology is so important. The very fact that within this organisation we come together in hospitable inquisitiveness, indicates that we recognise the desire for reconciliation that can easily become a victim of ongoing reformation.

Practical Theology and Reformation: Orientation, Disorientation and reorientation

Not all of us may agree with all of the details of Tickle's analysis and conclusions, but she does seem to be on to something interesting. As we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the last reformation, the world is shifting and changing in ways that are unpredictable and deeply disconcerting. We live in a time of great turbulence and change inside and outside of the church. Brexit, Donald Trump, substantial church decline within the Western world, mass immigration caused by war and famine, ongoing destruction of civilisations, the online abuse of innocents ... the list goes on. Many of the assumptions that we had about the world have shifted, some of them quite radically. The world is changing, but we are not quite sure whether that is a good or a bad thing. It is difficult to tell if we are in the midst of a reformation (we may well be), but at a minimum we are living in a time of profound change and deep *disorientation*.

It is interesting to note the connections between reformation, our current situation and the psalms, in particular the psalms of lament. In his book *The Spirituality of the Psalms* (Brueggemann 2012) Walter Brueggemann draws attention to the ways in which the psalms are intended not only to reflect our experience, but also to restructure it in ways that teach us to see the world in quite particular ways. He notes that some of the psalms, particularly the lament psalms, are intended to function therapeutically in enabling people who have experienced deep suffering and injustice to articulate their pain and find fresh ways of perceiving the world. Brueggemann schematises the psalms according to a threefold pattern that he suggests is intended to facilitate different ways of looking at, perceiving and responding to situations. The schema runs from *orientation* to *disorientation* to *reorientation*. *Orientation* is found particularly in the Royal psalms. These psalms assume and proclaim that the world is good and stable; God is in his heaven and the covenant is



being faithfully upheld. The royal psalms sum up how the people of Jerusalem must have felt as Jesus rode into the city. God is good! God is here! God will win! But then something happens that shakes the psalmist's world. This leads to a period of *disorientation*. The old maps just don't fit; the old coping measures don't help him to cope. "Why me oh Lord! How long!" The old visions seem to make no sense any more. He quite simply no longer sees the world in the ways he used to. He looks out on the same space, but everything has changed. The psalmist cries out in desolation "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?" But then, something changes and brings about a sense of *reorientation*. Within the majority of the lament psalms there is a profound change in the way that the psalmist perceives the situation. The change is initiated as he comes to recognise the significance and presence of God's unfailing love. "But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me (Psalm 13:6)" He remembers God's *hesed*; God's unending and faithful love. The horror of the fearful moment remains, but is profoundly re-conceived by the memory of God's unfailing love. The psalmist begins to *perceive* things differently. He looks out at the same situation, but he perceives it quite differently. As his perception of the situation changes, so the psalmist moves from the language of lament to the language of joy and worship. His theological attentiveness, leads to a change of perception which moves the psalmist to engage in a quite different set of liturgical practices. As he "takes a second look" at the situation and allows his theology to change his perspective, he sees and responds differently. The pain of the event is not taken away; it is perceived differently in the light of the reframing revelation of God's gracious presence. Grace and redemption did not enter the situation. They had always been there. The psalmist had not, for whatever reason, been able to perceive them.

It is very important to note that the reorientation of the psalmist's perception, is not a movement backwards towards his original orientation. Suffering changes things. There is no going back. His reorientation recognises what was, but now sees even that differently in the light of God's unending and faithful *hesed*. It's a little like the ministry, passion and resurrection of Jesus. The excitement of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem is shattered by the pain and disorientation of the cross. But the shadow of

the cross is lifted by the wonder of the resurrection. The reorientation of the resurrection is not a movement back to the glory days of the entry into Jerusalem. Rather it is a revelation of something radical and new; connected to what has gone before, but not determined by it. The endpoint of this Spirit led movement is a dialectical, eschatological newness; a newness that respects the significance of what has been, but opens up new vistas for understanding and faithful living in the present and on into the future.

Reformation and reorientation

Now, what is interesting and important here is that *the structure the psalms offers us for understanding and dealing with vicissitude is the structure of reformation*. The movement from orientation to disorientation to reorientation is precisely the dynamic that occurs within the process of reformation. When Luther looked around at the church, he saw certain things that the rest of the church either didn't see, couldn't see, or chose not to see. Their settledness and orientation blinded them to certain things that Luther perceived as obvious. The church was in a state of dangerous disorientation even though to look at it as an insider, it seemed to be quite gloriously oriented. However, the way that the church looked at itself and saw itself differed radically from the way in which Luther looked at and saw the church. One viewed the church through a hermeneutic of power and glory; the other viewed the world through a theology of the cross. Both *looked* at the same thing but *perceived* it quite differently. The crucial theological difference was that Luther's perception of the situation (what he saw, what he felt, how he acted and the telos of his actions) was shaped and formed by a different set of assumptions from those recognised by the church. As he looked at the church with a theological attentiveness that had been shaped by his ongoing emersion within the strange world that is revealed within the bible, so he saw things differently. Like the transforming moment when the psalmist allowed God's *hesed* to reinterpret his tragedy, so Luther's scriptural formation meant that he looked at the same thing as everyone else was looking at but perceived them quite differently. His changed perception was intended not to reject all that had gone before, but to reorient it and put it to its proper purposes.

The dynamics of reformation and reorientation capture some vital dimensions of the practical theo-

logical task of facilitating faithful perception. Reformation, reorientation and practical theology are deeply interconnected. They take very seriously what is, in the light of what is still to come. All three seek to change perceptions and to affect deep bodily changes in practice. They primarily desire that we return to God and find new peace and new ways of being in the world and perceiving what it means to be in the world faithfully. Understood in these ways, the pattern of reformation and the psalmist's experience of reorientation and the tasks of practical theology are closely connected in their desire to disorient and to reorient church and world and put them to their proper purposes.

Re-Visioning: Developing theological attentiveness

The key for the psalmist and for Luther was the ability change their perception of their situations by engaging with a renewed theological attentiveness. In his essay 'The Cultivation of Theological Vision: Theological Attentiveness and the Practice of Ministry (McGrath 2011 107–123),' Alistair McGrath suggests that "theological attentiveness" is central to the practical theological task. Theological attentiveness is a way of paying attention that allows our perception to be shaped and formed by the world that is brought to us through our engagement with Scripture, tradition and theology. It is formative knowledge that engages the whole person as the whole person turns themselves towards God. Karl Barth has pointed out that the world that is created as we pay attention to the Christian Scriptures is very strange (Macdonald 2000). The strange new world within the bible reveals a world that is filled with odd narratives, sometimes dysfunctional people and dissonant occurrences. Nonetheless, strange as it may be, it claims to be the *real* world; the world as God is revealing it to us. It was that strange new world within the bible that caused Luther to set in process a reforming dynamic that would revolutionise church life. It was this strange new world that drove Calvin to try to create "a small piece of heaven on earth" in Geneva. It is this strange new world that drives pope Francis to embrace disabled people – those who are shunned and rejected by the world – and to insist that caring for oppressed people should return to central place in the practises of the church. It is that strange new world that shapes the practical theologians ways of engaging with, in-

terpreting and perceiving the world. Theological attentiveness means allowing that strange new world within the bible to shape and form our perceptions, and to transform our intellectual and bodily practices.

Theological attentiveness requires what McGrath describes as a "discipleship of the mind (McGrath 2011, 108)." The idea of disciplining the mind resonates with what the apostle Paul talks about in Romans 12:2 when he talks about renewing our minds. It involves what McGrath describes as "the cultivation of a Christian "map of meaning" – a distinctively Christian way of seeing things (McGrath 2011, 108)." This is an individual and a communal task wherein Scripture, doctrine, tradition and practice function together to shape and form minds, emotions, bodies and imaginations in ways which reform our perception of the world and re-order and expands our options for acting in the world. The outcome of such disciplining results in the development of "principled seeing". Principled seeing McGrath suggests, enables us to "grow by looking" Seeing things as they really are, penetrating beneath the surface of appearances, is both the goal and the outcome of the cultivation of perceptual attentiveness (McGrath 2011, 112) McGrath concludes: "The Christian faith thus offers a way of seeing reality that brings about a transformation and a transvaluation of our understanding of the world, and our place within it. It strips away our delusions about reality, illuminating it and bringing it into sharp focus so that we may see it as it really is (McGrath, 2011, 108)." Cultivating perceptual attentiveness results in reoriented vision, which in turn results in forms of practice that are faithful, theologically discerning and practically transformative. It is this kind of theological attentiveness that sits at the centre of the practical theological gaze.

Refounding: Practising theological attentiveness

So what might all of this look like for practical theologians? In seeking an answer to this final question, I want to introduce one more concept namely; *refounding*. The idea of refounding relates to modes of practice and forms of changed perspective that reveal radical alternatives to what is currently available. In his work on how churches deal with trauma, disruption and change, the anthropologist and Roman Catholic priest Gerald Arbuckle calls for the



church to consider the need to *refound* itself when it is faced with major changes. To refound something, he suggests, is not simply to renew it. Refounding is much more radical than renewal. Renewal often means shuffling around current ideas and concepts in order to make changes that can be envisaged within the current set of plausibility structures in any given context or situation. Refounding is deeper, thicker and more radical. It is much closer to the psalmist's process of reorientation than it is to the renewal of that which once was. Refounding requires what Arbuckle calls: "a quantum leap in creativity (Arbuckle 1996, 92)." To refound something is to reorient it on a radically new foundation; to see it in a way that is continuous with its history but quite different from the way in which that history has worked itself out up to that point. In order to refound something we need to put to one side our current assumptions and presumptions and return to those root narratives, cosmologies, symbols and myths that offer what he describes as "a set of felt meanings in an orderly pattern (Arbuckle, 1996, 25)." Refounding has to do with embarking on a creative exploration of theology, Scripture and tradition and allowing these ways of looking at and being in the world to enable us to perceive the very foundations of the thing we are looking at differently; in a way that changes how we see the situation and offers a fresh range of possibilities for action and response.

Refounding who we are: Same body, different person

In concluding this chapter I want us to reflect on some work I have been doing on brain injury and personality change. In looking at what it might mean to have the same body as one had before a trauma, but to appear to be a different person after it, we will be able to see the importance of refounding at a most profound level: refounding who we and whom others think we are. By focusing on this perplexing human experience we will be able to draw together the various threads that I have laid out in this chapter and begin to tease out something of the practicalities of my argument for doing practical theology.

Let us begin with the idea of personality change. Personality change relates to a discontinuity in personhood post injury. The American Psychological Association defines personality as referring to "in-

dividual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving (The American Psychological Association 2018)." Personality change is thus framed as a change in one's personal identity. The assumption is that neurology and continuity of thought and behaviour defines personhood and identity and that damage to one's body is equal to damage to one's identity; who one is in the world. From the perspective of psychology and neurology this is accurate. If we come to perceive identity in the terms offered by psychology and neurology, we will most probably assume that the most adequate response is grief, lament and some mode of rehabilitation, with the latter being primarily perceived as a movement backwards towards as close an approximation of what we have been in the past as we can imagine. However, if we seek to operationalise the idea of theological attentiveness and look not for renewal or rehabilitation but for reorientation and refounding, an interesting new set of possibilities begins to emerge. The question then becomes: *does brain damage that brings about a shift in our perceived identity actually alter who we are?*

Think for a moment about the kind of language that we use around people with advanced dementia or other forms of serious brain damage. People quite frequently say things like: "She is not the person she used to be." "I would hate to be like that;" "Life wouldn't be worth living without memory." Apart from the obvious question – "How do you know?" – such language indicates not just a perceived change in a person's personality, but a disappearance of the self altogether. As our brains deteriorate or are damaged, so we somehow gradually or immediately disappear. The problem here is twofold. Firstly, such language is the product of what we might describe as a pathological imagination, that is, a way of imagining certain conditions and experiences that is driven by the assumption that they are first and foremost pathological. Such a way of imagining begins with the assumption of loss and negativity and proceeds accordingly. Nestling at the heart of such a mode of imagination is a particular understanding of the self: *the autobiographical self*. The understanding of the self reflects John Locke's description of a person. Locke describes a person as "a thinking intelligent being that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places." Within this understanding of identity and personhood, who we are is determined by memory and awareness. To be "me" I need to remember my past, have an awareness of

who I am in the present and be able to project a possible future. If I can't do that I am perceived to no longer be the person that I was. So continuity over time and history is necessary for me to retain my identity. According to this understanding of what the essence of identity comprises, brain damage clearly does bring about personality change and the destruction of our selves.

However, if we reflect on such a situation in the light of the idea of refounding, interesting new possibilities begin to emerge. Arbuckle tells us that the process of refounding begins as we engage with the founding documents and allow these documents to reshape and reform our vision of the future and in so doing attend theologically to the situation. What then within our "Christian map of meaning," to use McGrath's phrase, can help refound people's identity when their stories seem so different from the way that they were?

Identity in Christ

Karl Barth introduced the idea of soteriological objectivism as a way of framing what it means to be a creature. George Hunsinger reflects that "Soteriological objectivism...means that there is finally no other truth about us than the truth of who we are before God in Jesus Christ. We have no existence before God that stands in independence of Jesus Christ. "The truth of our existence is simply this—Jesus Christ has died and risen again for us. It is this and this alone which is to be proclaimed to us as our truth (Hunsinger 1991, 103.)

The idea of soteriological objectivism opens up a whole new way of viewing the truth about who we truly are. The truth of who we are is not to be found in who we might think or remember ourselves to be. Rather, the truth of who we are is found only in Jesus. We are who we are "in Christ." This understanding draws us to the letters of Paul and in particular Paul's frequent use of "in Christ" language. Paul speaks of the saints being 'in Christ Jesus' (Philippians: 1:1). In Romans 8:1 he talks about 'those who are in Christ Jesus.' Again in 2 Corinthians 12:2 he describes himself as a man "in Christ." For Paul, one's identity is not found in one's own body but in Christ. Importantly, in Colossians 3:3 Paul states: "For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God." This is a truly mysterious passage. Paul urges us to realise that as Christians, we discover that we are not who we may have thought we

were. Our identity is not comprised of *our* memory, knowledge about ourselves or the state of our current capacities. We are who we are *in Christ*, and importantly, even that is hidden from us.

This passage offers a beginning place for refounding our identity when we experience brain damage. All of us tend to assume that we know who we are. However, that may not be the case, at least not in the obvious way that we might assume. Think about I in this way. Before I became a Christian I thought I was a pretty good reason. I encountered Jesus and discovered that I was a sinner in need of reconciliation with God. What I thought and assumed about myself turned out to be wrong. It was only as I encountered my identity in Christ that I began to understand who I truly was. If someone experiences biographical, intellectual or behavioural discontinuity, that is experienced as a change in one's personality – that cluster of behaviours that we assume makes us who we are – Paul's reminder of the true source of identity refounds this experience and offers a different point of orientation and a different set of responses. Within the Christian map of meanings we discover that our identity is given and held by in Christ. If someone asks me who I am, my response is no longer "I am John Swinton, a theologian from Aberdeen." I am that off course, but that is not what defines me. There is another level of interpretation that can be applied to my situation. Who I am is who I am in Christ and that will not change. As the apostles Paul puts it: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38–39)" There is nothing in scripture to indicate that any of this changes when we encounter brain damage.

Such a mode of refounding opens up fresh space for new and innovative pastoral practices – lament, grief counselling to manage the changes – that can enable us to manage the changes without losing the hope of the Gospel¹. Refounding our lives in Jesus keeps the cornerstone of our lives firmly in place in all circumstances and at all times.

1 For further details on what this might look like see Swinton, John (2017) *Becoming Friends of Time: Disability, timefullness and gentle discipleship*. Waco: Baylor Press.



Conclusion: Practising double vision

In this chapter I have argued that a key task of practical theology is to change our perspective on the world in such ways as to transform our minds and create spaces for transformative, creative theological responses that would not be available if the practical theologian was not involved. I have offered three core concepts: *reformation* (Protest and reform with a view to reclaiming faithfulness) *revisioning* (reorienting our understanding of situations in the light of the reframing power of the bible) and *refounding* (returning to our core documents and traditions in order to look differently at situations and experiences). Taken together these concepts help us to understand something of the nature of the transformative theological attentiveness that practical theology brings to the theological enterprise. Our very brief reflections on brain trauma helps us to embody and visualise something of the practical implications of our theological endeavours and to illustrate the way in which, properly conceived, theology is always for the sake of practice and practice is always for the sake of the Kingdom God.

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Can “God” be reformed? Musings on a Faithful and Responsible Practical Theology

Robert Mager

The article examines recent publications in the field of practical theology, to see how the “God” reference is invoked. It addresses a tendency to downplay this reference in favor of a scientific analysis of “lived religion”. While acknowledging the harmful aspects of many traditional views of God, the disqualification of the “God” reference in a highly secularized world, and the need for new perspectives on the spiritual dimension of life, the article argues in favor of a God-centered theological endeavor anchored in a clearly identified religious or spiritual tradition. Faith is understood here as a dialectical process of listening and responding to the divine as perceived in human experience. Practical theology is presented as a reflexive task within and about this process. By its very nature, the “God” reference calls for reform, not only of our representations of the divine, but of our lives and of our world.

You, God, are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you,
my whole being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land
where there is no water. (Ps 63:1)

Could this be the prayer of practical theologians? If it were so, what would it say about our identity and activity? That the quest for God is central to us. That our *longing* is rooted in a sense of *be-longing*, expressed both in naming God and in addressing ourselves to God. That *be-longing* to God, far from implying a form of possession or achievement, compels our search for God. That this search is not merely a rational venture, but a holistic one, which involves us entirely. That our thirst is exacerbated by our location and, in turn, unveils the true nature of this location: “a dry and parched land where there is no water”.

Such a prayer is subjectively grounded and God-oriented. But most forms of practical theology today do not work this way. Despite recent challenges

coming from feminist and postcolonial approaches (Dreyer 2016), subjectivity is still downplayed in research methodologies pledging allegiance to the classical scientific method. And in the context of highly secularized Western societies, practical theological research rarely foregrounds the quest for God, whatever the inner faith incentives of the researchers might be.

I muse about the “God” reference in practical theology as a contribution to the ongoing reflection on the identity and methods of the field. I ask a simple question: what makes practical theology a *theological* endeavor? Is it still about God or gods (*theos*),

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or has it moved on to other matters, in the way philosophy has come to grapple with all kinds of issues hardly related to the love of wisdom (*philo-sophia*)? Common answers to that question can be summed up as follows: 1) “Practical theology is theological in that it studies ‘godly matters’, aka religions.” But even if we agreed that religions deal with God or gods, which is certainly not self-evident (Despland 1979), the different sciences of religion (*religionswissenschaft*) that have developed since the 19th century claim to do precisely that—to study religion—and they insist their task is *non-theological*. The question rebounds: what constitutes a *theological* study of religion? 2) “Practical theology builds ‘theological theories’ about religious practices.” But apart from the obvious tautology here, the question remains: in what sense are such theories *theological*? To make progress here, I believe we must go beyond the objects and methods of practical theology, and examine our stance (*where* we are), the nature of our quest (*what* we are looking for), and our purpose (*why* we do what we do).

I write from the context of Quebec, Canada, which has experienced a rapid transition from a strong embeddedness in Catholicism to advanced secularism in a few decades (Lefebvre 2000; Lefebvre 2007; Nadeau 2009). Beyond even secularism, a persistent anti-religious resentment—which the political theorist Gilles Labelle (2006; 2011) calls an “anti-theological wrath”—simmer in the media, the academy, and the whole of society. Although this attitude aims at religion and not theology per se, it has caused, amongst other casualties, the extinction of most theological faculties in barely 20 years (Mager 2016a). One might blame those faculties, as if they were simply on the decline; however, as a rule, they were precisely doing what most practical theologians are calling for today—facilitating creative transactions between church, society and academia (Baum 2014).

A snapshot of the field

Such generalizations hardly honor the variety and profundity of the current practical theological literature; still, I suggest that they resonate *prima facie* with mainstream activity in the field. To test them, I thematically and rhetorically analyzed a year-long (2014) production of the *International Journal of Practical Theology* (IJPT) comprising fifteen articles in order to see how “God” is invoked.

I present the results of this analysis in broad strokes.¹

Three articles are in the sub-field of social care. They suggest that the perspective of God’s love (Goodall 2014; Norris 2014) or naming a person as God’s child (Swinton 2014) can transform a caregiver’s understanding, attitude and practice towards people living with dementia or other afflictions. A traditional faith perspective is fully operational here: practical theology is about “reflecting critically on Christian practices as they interrelate with the practices of the world” (Swinton 2014, 245). Goodall suggests that practical theology investigates “what God is doing in the world” (Goodall 2014, 250). Similarly, a fourth article aims at helping Christians develop “a God-like unity of personality through both their work and religious ideals” (Blosser 2014, 54) in order for them to “rightly respond to God’s presence in the world” (52), especially the business world. A fifth article offers a typology of catechetical environments; references to God appear amongst the various elements of the Christian faith addressed by catechesis (de Kock 2014). A sixth text makes a methodological call for a more God-centered “description, analysis and reconstruction of religious practices” (Immink 2014, 127). Those six articles refer to God in ways that presume that a religious tradition is shared with the readers. The readers are supposed to know what is meant by God’s love, presence, action, personality and so forth. The articles are about Christian practices, though Immink extends the interest of practical theology to other forms of “lived religion” (Immink 2014, 132).

Immink’s contribution is related to other texts authored by Wilhelm Gräb, Christiaan Hermans, Friedrich Schweitzer, Ruud Ganzevoort and Birgit Weyel who, along with Jaco Dreyer, all took part in a panel discussion on methodological issues at the 2013 Conference of the International Academy of Practical Theology held in Toronto (Canada). Most of these texts converge in the way they see lived reli-

¹ A downside of proceeding this way is that I will not engage the conversation with the many formidable volumes published recently which address my methodological concerns in different and insightful ways (such as Miller McLemore 2011; Cahalan and Mikoski 2014; Wolfteich 2014; Wolfteich and Dillen 2016; Mercer and Miller-McLemore 2016). This limitation is necessary to keep my inquiry focused on a clearly defined sample of texts.

gion as the object of practical theology and scientific theory building as its main task.

They present the concept of lived religion in different ways. As a whole, it aims at the experiential and practical dimensions of religion, in distinction from their institutional forms (organizations, sacred texts, dogmas, etc.). The authors strive to distance religion from a direct reference to God (thus Gräb 2014, 109: “the religious is definitely not to be essentially linked to God”), though Immink insists on the necessary “interaction with the divine” (2014, 132) and Hermans on “superhuman agents” (2014, 120). In their definition of religion, those authors prefer to rely on other concepts such as transcendence, sacredness, otherness, the ultimate, the ineffable, and spirituality. As I understand it, they define religion in reference to anthropological concepts akin to the divine but distinct from it, thus justifying the theological endeavor while letting go of any definite understanding of God. These concepts target an anthropological (and theological) reality believed to be perceivable in “spiritual and existential practices” (Ganzevoort and Roeland 2014, 91), or more specifically under the form of “culturally mediated objectifications and externalizations” of otherwise unseizable inner experiences (Weyel 2014, 155, citing Clifford Geertz). For the practical theologian studying the “lived spirituality and/or religion” of people, God can only be objectified as “God-as-they-understand-it” (Hermans 2014, 122).

These authors emphasize that lived religion becomes the object of theory building, a task which secures the scientific status of practical theology within the academy. Hermans writes: “If [practical theology] want [*sic*] to be an academic discipline (which is my position), it needs to be second order discourse about practical reasoning on human agency seen as spiritual and/or religious.” (Hermans 2014, 116) Weyel acknowledges the tensions created in some theological or ecclesial milieus by “[the] scientifically devised difference between the practice of religion and the theory construction which refers to that practice” (2014, 151), but she believes that “[the] institutional differentiation of practical theology into empirical cultural hermeneutics and an action-oriented science, which is focused on the profession, has the advantage of the two being able to relieve and complement each other.” (154). Our authors consider that the scientific task thus conceived is fully theological, since lived religion is the object of “theological study” (Ganzevoort and Roeland 2014, 99) or “theological theories” (Hermans 2014,

113; Gräb 2014, 112). But they themselves ask: “How will theological theory on religion differ from other theories on religion?” (Hermans and Schweitzer 2014, 90) Such a theology is no longer religiously affiliated to a religious tradition; it is not about building “theory *in* faith”, but theory about the different manifestations of lived religion (Hermans 2014, 116). In this sense, none of its key features requires (or justifies) it to be Christian, Muslim, or Buddhist practical theology.²

Five concerns

Understanding practical theology as the scientific study of lived religion has obvious advantages. It unlocks the tight link between the theological endeavor and traditional, normative, institutionally-defined views of God. It renders possible a critique of those views, in terms of their theistic, deistic, paternalistic and otherwise hidden underpinnings. The traditional representations of God no longer create the standard by which the burgeoning “spiritual and/or religious” experiences of our contemporaries are described and assessed. Practical theology thus acknowledges the decisive shift from a traditional Western civilization based on a God-given order, to diversified modern societies which are no longer religion-driven. It widens its field of interest to all sorts of experiences of the divine, anthropologically understood in terms of sacredness, otherness, transcendence and the like. By adopting a resolute scientific stance, it strives to strengthen the status of theology within the academy, as complement to and in dialogue with other sciences devoted to the study of human phenomena.

Nevertheless, those advantages might be obtained at the cost of the integrity of the theological discipline. I make this blunt—maybe even offensive—statement in order to advance the methodological discussion. My concerns are fivefold.

First, such a practical theology does not differ in essence from the various sciences of religion. As in-

2 Bhikshuni Lozang Trinlae’s “Prospects for a Buddhist Practical Theology” (2014) is in search of a middle ground. It fully subscribes to an understanding of practical theology as “an empirically descriptive and critically constructive theory of religious practice” (12, quoting Gerben Heitink), but it tries, nonetheless, to maintain a location of that theoretical activity under the authority of specific religious traditions (13).



licated by David Hall (1997, vii), the very notion of “lived religion” is inherited from the French sociological tradition of Gabriel Le Bras (1942; 1945) and his followers. For decades now, the various sciences of religion have paid close attention to different facets of lived religion, including discourses, practices, experiences, phenomena, engaging both descriptive and hermeneutical issues. When compared to the psychology or sociology of religion, practical theology, so understood, becomes not “just” science of religion (Weyel 2014, 151), but *precisely* science of religion. The sciences of religion, and all forms of science, offer tremendous value to practical theological endeavors, but I wonder where and how any form of science of religion becomes a theological endeavor.

Second, the reference to “theological theories” or “theological concepts” does not constitute in itself a satisfactory solution. What do such expressions entail? One of two things. Either theological concepts such as salvation, revelation, nirvana, or the like are harvested from theological traditions, and in so doing, the analysis does proceed from some specific tradition and should be clear about this root. Or those concepts are developed around a “dimension of the divine,” perceived and interpreted in the phenomenon of lived religion. But then we end up with a multiplicity of concepts (sacredness, otherness, transcendence, ultimate meaning, etc.) which seem interchangeable. Aren’t these concepts terribly abstract? Do they refer to “the same thing”? Do they offer a convincing testimony to some universal spiritual dimension of human life? Don’t these concepts belong primarily to discussions in anthropological philosophy and philosophy of religion, rather than to theology *per se*?

Third, the methodological “distance” inherent in a modern understanding of science (Weyel 2014) comprises a renunciation to any “special, intuitive or privileged knowledge of the material object” (Hermans 2014, 116). To what extent is this form of science up to the task of granting deep knowledge about what is at stake in experiences of the divine? Trinlae (2014, 10) quotes Roger Jackson who writes: “it may be a hallmark of ‘religions,’ and at least one way of distinguishing them from ‘philosophies,’ that their adherents cannot rest content only with pondering the ultimate; somehow, they must gain access to it, either directly or indirectly.” Theologians—like all intellectuals—tend to overemphasize ideas over practices and experiences; they must constantly remind themselves that “meaning” is not just

“food for thought” but an all-encompassing challenge crossing all aspects of life, including work, relationships, art, politics, and, as such, requires multifaceted forms of intelligence and enquiry involving as much personal commitment as it calls for “distance”. For instance, Swee Hong Lim’s article on “musicking” suggests that music is a deeply constructing form of art that challenges practical theology to develop “a theo-music aesthetics approach” (2014, 305). One would hardly restrict the study of music to the scientific apparatus of musicology, nor would we imagine that the learning sciences could stay free of bodily engagement within the struggles of education. As Karl Rahner (1978, 16) wrote: “It is precisely we theologians who are always in danger of talking about heaven and earth, about God and man with an arsenal of religious and theological concepts which is almost limitless in its size and proportion. We can acquire in theology a very great skill in talking and perhaps not have really understood from the depths of our existence what we are really talking about.”

For such reasons, “theory building” may not satisfactorily express the theological endeavor. *Theoria* evokes the visual stance of the onlooker who watches what is going on “at a distance”; in what ways—if not by the typical bias of the Greek philosophical thinker—is the knowledge obtained in this way superseding the one developed through *praxis*? In this sense, isn’t theology as a whole—and not only practical theology—better served when it is conceived and exercised as a form of *theoria* developed within (and not just about) religious/spiritual *practices* (*fides quaerens intellectum*)?

Finally, insofar as theologians do not feel bound by a religious tradition and stay distanced from the religious practices they study, how can they hope to overcome the “elevation of the descriptive over the normative” which is typical of the modern academy, at least in principle (Trinlae 2014, 11, quoting Roger Jackson)? As put by Hermans and Schweitzer themselves (2014, 90): “Are we making prophetic theological interpretations, or do we study people who make prophetic interpretations?” Most practical theologians claim to be “engaged scholars” (Ganzevoort and Roeland 2014, 100) who offer “value-driven strategies” (Graham 2014, 197). But where do we find and how do we justify the criteria of our critical stance? Ganzevoort and Roeland (2014, 100) thus write: “A ‘preferential option’ for the praxis of the disenfranchised is an ethical requirement.” Why so? The neutrality of science has long been ques-



tioned (Polanyi 1952; Kincaid, Dupré, and Wylie 2007); science-based ethics and personal values are hardly satisfactory answers (Jenkins 2013). In a nutshell: “in what name” do the practical theologians speak?

An anti-theological modern context

In advancing these critical elements, I do not advocate a neo-orthodox stance. The traditional Christian foundations of the Western world are irremediably broken. Modernity and its postmodern developments display worldviews and social (dis)orders which no longer rely on the Christian God as their foundation, apex or even central figure. Typically, in their multiplicity of forms, with their emphasis on reason and science, and their rejection of the “sacred trinity” of religion/authority/tradition (Arendt 1968), dominant modern and contemporary discourses are explicitly and intentionally *anti-theological*. Many of our contemporaries hold that a God who is out of space and time, who cares more for souls than bodies and who has proven to be hopelessly entangled with the politics of power and violence, can neither be redeemed nor “reformed” and would better be buried with the religious past. Traditional churches experience a sharp decline in most Western countries and tend to be shooed away from the public sphere.³ In most countries, this disestablishment of churches and of the whole Judaeo-Christian tradition is reflected in the academy, where they are often associated with obscurantism and regressive ideas.

In this trying context, many Christians, churches and theologians are tempted to uphold traditional views of God against all odds, even when they are not necessarily keen to restore Christendom. But many others have long realized how the God of Christendom became an ossified, perverted and oppressive figure, an *idol* rather than an *icon* of the true God. Authors like Jean-Luc Marion (1991) have tried to untangle the tight knots linking God and the “Supreme Being” figure. Vast biblical, theological and pastoral endeavors have sought to renew the understanding of the Judaeo-Christian God, showing, amongst other things, how the ways we understand

and relate to God are entrenched in history and subject to criticism, in the very name of God. In our societies, cultures and academic circles, theologians are tempted in two directions: either to entrench themselves within traditional views, at the risk of losing public significance and relevance, or to abandon the God reference altogether, at the risk of alienating themselves from what they are about (Lison 2000). Most keep working on “the transfer of knowledge between university, society and church” (Weyel 2014, 159) in countries where such an interface still seems to be operational. But under the pressure of intensifying secularization, this could be less and less the case in many areas of the world, such as Quebec, where theology struggles to find research funding and to remain within the universities.

Listening and responding to God

I understand, appreciate and partake the vast efforts made by practical theologians to study attentively their contemporaries’ experiences and practices and thus to “trace the sacred”, as Ruud Ganzevoort (2009) perceptively puts it. This rightfully leads them beyond the boundaries of traditional religions. I believe, however, that the theological edge of this endeavour depends upon the “critical faithfulness” (Stoddart 2014, 346) of the practical theologian towards a clearly identified religious tradition or belief system. A purely scientific stance risks to lose sight of what is at stake, which is the experience of the divine and the responses it incites. This calls for an ongoing “reform” of the “God” reference within the reflexive process of listening to the divine and of responding to it in today’s world.

God does not essentially appear as an *object* of our experiences and practices, but as what addresses them and happens to them in such a way that they are either gracefully transfigured or radically questioned. In a luminous chapter of his book *Raisons communes*, the sociologist, philosopher and theologian Fernand Dumont puts it in secular terms: as transcendent beings entangled in a historical process of humanization, we are judged by our deepest values long before we reflect upon them (Dumont 1995, 211). If this is so, the theological endeavor is concerned about human experiences, practices and situations insofar as they are epiphanic, that is, impacted by—or craving for—God’s grace. This grace cannot be objectified as such, nor can it be put at a distance in order to be simply examined “objective-

3 In his analysis of the Scottish referendum, Eric Stoddart (2014, 318) indicates that “the single reference to the church in Scotland during a tableau broadcast to millions around the world was to avoiding ecclesial influence.”



ly” or “theorized.” Rather, these experiences, practices, or situations can be discerned critically, reflected upon, meditated “from within.” In this sense, to use biblical symbolism, theology is first and foremost a matter of *listening* to what manifests itself as the living God (“*Shema Israel*”). Reflection appears here as an inner dimension of that listening attitude and not as some afterthought detached from the demands of listening. Moreover, I believe there is no decisive reason to restrict the field of these experiences (or practices, or situations), and thus the scope of practical theology, to what Westerners call “religion” or even “spirituality”. In this 21st century more than ever, the most crucial challenges facing humanity, both individually and collectively, transcend the distinctions between religion and secularity, spirit and matter, sacredness and profanity, public and private, and the like. For instance, how can we collectively care for a world which we contribute to desacralize and dismantle everyday, by our very way of living? How can we favour and nurture specific cultural identities in a globalizing world? On what ground (religion, reason, wisdom?) can we establish ethical principles and get them to deal with our ever-expanding ability to manipulate the living? By which enchantment can we hope to neutralize the demonic dynamics of war?

Epiphanic phenomena are not simply there to be heard and felt, but they inherently call for a practical response. How to *respond* to the innermost challenges of our lives, personally and collectively, is the crucial theological problem. In this sense, theology is practical through and through. Many theological sub-disciplines deal essentially with the past—what our predecessors considered divine revelation and how they responded to that—and operate as post-mortem analyses. But practical theology deals with the living: our hopes, our fears, our struggles and the practices we devise to become better humans. “God is not the God of the dead but of the living” (Mt 22:32). Practical theology is “practical” not only because it is concerned with practices but, more fundamentally, because faith is structured as a dialectic of *listening-responding* (or, in this sense, theory and practice). In biblical terms, again: Jesus praises the person who “*hears my words and puts them into practice*” (Lk 6:47). Faith entails practical requirements. Likely, the listeners’ answer to Peter’s preaching at Pentecost is practical: “When the people *heard* this, they were *cut to the heart* and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘*Brothers, what shall we do?*’” (Acts 2:37) Consequently, practical theological

methodologies cannot remain at the threshold of concrete action and should comprise a theological proposal (Mager 2016b), such as the 5th phase (precisely called the “response”) in Thomas Groome’s methodology (Groome 1991; Stoddart 2014), or the 3rd phase of the classical see-judge-act sequence underlying many forms of theological reflection.

Can “God” be reformed? For many believers, this question has a blasphemous twist: “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” (Heb 13:7–8). But God does not seem to be such as to be confined within religious institutions, even the most revered ones (the Ark, the Temple, the Bible, the Magisterium). A long theological tradition has taught us to deny whatever we profess about God, in the very moment we profess it; other religious or philosophical schools raise similar requirements. A specific theological impulse encourages theologians, as all believers, to seek God beyond the boundaries of church experiences and structures. We may then realize that “reforming God” becomes a matter of re-forming our world and ourselves in response to what we perceive and understand as God’s presence, or God’s word, action, spirit, love. “Reform,” understood both as “re-creation” and “new creation”, might be what the very experience of God is all about.

Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.
I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands.
I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods;
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.
On my bed I remember you;
I think of you through the watches of the night.
(Ps 63:3–6)

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The politics of meaning: societal discourses on the sexual abuse of children and their influence on the Catholic Church

Karlijn Demasure

This chapter on child sexual abuse contributes to an understanding of the shift from a focus on perpetrators that denies the voice of the victims, even holding the victims to be sexual delinquents responsible for their abuse, to a “victims first” approach. The Catholic Church has been heavily influenced by the major discourses in society that give power to psychiatrists, therapists and social workers. However, with regard to clerical sexual abuse in the Church, two distinct discourses can be identified. In the first, sin is considered a cause for abuse, reducing it to a matter of the will. The second discourse restricts child sexual abuse to the North American context, suggesting that moral decay has contaminated the clergy in that region.

Introduction

In recent decades, sexual abuse has been widely discussed in the Catholic Church as well as in society at large. Also, dominant discourses in society were previously more concerned about the perpetrators than the victims. But recently, a major paradigm shift has taken place: victims have come forward testifying how the abuse has ruined their lives and are asking for justice. This has resulted in a “victims first” approach.

This chapter contributes to an understanding of the shift from a focus on perpetrators, one that denies the voice of the victims, even holding the victims to be sexual delinquents responsible for their abuse, to a “victims first” approach. Although the focus is on the Catholic Church as such, the major discourses in society play an important role in its thinking and actions. It is worthwhile to take a closer look at the interaction

This chapter adopts a constructionist approach, which accepts that society is both an objective and a subjective reality. It holds that meaning is constructed, leading to a taken-for-granted reality. Foucault

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and Derrida have convincingly shown that language creates the framework in which psychological and social life take form. Considering someone who has sexually abused a minor a psychopath, gives power to legislative authorities; the decision to put someone in a psychiatric institution—and not in prison—is based on the testimony of a psychiatrist. Thus, language not only creates meaning, every discourse also leads to practical consequences. It follows that discourses can be constructed to serve certain purposes (Gergen 1999, 42). For example, a discourse can be constructed that focuses on false accusations so as not to have to pay compensations,

which leads to a situation of no longer believing the victims and setting the perpetrators free.

Within the limits of this chapter, I will look at history from the turn of the twentieth century to today. An analysis of some of the major discourses concerning the sexual abuse of minors will reveal both the meaning that is conveyed as well as the purpose and consequences of such discourses. It makes clear that the status of the victim and the offender is not fixed but changes over time. To be aware of the historical evolution of meaning is to become aware of the fact that the categories we use for the persons involved often create much suffering (Gergen 1999, 48). We need to ask the questions: Who gains? Who is hurt? Who is silenced?

This chapter is rooted in the study of a large number of scientific writings that describe or research, or else are expressions of, the particular periods that are under analysis. The first group of writings can be identified as historical, describing how sexual abuse was being examined during a specific period; the second group includes empirical research based on interviews or the analysis of sources, such as journals and magazines, while the third group looks at the construction and the meaning of the phenomenon of abuse.

Definitions

Currently, the World Health Organization defines Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) as “the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared or else that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Children can be sexually abused by both adults and other children who are—by virtue of their age or stage of development—in a position of responsibility, trust or power over the victim” (WHO 2006).

The Oxford Dictionary defines politics as “the principles relating to or inherent in a sphere or activity, especially when concerned with power and status” (Oxford Dictionary of English, 3rd ed., s. v. “Politics”). We will use the term “political” in this broad sense, i. e. as it is connected with power relationships and status. Within this context, the chapter will examine the major discourses on the sexual abuse of minors.

A discourse (Burr 1995, 64) expresses meaning through language, which in turn influences identity as well as social and political praxis. It is a way of

talking about and understanding a specific reality. For Foucault, however, discourse is not limited to language; it includes practice (Hall 2001, 72). Discourse is related to power, operating by rules of exclusion. Those in power decide what can be discussed, where and how one can speak, and “who gains, who is hurt, who is silenced, what traditions are sustained, which are undermined” (Gergen 1999, 62). In discourse analysis, the primary concern is not if the perspectives under being examined are true, but rather, “what interest [do] they serve, what relations of power [do] they uphold?” (Miller 1990, 118).

The social construction of reality does not depend on one discourse only, but on a miscellany of simultaneous discourses, each one viewing the “world” from a certain perspective. Prevailing or dominating discourses can be opposed by counter-discourses. When the voiceless and oppressed start to speak for themselves, they create a counter-discourse, which is always political, because only those who have been oppressed can form a counter-discourse, and by doing so they resist the oppressing power (Moussa and Scapp 1996, 92–93).

Telling the truth or inventing fantasies?

Europeans began giving greater attention to CSA in the late nineteenth century, primarily in Great Britain and France. In France, the discovery resulted from research in the field of forensic medicine. Major works published by Ambroise Tardieu (1867), Paul Bernard (1886) and Paul Brouardel (1909) presented their research on indecent assault cases, which they considered a form of physical violence. Tardieu asserted that three-quarters of those charged with rape were accused of raping children (Olafson, Corwin and Summit 1993, 8). The French forensic tradition documented tens of thousands of cases of sexual abuse and rape.

It is speculated that, while studying at the Paris Morgue, Sigmund Freud may have been present when Brouardel conducted autopsies on victims of sexual abuse. However, when Freud published his *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie* (Three Essays on the History of Sexuality) in 1905, he stated that it is rather exceptional for children to be the only sexual object. In his opinion, they only fill this role when the individual is “a faint-hearted and impotent individual who makes use of such substitutes, or when an impulsive urgent desire cannot at the



time secure the proper object” (Freud 1910, 40) He continued: “Thus we find with gruesome frequency sexual abuse of children by teachers and servants merely because they have the best opportunities for it” (Freud 1910, 41). So, Freud distinguishes between individual causes (a faint-hearted, impotent individual) and situational causes (no proper object).

Freud initially defended the proposition that traumas present in adult hysterical women were the result of true (real) sexual abuse in their childhood (Freud 1998), but he definitively retracted his seduction theory in *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie* (Schusdek 1996). From that time onwards, he maintained his conviction that the seduction scenes recounted by his patients had never taken place and were instead invented fantasies. A crucial reason for this was that he could not believe that incest was so widespread (Smart 1999, 397).

The opinion that children invent stories and, consequently, stories of sexual abuse was revived by the controversy surrounding the False Memory Syndrome and False Accusations of child sexual abuse made in the late 1980s (Beckett 1996). While K. Beckett describes the pre-1980 phase as characterized by groups advocating against collective denial of CSA (Beckett 1996, 69), from 1985 onwards articles appeared opining that most of the abuse cases were false accusations because children do lie and leading questions can make them do so (Waller 1991). Created in March 1992, the False Memory Syndrome Foundation (FMSF) defines False Memory Syndrome as a condition in which people remember things that did not actually happen. Therapy and hypnosis are held responsible for the evocation of such memories (FMSF 2013). The foundation was rather successful because, as Beckett states, they managed to influence the media, “facilitated by the status and authority of many of the academic and professional sponsors of this frame” (Beckett 1996, 73).

The perpetrator

At the same time that Freud was considering hysteria as the consequence of sexual abuse, governments began criminalizing the sexual abuse of children. In Great Britain, the age of consent was raised from ten to thirteen in 1875, and to sixteen in 1885, and incest was criminalized in 1908 (Olafson, Corwin and Summit 1993, 9; Smart 1999, 392–394). In the Netherlands, the age of consent was fixed at sixteen in 1886 (Brongersma 1984, 81).

The label “sexual psychopath” originated in Krafft-Ebing’s work *Psychopathia Sexualis*, in the chapter “Pathological Sexuality in its Legal Aspects”, published in 1884, which greatly influenced the discourse on perpetrators. Discussing the sexual abuse of children, Krafft-Ebing differentiated between psychopathological and non-pathological cases. The non-pathological cases were the result of “moral weakness or psychical impotence”, while the psychopathological were “acquired weaknesses” and caused, for example, by alcoholism or a degenerative predisposition. Krafft-Ebing further labeled such moral weakness, which he considered a vice, a “perversity” and called the pathology, the disease, a “perversion” (Angelides 2005, 274).

Based on this discussion, U.S. criminal law regarded any person who committed sexual abuse with minors a “psychopath” (Freedman 1987, 91). “Sexual psychopath” as a legal category, which considered the psychopath curable and only dangerous to society until healed, was an experiment (Prager 1982, 50). Perpetrators were admitted to psychiatric care instead of prison. The state continued to rely on insufficient medical knowledge, and often hospitalization was “the shortest route to freedom” (Prager 1982, 55).

After the 1930s, a consensus slowly grew that the label “sexual pathology” was inadequate (Freedman 1987). More specific descriptions were sought to differentiate between those perpetrators who were dangerous to others and those who were mentally disordered (Weisberg 1984, 30).

From the 1920s until 1960, sexual abuse disappeared from the radar. L. Gordon argues that in the U.S., a decline in feminism led to a reduction in concern for children’s welfare (Gordon 2002). It was only in the 1970s that “sexual psychopath” was relabeled as “sex offender” and “child molester”, making victims more visible.

Let us summarize: we can see that, from the start, distinctions have been made when analyzing perpetrators of child sexual abuse. Freud talked about weakness and impotence and about those who suffer from “impulses” and behave in a sexually deviant way. He also pointed to easy accessibility as a factor in abuse (e.g. teachers). Krafft-Ebing differentiates between perversity (a vice) and perversion (a disease). Thus, not all abuse occurs for the same reason. However, when looking at media coverage of the abuse crisis in the Catholic Church in the 1980s, distinctions were lost and the profile of the priest who commits sexual abuse was reduced to one single type, the pedophile priest, mainly due to media

coverage that only focuses on the most sensational cases (Jenkins 1996).

Framing pedophilia in positive terms

The Kinsey Reports, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953), greatly influenced ideas about human sexual behavior. Deviant sexual behavior seemed less exceptional than previously thought, which may have played a role in the “sexual revolution of the ‘60s”, a reaction against “the repression of sexuality” that advocated the celebration of sexuality as a normal part of life, not repressed by family, society, church or government. Embracing “free love” as an ideal, many people engaged in sexual experimentation.

This also affected attitudes toward pedophilia; emphasis was placed on the etymological meaning of the term: love for a child. A group of people defended the opinion that a “sexual relationship between an adult and a child”—notice the difference in discourse—should not always be considered abuse. This group tried to influence legislation and strove to lower the age of consent for sexual relations. In 1979, the North American newspaper *Gay Community News* called for a repeal of all age of consent laws and freedom of all forms of sexual expression (Angelides 2005, 281).

The pro-lowering lobby assumed that sexuality is a form of social behavior, whereby no intrinsic or essential difference can be made between normal or abnormal behavior. In this paradigm, there is only conformist and non-conformist behavior, and sexual behavior is affected by social rules (Ghijs, Cohen-Kettenis and Vanderschoot 1994). The morality of an act, then, is determined by the fact that the relationship in question is actually a subject-subject relationship and not by the fact that society recognizes a particular form of relationship. Threats of violence, temptation by flattery or money and goods, considerable differences in social status and sexual deception turn a relationship into an object relationship. As a result, pedophilia is, in this vision, not always CSA (Van Naerssen 1989). In addition, based on Freud’s insights, they defended the point of view that children were sexual beings, and by doing so, they challenged the notion of innocent childhood.

Within this context, the term perversity or pathology has no scientific meaning whatsoever and refers only to social conflict. Assistance consists of eliminating the effects of social stigmatization so

that a person can experience his/her sexual preferences. The negative consequences, if they exist, are not the result of sexual relations between adults and children, but due to negative reactions to the environment.

1970–1980: feminist framing: an influential reinterpretation

The 1970s and 1980s are characterized by feminist framing. CSA came under public scrutiny through the “battered child syndrome”, put on the agenda by pediatric radiologists. The publication of an influential paper by C. H. Kempe et al. in 1962 made it clear that the abuse of children was far more common than previously believed (Whittier 2009, 21).

A renewed focus on incest and CSA particularly grew out of the women’s rights movement and its advocacy for adult victims/survivors of rape (Grondin 2011) and other sexual and physical assaults. Within a feminist framework, incest was viewed as a practice that concretized men’s control over women’s sexuality (Scott 2001). Children’s issues were considered women’s issues, and both fell under the umbrella of feminism. Feminist groups contradicted historical understandings of CSA as infrequent acts perpetrated by sexual deviants. They argued that sexual violence was indicative and symptomatic of patriarchal societal attitudes towards women and children and the unequal distribution of power. These groups sought to raise awareness and increase understanding of sexual violence, they were openly critical of government and the criminal justice system’s responses to victims of violence, and they contested legal definitions that did not integrate non-penetrative acts (Angelides 2004, 141).

Within the feminist framing, CSA became a problem endemic to nuclear patriarchal families and therefore widespread (Scott 2001, 352). Feminists put great hope in the media and indeed they received much public attention. But the media dropped the political argument and portrayed the abuse “as a medical or a criminal problem rather than a political one” (Whittier 2009, 9).

Though society had difficulty accepting that the abuse of children had systemic causes, the feminist argument that sexual abuse is also an abuse of power became an insight accepted to this day; however, instead of being linked to societal structure as such, or to patriarchally structured families, it was connected to individual characteristics or to dysfunctional fam-



ilies (Scott 1995). This hermeneutical change was also reflected in U.S. legal practices. Psychiatrists had to cede their place to psychologists and social workers who counsel the family as a whole.

The feminist construction of CSA suggested the following: the offender is male and the victim female; he is not a stranger but someone who is trusted; the child is innocent, as opposed to the libertarian analyses of child sexuality; the abuse is not rare but widespread; non-penetrative acts must be considered abusive; and the individual etiological interpretation must be replaced by systemic causes.

From seduction to victim and survivor

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, two opposing discourses circulated simultaneously. The first stressed the innocence and purity of a child, meaning also desexualization. According to the second, the child was bad (sinful), inclined to evil and required tough education; thus, a child could also seduce an adult, who fell victim to the child's tricks (Whittier 2009, 5).

Freud's discovery of infant sexuality led to the opinion that sex between adults and children might be sought by the latter and that children are the actual seducers rather than the ones seduced. An important study of child abuse victims, of which 80 % were female, at the Langley Porter Clinic (California) described "the majority of the victims as 'seductive,' 'flirtatious,' and sexually precocious" and found that "in almost five-sixths of the cases" the child victim was "a participating member in the sexual act" (Weiss et al. 1955). Sexual abuse in that interpretative framework became defined as a problem of the perception of the victim (Conte 1994, 226).

Feminists insisted that the child is not willingly participating, but innocent. The term "victim" was used to make clear that the abused child, overpowered by the perpetrator, is without guilt. Feminists were mostly interested in female victims, which led to a binary interpretative framework of men as abusers and women/girls as victims. The victim/offender dyad strengthens the "politics of purification", in which the sanctity of the child is re-enforced as well as the profanity of the offender, the man, the pedophile. Only later, when research was done on clerical sexual abuse, in which the majority of victims are boys, it became clear that this gendered discourse is incorrect (McAlinden 2014, 184), or at least it needs to be more nuanced. The victim/

offender dyad also came under scrutiny when research indicated that a victim could turn into an offender (McAlinden 2014, 186).

Victims have to respond to certain norms to be recognized as a victim, and the qualities of weakness, respectability and blamelessness are part of that. Claiming victimization often leads to an evaluation of the behavior of the victim prior to, during and following the victimization. S/he must prove that s/he corresponds to the image of the "ideal" victim. Many have perceived this as a second victimization (Dunn 2010, 161).

The characteristics of weakness, passivity and non-responsibility, however, do not fit well into a Western culture that celebrates strength and responsibility. That is why the term survivor emerged. Dunn suggests that it might be easier for people to identify with this term.

As a sign of agency, survivors spoke for themselves. They testified on television, in newspapers and at conferences. They wrote books in their own name or together with other victims, and they were considered to have an expertise that could not be replaced by study or any other experience. Some also claimed that for this reason, they were the only ones with the right to speak up.

Clergy sexual abuse in the Catholic Church and practical theology

Although there were some earlier cases, the 1984 case of Father Gilbert Gauthier¹ in Louisiana and the subsequent cover-up by his bishop, Gerard Frey, is usually considered the start of the contemporary CSA scandal. In the following paragraphs, I would like to look at some of the discourses within the Catholic Church and the resulting tasks for practical theologians.

1. Perpetrators: from sin to pathology

For many centuries, the Catholic Church has focused on the perpetrators, the sinners and the possi-

¹ "Fr. Gauthier had in fact been reported to the bishop several times since 1972 and before long, it was discovered that he had abused scores of young children, all prepubescent and all boys with the sole exception of one little girl. In the end, he pleaded guilty to 39 counts." http://www.awrsipe.com/Doyle/pdf_files/Manual-History%20%2010-12-2010.pdf

bility of forgiveness. The priority given to the perpetrator was rooted in a theology of the cross that concentrates almost exclusively on the theology of atonement, which states that Jesus enabled the forgiveness of sins through his suffering. In the U.S., at the onset of the crisis, the perpetrator was considered a sinner (Demasure and Maisha 2015). Within this interpretative framework, the decision to abuse someone depended on an act of the will. The solution was confession, conversion, penance, absolution and forgiveness. Because of the seal of confession, the abuse remained secret. No measures capable of solving the problem were taken, and bishops aware of the abuse chose fraternal correction or a pastoral approach (Doyle 2006; Geary 2011, 84; Jones 2015, 244). T.W. Jones argues that the 1917 and 1983 Codes of Canon Law provided measures for punishing clerics who engaged in sexual relations with minors under sixteen years of age (2015, 245). Pope Benedict XVI was of the same opinion, writing in his 2010 pastoral letter to Catholics in Ireland that “a misplaced concern for the reputation of the Church and the avoidance of scandal, [resulted] in failure to apply existing canonical penalties when needed” (Benedict 2010). However, questions have been raised about the degree to which the law could have been helpful due to the short statutes of limitations (five years) and high standards of proof and imputability.

As shown above, the empirical scientific research on pedophilia and CSA is quite recent. Therefore, before the 1980s U.S. bishops might be excused for not having taken the right decisions by giving multiple chances to those who committed sexual abuse, considering it a sin comparable to that of adultery. This led to a politics of geographical relocation by which abusing clergy were sent to another parish. Meanwhile, Th. Doyle, M. Peterson and R. Mouton were working on a document with the title “The Problem of Sexual Molestation by Roman Catholic Clergy: Meeting the Problem in a Comprehensive and Responsible Manner”, usually called the “Manual” (Doyle 2010), to inform U.S. bishops about the real problematic situation of CSA by members of the clergy. The final draft of the “Manual” was completed on May 14, 1985. So, from 1985 onwards adequate information was available.

In the late 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, with the media focusing on clerical sexual abuse, offending priests also became characterized as pedophiles, men suffering from a pathology, in need of care, not punishment. One can question to what extent a person is responsible for his actions, but a

more important point is why individualization, through the definition of deviant behavior, excludes systemic questions.

In the 1990s, a new discourse that looked at systemic causes within the cultural realm became dominant (Terry 2015). In 1993, in Denver, Pope John Paul II talked about the “sins” of the members of the clergy and put the blame on a (American) culture that no longer recognized truth, which consequently led to moral decay (Doyle 2006, 200–201). But soon it became clear that CSA was a global problem: Ireland (1994) was the first European country to suffer from the CSA crisis. In 2010, several other European countries followed, such as Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Austria. The magisterium reacted with an adaptation of canon law,² which led to a politics that aimed at the prevention of CSA and cover-up.

To my knowledge, only a few articles have been written by practical theologians about members of the clergy who have abused others (Geary, Giarrochi and Scheers 2006; 2011; Demasure, Joulain and Phillips 2016). However, many pastors have to deal with perpetrators in prisons and in psychiatric institutions, so there is much work to be done.

2. Victims and survivors

Also, when discussing the victim, psychological language became dominant: s/he suffers from a trauma. Therapy assures confidentiality, but at the same time risks reinforcing silence and stigmatization. Furthermore, it risks reinforcing the opinion that the abuse is a mere personal matter, keeping the victim in isolation. It does not contribute to social change. Pastoral care for victims is deeply rooted in a therapeutic or hermeneutic model, mainly focusing on the individual, but if we want to take into account the socio-political dimension, we might opt for a different model. L. Bridgers (2001) and J. Pais (1991) examined pastoral care in line with liberation theology, which may be better in cases of sexual abuse.

In her article “The resurrected life: toward a theology of liberation for the traumatized”, Bridgers argues that although oppression and traumatic experience cannot be conflated, they are “extremely close companions” (Bridgers 2001, 64). Both victim-

2 *Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela*: (2001) Grave delicts reserved to the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. Apostolic Letter, *Motu Proprio*, by Pope JP II, revised in 2010 by Pope Benedict



ize the powerless and in both cases the police and the justice system do not always respond adequately. Even when oppression is not considered the cause of abuse (contrary to feminist analysis), in many situations, oppression is certainly a problem after the abuse has taken place. Victims are forced to keep silent and not denounce the abuse. After disclosure, victims might be paid under the condition that they remain silent. If oppression can be defined as a loss of voice, then victims of abuse are certainly oppressed.

During pastoral care, survivors express their difficulties with traditional God images, such as God the Father or God the Almighty (Pais 1991; Flaherty 1992; Nandau, Golding and Rochon 2012). In liberation theology, God is on the side of the oppressed. Pais wants theologians to produce a theology that respects the child. God came to us as a child. While disadvantage and weakness will never be overcome, they must be respected and embraced. The child is Christ, and whoever abuses a child abuses Christ. As E. Borgman argues, CSA is the ongoing suffering of Christ (Borgman 2011, 15). I suggest integrating these insights into catechesis, liturgy and pastoral care.

Furthermore, atonement theology has been criticized (Brock and Parker 2001) because it often fosters a spirituality of martyrdom and sacrifice, which allows abuse to continue. These insights have consequences for catechesis; e.g., Christ's death on the cross should not be explained only in terms of forgiveness of sins because victims are the ones who have been sinned against (Coulter 2001).

Sacramentology also needs some attention. Victims deplore the fact that perpetrators can rely on the sacrament of confession, while they feel left behind. We might consider whether the sacrament of the sick could be helpful in this regard. It is also important to make use of the hermeneutics of suspicion with respect to exegesis and the texts used in liturgy, i.e. which biblical texts receive attention in the liturgy and which are left out. Prevailing interpretations may have excluded important passages.

3. What about the systemic causes?

In her critical analysis of the sexual abuse crisis, M. Keenan focuses on the Catholic Church's organizational structure. She considers the hierarchical structure a major systemic cause of the abuse crisis. This structure has consequences for accountability, which is organized from the bottom up, easily lead-

ing to a culture in which the organization as such is protected, while victims of abuse are not properly taken care of (Keenan 2012, 24–53).

Clericalism has been pointed to as another factor that enables CSA. Clericalism has to be distinguished from clerical culture, which is a subculture and not necessarily negative. Doyle describes clericalism as “grounded in the erroneous belief that clerics constitute an elite group and, because of their powers as sacramental ministers, they are superior to the laity” (Doyle 2006, 190). Keenan defines clericalism as “the situation in which priests live in a hermetical world set apart from and set above the non-ordained members of the Catholic Church” (Keenan 2012, 42). An important element in these definitions is the power differential. K. Seasoltz argues that the teachings of Vatican II brought about important changes, but that even newly ordained priests have a hard time accepting them theologically, as well as practically, and continue to adopt the former lifestyle (Seasoltz 2010, 141).

Seminary admission and formation is also considered a systemic cause of abuse. At the 1970 Synod of Bishops at the Vatican, Dr. C. Baars and Dr. A. Terruwe presented a paper based on their forty years of psychiatric practice. They found that 60 % to 70 % of priests suffered from emotional immaturity (Baars and Terruwe 1970, 3). This concurs with E. Kennedy's study commissioned by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States. He concluded that 7 % of American priests are psychologically and emotionally developed, 18 % are developing, 66 % are underdeveloped and 8 % are maldeveloped (Kennedy 1972, 11). These numbers are important since it has been suggested that emotional immaturity is a key factor in the etiology of sexual abuse of children.

Conclusion

The major discourse circulating in society also dominated the discourse within the Catholic Church. All priests who abused were portrayed as pedophiles, meaning they suffered from a pathology. In the public forum, there was no space for a more nuanced discourse that acknowledged the complexity of the phenomenon of sexual abuse. In addition, even when accepting that CSA was a crime, the influence of the psychiatric discourse remained influential.

However, with regard to clerical sexual abuse in the Church, two distinct discourses can be identi-

fied. In the first, sin is considered a cause of abuse, reducing it to a matter of the will. The second discourse restricts CSA to the North American context, suggesting that moral decay has contaminated the clergy in that region.

Within the Catholic Church, the discourse about victims/survivors also mainly followed society's attitude: initially, such discourse was avoided, and silence was expedient to avoid scandal. When victims/survivors were finally listened to and believed, the psychological discourse became dominant, stressing the psychological consequences of abuse, such as PTSD, and the need for victims to receive therapy, thus leaving out systemic factors.

To conclude, given the prevalence of CSA (1 in 5 girls; 1 in 13 boys), I suggest that in the formation of practical theologians, CSA should be addressed both as an individual issue and as a systemic issue. I hope that not only care, but also prevention, becomes part of the formation. This would certainly help make the world a safer place for children.

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Reforming pastoral care: masculinity, male pathologies and gender-specific pastoral care

Armin Kummer

Despite a heightened awareness of gender in practical theology, little attention has been paid to men-specific perspectives so far. This article contrasts the claims of the so-called mythopoetic movement about masculinity and male pathologies with findings from sociology and recent publications in practical theology. This allows me to discuss a number of observations on contemporary masculinities, men's pathologies and spiritual needs, and how the church can integrate such insights into its practical ministry. I will argue that misguided notions of masculinity are at the root of many male pathologies. Greater engagement with spirituality is key to male flourishing, and church can be a place for men to explore and develop authentic forms of spirituality. This article makes the case for reforming church practices and pastoral care so that greater pastoral attention to gender allows men to embark on a therapeutic spiritual path that ultimately transcends gender.

Introduction

Over the past three decades, gender-specific perspectives have been introduced into many academic disciplines, including practical theology. Yet despite this heightened awareness of gender, much less attention has been paid so far to men-specific perspectives. Denying men's perspectives and experiences their specificity amounts to identifying them with "the human being" or common sense. In post-patriarchal discourse, such generalization can no longer be upheld. Not only would it maintain an unjustifiable notion of a discursive dominance of men over women, it would also erroneously homogenize the plurality of men's perspectives.

A certain *genre* of men's literature has played a very influential role in the definition of men-specific perspectives in Western Europe and the U.S. since the 1980s. Robert Bly, Stephen Biddulph, Richard Rohr, and Anselm Grün are popular writers, grounding their talk about masculinity, manhood, and men's spirituality in myth, poetry and Jungian psychoanalysis, which is why this genre is often referred to as the *mythopoetic movement*. It is important

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to critically confront these texts, as they keep exercising significant influence in church-based activities with men across Christian denominations. I will submit these texts to a close and critical reading in order to identify what these authors write regarding the meaning of manhood, the apparent problems of men today, and their proposed solutions to these problems.

I will complement and contrast the claims of the mythopoetic authors with findings from sociology (the work of Connell) and recent publications in practical theology (notably the pioneering work of Kuratle and Morgenthaler). This allows me to discuss a number of observations on contemporary masculinities, men's pathologies and spiritual needs, and how the church can constructively integrate such insights into its practical ministry. I will





argue that misguided notions of masculinity are at the root of many male pathologies.¹ The mythopoetic paradigm, therefore, cannot offer valid solutions. Instead, greater engagement with spirituality is key to male flourishing, and the Church can be a place for men to explore and develop authentic forms of spirituality. On the basis of these observations, this article makes a case for reforms in church practices and pastoral care so that greater pastoral attention to gender allows men to embark on a therapeutic spiritual path that ultimately transcends gender.

The mythopoetic approach: archetypes of masculinity

Triggered by feminist discourse and policy change, the 1990s saw the emergence of a literary genre addressing a male identity crisis. These texts often take as a point of departure Carl Gustav Jung's speculative theory of universal archetypes (Jung 1968), Joseph Campbell's writings about mythology (Campbell 1964) and Mircea Eliade's history-of-religion work on initiation (Eliade 1998). The most popular and influential text of this genre remains Robert Bly's *Iron John* (1990). Due to this genre's frequent recourse to mythology, fairy tales and poetry, this genre came to be known as *mythopoetic*.

Bly's text also inspired numerous publications from authors outside the mythopoetic movement. This includes Australian family psychologist Steve Biddulph, US Franciscan writer Richard Rohr, and the German Benedictine writer Anselm Grün. The choice of these authors is not random. The titles of Biddulph, Bly, and Rohr, are recommended reading of many church-based initiatives addressing men's spirituality. Anselm Grün is Germany's most successful contemporary writer on spiritual matters

and, therefore, certainly representative of popular spirituality. All these authors can be shown to be genealogically related to Bly and sometimes to each other.

In a close, critical reading of these texts, I submitted each text to the same set of questions. I asked what kind of masculinity the texts are constructing, what they diagnose as contemporary men's problems or pathologies and their root causes, and what they propose as solutions or therapies.

The masculinities offered in all these works share conventional features, including physical strength and energy, fierceness and wildness. Each author pays homage to the "warrior", even if they differ about which concrete attributes or practices this involves. Arguably, Grün goes the farthest in his celebration of aggressiveness (Grün 2003, 7), which Rohr expresses more moderately as agency (Rohr 2012, 342). While all authors pay tribute to the Jungian idea that it is important for men to integrate the opposite "anima", attributes of toughness and combativeness are presented as more originally male than an interest in cooking or the arts.

The authors show more diversity in their analysis of what causes the malaise for contemporary men. Bly and Grün describe men's predicament as an identity crisis that is directly related to the rise of feminism (Grün 2003, 7). Biddulph locates men's problems—loneliness, compulsive competition, and lifelong emotional timidity—within a destructive self-image they have brought upon themselves (Biddulph 1998, 81). Rohr sees men's problems as rooted in false external motivators—money, sex and power—that are ingrained in the dominant ideologies of contemporary U.S. society, rather than in a loss of relative power vis-a-vis women (Rohr 2005, 87 ff.). For Bly and Grün the nature of the problem is a matter of gender conflict, while for Biddulph and Rohr it is a matter of broader social ills. All agree that contemporary men suffer from absent fathers and thus miss an opportunity to get "initiated" into their own manhood. Contemporary men, according to Rohr, have lost a sense of purpose in their lives and thus ultimately suffer from a spiritual deficiency.

The prescribed solutions or therapies differ: Bly offers an eight-step initiation program, but remains ambivalent as to whether his readers actually need to leave their armchairs. Getting in touch with archetypical images by reading poetry, myth and folklore appears to cover most of the interior spiritual journey he is prescribing. In a similar vein, Grün's therapy consists in the encounter with biblical figures that

1 Although at the aggregate level, there are empirically measurable indicators like e.g. suicide rates, cardiovascular diseases and life expectancy, I am not using the term "pathologies" in the clinical sense analogous to the WHO's International Classifications of Diseases. Instead, I am using the term broadly for all kinds of experiences, problems and behaviours that cause individuals to seek help in pastoral care and psychotherapy. As the different "schools" discussed in this article show, these male pathologies can be theorized as social, psychological, or spiritual phenomena. What ultimately matters in pastoral care, I would argue, is the care seeker's subjective perception of a need for change.

move the reader towards his own spiritual centre. *Selbstwerdung* (Jung's individuation) occurs within the self, and the reader's journey is an interior one. On the other extreme, we have Biddulph. His "action plan" calls for initiative and interaction: Reconciliation with the father, good and active parenting, mutually gratifying sex, healthy friendships and meaningful work all require proactive, transformative behaviours that bring the individual in touch with others (Biddulph op.cit., 13 ff.). For Rohr, initiation is a metaphor for spiritual growth, but it contains a strong relational element. His vision of the spiritual life is expressed and nurtured in community life and social activism (Rohr and Martos 2005, 91).

One of the problematic aspects identified in Bly's text is his narrative celebration of violence and killing as a source of male identity. The reactionary essentialism underlying Bly's notions of gender and his broader ideological message did not by accident chime with a belligerent right-wing conservatism in the U.S., that culminated in the two invasions of Iraq (Doubiago 1992, 82). Bly's anti-modernism and romanticism were also shown to resonate with authoritarianism and orientalism (Parker 1995). Jack Zipes quite correctly criticizes Bly's use of Jung and Campbell, whose theories about myths, archetypes, and the collective unconscious fail to take account of the socio-historical specificities of real men and encourage nostalgic longings for a fabricated past (Zipes 1992). This criticism must of course be extended to all the other writers to the extent to which they follow Bly's archetypal speculations.

The mythopoetic authors base their views on masculinity on a concoction of myths, fairy tales, poetry and the odd ethnographic anecdote. None of these writers provide detailed reflections on how they arrive at knowledge about their subject. In the following section, I will turn to more scholarly and empirical research.

The sociological approach: masculinities as configurations of practice

The Australian sociologist Raywen Connell must be credited with having framed the scholarly discourse about men and masculinities over the past three decades. Connell defines masculinities as "configurations of practice" within the social conflict inherent in the patriarchal gender order (Connell 2005, 44). I will give a concise overview of Connell's theory, highlight the major achievements of her work and

offer my critical assessment of some aspects of her² work. I will show the tension in Connell's work between modern and postmodern sensibilities and finally highlight some methodological weaknesses in her theorizing.

In her attempt to constitute a science of masculinity, Connell addresses the shortcomings of previous projects to do so. The psychoanalytical project failed because it neglected the sociological dimension. The sociological project's focus on "sex roles" throughout most of the 20th century accepted gender simply as a functional differentiation of society but was oblivious to inherent issues of power and social dynamics. The third line of scholarship, namely attempts in history and ethnography to research masculinity diachronically or across cultures, were doomed due to the lack of a stable subject. These failures have left sociology without a unifying paradigm. For Connell, the real object of study must be gender relations, within which different masculinities can be dissected. Thus, Connell defines masculinity as "simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practice through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture" (ibid., 71).

Gender, for Connell, "is a way in which social practice is ordered... Gender exists precisely to the extent that biology does not determine the social" (ibid, 71–72). Connell sees gender ordering practice in three kinds of social relations – political or "power relations," economic or "production relations," and affective relations (ibid., 74). At the individual level, such configurations of practice are called personality, character or identity, all of which are unstable or fluid because multiple discourses, including class and race, intersect. Depending on such intersections, individual masculinities can be hegemonic, complicit, subordinate, or marginalized. "Hegemonic masculinity", the term most famously associated with Connell, "can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (ibid., 77). In other words, hege-

2 On her website (http://www.raewynconnell.net/p/about-raewyn_20.html), Connell describes herself as a transsexual woman. In this article, I am therefore using feminine pronouns throughout, even if the research and publications may date from a time before this transition.



monic masculinity is malleable over time, but always in the service of defending patriarchy.

For Connell, gender is both a product and a producer of history, and thus of social agency. In her Marx-inspired view of history, any social order marked by significant inequalities inexorably generates social conflict. The contemporary gender order therefore shows crisis tendencies. The crisis currently manifests itself at the level of power relations in the historic collapse of the legitimacy of patriarchal power and a global movement for the emancipation of women. At the level of production relations, the changes are manifest in the postwar growth in married women's employment in rich countries, and the even vaster incorporation of women's labor into the money economy in poor countries. At the level of affective relations, Connell refers to "the stabilization of lesbian and gay sexuality as a public alternative within the heterosexual order" (ibid., 81–85).

It has been noted that Connell's thinking is marked by a tension between modern and postmodern sensibilities, leading to "a certain inconsistency or even incoherence" (Beasley 2012, 747). Two of Connell's important presuppositions, one of them modern, the other thoroughly postmodern, invite critical scrutiny.

Connell locates her analysis of masculinities within a model of social conflict. This model looks very much like a projection of Marxist class conflict onto the gender order, where men dominate women. While Connell may weaken the (biological) binary by allowing some men (notably gay men) to fight alongside feminists against the trans-historical forces of patriarchy, this struggle remains a fairly dualist affair. Connell's masculinities are always projects within historically located gender orders that create social conflict. Such broad-brush picture of the human condition, with its borrowings from Marx, might be redolent of Lyotard's *grands récits*, the totalizing meta-narratives typical of the ideological Enlightenment-projects of European modernity (Lyotard 1984). Connell shows a similar debt to another author of grand modern narratives, Freud, in her frequent recourse to Oedipus. Given Connell's personal and scholarly commitments to political advocacy, I am afraid the lure of modernism may have been irresistible. Historically, it can be argued that the meta-narratives of modernism have proven to be far more effective to mobilize political mass movements than post-modern micro-narratives and epistemological humility. Connell's contribution to

highlight the power dimension in the construction and performance of masculinities must be acknowledged. But she does so within a dualist, reductionist, and finally deterministic master narrative of gender struggle. Her disappointment with homosexual men and her lived practice and argued advocacy of the sex-change option reveal just how little room such social determinism leaves for plural, fluid and performative gender identities (see Butler 1990).

Connell shows a more post-modern sensibility when she seeks to replace sex role theory with her notion of masculinities as configurations of practice, thus emphasizing individual experience, micro-narratives, and sensitivity to differences (see Bourdieu 1977 and Lyotard 1984). Yet the focus on practices also makes the subject matter more elusive. In lightly structured, tape-recorded interviews, she solicited life histories from four groups of Australian men. In her re-telling of these life histories, Connell fails to acknowledge and inure herself against the dangers of reflexivity (see Merton 1948, Hoel 2013, Dreyer 2016). Thereby, she appears to maintain a semblance of scientific neutrality, a modern notion thoroughly discredited among postmodern and feminist scholars long ago (e.g. Harding 1986, Bordo 1987; more recently Bass et. al. 2016 and Mercer and Miller-McLemore 2016).

Life histories do not capture practice; at best they capture narratives about practice. If masculinities *as practices* are difficult to capture, I would argue that one should show some willingness to redefine the subject so that it becomes more manageable for the researcher and yields better results. Contrary to Connell, I believe that there is justification for examining masculinity codes at the level of ideological discourse. For Connell, this may be too close to sex role theory. The problem with role theory for Connell is "the blurring of behavior and norm, the homogenizing effect of the role concept, and its difficulties in accounting for power." (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, 831). I believe that all three concerns can be addressed.

I would start with her second point. Arguably Connell's greatest achievement was to establish the plural in "masculinities." Once the plurality of roles or norms has been established, the danger of homogenization is much reduced. There is not a single norm of masculinity, but competing ones.

On the first point, Connell explains that the "distinction between behavior and expectation is basic to the role metaphor. But the male sex role literature

fails to document them separately, and takes one as evidence of the other” (Connell op. cit., 26). A useful approach for theorizing the relationship between norm and behavior is Foucault’s concept of the subject’s moral self-constitution as a deliberate “subjecting” of oneself to a specific moral code (Foucault 1990, 25–32). Foucault captures all three elements relevant to Connell’s observation – socially operant norms (codes), the possibility of choice (plurality), and a moral subject, positioning itself through practice in relation to these codes. This triangular construct, presupposing practice and plurality, provides an adequate model that allows the researcher to focus on the codes without losing sight of practices.

Connell’s third point urges us not to be oblivious of the power dimension. Indeed, any examination of ideological codes of masculinity would be futile without due attention to power issues. Connell recognized in 2005 that her original formulations relied on “a too-simple model of the social relations surrounding hegemonic masculinities.” (Connell and Messerschmidt, op. cit., 831). I would indeed argue in favor of a more multidimensional understanding of power dynamics. There may be many different powers and different socioeconomic interests behind masculinity codes other than the self-interested defenders of patriarchy. In recent history, ideological masculinities motivated not only the submission of women, but also—to take a case of truly embodied practice—the pointless self-sacrifice of millions of young men in military adventures. In Western Europe, such militarized masculinity is currently no longer dominant, but masculinity codes are ceaselessly produced and reproduced in public discourse and the media. In today’s pacified, affluent societies, gender codes serve to influence productive and consumptive choices. Consumptive choices are choices about what to spend money on. The need for money feeds back into productive choices: what kind of work and how much of it am I willing to perform to fund my consumptive choices? Ideological gender codes are constructed and performed in movies and talk shows, in sports events and pop concerts, in children’s books and videogames. The facts that the resulting masculinities are heterogeneous rather than uniform, and that the interests behind them are pluriform rather than monolithic, make these codes no less *power*-ful.

The pastoral approach: masculinity as a man’s life project

In *Männer und Kirche*, Reiner Knieling describes and laments the wide gap between men and church, and seeks practical ways how the church could bridge them (Knieling 2010). Knieling is less concerned with what men should do than how the church should change. He offers a comprehensive reform package to make the church more relevant to men. As part of the church’s reorientation towards men, Knieling urges the church to rethink and reform its practice of pastoral care.

David Kuratle and Christoph Morgenthaler’s pioneer textbook is an ambitious attempt to do exactly that (Kuratle and Morgenthaler 2016). They confirm that men are neglected in pastoral care, and offer their model of gender-sensitive *Männerseelsorge*. They explain compellingly why men should take an active and critical interest in masculinities: Socially constructed codes of masculinity can have a double impact: In the first place, they are at the root of many psychological and social pathologies. In the second place, they prevent men from seeking a cure. Therefore, there is huge liberating and therapeutic potential in “undoing gender”, in deconstructing normative gender stereotypes. This primarily therapeutic project shares political objectives with the feminist project—as far as the latter is committed to liberation, justice and human flourishing, and not just to turning the tables and grabbing power. Both aim at overcoming gender stereotypes and dismantling patriarchy. In church practice, *Männerseelsorge* will be a mixture of “doing gender” in order to reach men, and “undoing gender” in order to heal men from disordered affections and affective disorders.

The authors emphasize that masculine identity is not only shaped in early development, but over the life cycle, especially at critical transitions. Thereby, Kuratle and Morgenthaler achieve a magisterial synthesis of the state-of-the art of theorizing gender. The most important aspect of their definition is its openness to change and its disavowal of determinism and essentialisms. Their definition of masculinity leaves room for molecular and biological factors, for sociology, psychoanalysis and developmental psychology. While recognizing the important role of society and culture, gender is seen as contingent, performative, and plural, and emphasis is put on in-



dividual agency. Masculinity is a project of self-development, and *Männerseelsorge* means to accompany and strengthen men as they pursue this project.

Kuratle and Morgenthaler identify contemporary men's central pathology as "the dilemma of male socialisation" – "having to be a man, and yet not really being able to, since a man's concrete life always shamefully falls behind the demands of masculinity" (op. cit., 30). Thus, the deconstruction of ideological masculinity codes, including the ones embraced by the mythopoetic movement, becomes the focal point of gender-sensitive pastoral care, although these very same codes constitute major impediments for men's entry into therapy and for the therapeutic process itself.

Kuratle and Morgenthaler have intelligently built on insights from the social-sciences debate inaugurated by Connell. Their definition of masculinity as a lifelong project retains much of Connell's concerns, especially a disavowal of any essentialism, but makes it more operative by replacing Connell's social determinism of class conflict with individual voluntarism. Biology, historical situatedness, social location, material endowment and quotidian life experience all play important roles, but ultimately, masculinity is the open, performative, and transformative ethical self-project of the individual person. The fluidity and performativity of Kuratle and Morgenthaler's masculinities rest on a sound theological basis. The Christian notion of repentance as a right to personal transformation informs both their anthropology when talking about men, and their pastoral approach when talking to men.

Discussion: Men, gender, and pastoral care

A certain *genre* of men's literature has played a foundational role since the 1980s. Robert Bly, Stephen Biddulph, Richard Rohr, and Anselm Grün ground their talk about masculinity, manhood and men's spirituality in myth, poetry and Jungian psychoanalysis. Their texts keep exercising significant influence in church-based activities with men across Christian denominations. Through a close and critical reading I interrogated these texts about the meaning of manhood, the apparent problems of men today, and the proposed solutions. I have both complemented and contrasted the findings of these non-academic writers with scholarly research from sociology and practical theology. This helped me to

refine my understanding of contemporary masculinity codes, men's spiritual needs, and how the church can constructively integrate such insights into its practical ministry.

The writers I have reviewed agree that contemporary men have a problem, gender-specific pathologies that require some form of therapy. Biddulph uses sociological statistics to highlight that there is "something badly wrong with large numbers of men." (Biddulph op.cit., 2) Statistics of life expectancy, of violence (with men both as perpetrators and victims), incarceration rates, and suicide rates provide an alarming picture that there are serious pathologies attached to contemporary manhood. Bly, Grün, and Connell locate the cause of male pathologies in recent changes to the gender order: men suffer an identity crisis because their traditional dominance has eroded in the course of the later part of the 20th century. Biddulph, Rohr, Kuratle and Morgenthaler, however, have convincingly shown the insufficiency of this interpretation. Men's problems cannot be reduced to an identity crisis induced by feminism. Biddulph describes the pathologies in psychological terms: "loneliness, compulsive competition, and lifelong emotional timidity" (ibid., 4). Rohr describes them in spiritual terms: emptiness, disconnection and alienation. I consider Biddulph's psychological and Rohr's spiritual terms as complementary and even mutually corroborating.

It is clear that Bly's mythopoetic paradigm does not provide a valid therapeutic solution for the pathologies of contemporary men. In its angry, backward-looking defensiveness and dualist essentialism, it appears to aggravate rather than solve the problems of contemporary men. Defending male privileges, legitimized by myths and fairytales, contributes little to the liberation of men or to human flourishing. Men won't solve their social, psychological and ultimately spiritual problems by trying to deny or reverse the collapse of an unjust gender order.

Biddulph, Rohr, and Kuratle and Morgenthaler agree that men have brought their problems upon themselves. Most male pathologies are rooted in the "dilemma of male socialisation: Having to be a man, and yet not really being able to, since a man's concrete life always shamefully falls behind the demands of masculinity." (Kuratle and Morgenthaler, op.cit., 30). If such misguided demands inherent in the operant normative codes of masculinity are at the root of the problem, "undoing gender" becomes a key element of the pastoral agenda for men. Rather than getting in touch with masculine archetypes as

suggested by Bly and Grün, gender stereotypes need to be deconstructed.

All authors, with the possible exception of Bly and Connell, would agree that spirituality is part of the solution. Biddulph intuitively feels that it is important, but he has difficulty explaining what it is. For Grün, it is about Jungian *Selbstwerdung*. For Rohr, spirituality is about finding meaning and purpose beyond sex, money and power. What role, then, does gender play in spirituality? Kuratle and Morgenthaler emphasize the importance of “doing gender” as a gate to “undoing gender” in pastoral care. Gendered discourse, they show in their case studies, is often needed to join men where they are. Similarly, Rohr speaks of gendered “entrance points” and “fascination points” (Rohr 2012, 339). Gender-specific spirituality, I would conclude, is never an end in itself. Gender-specific spirituality is merely a viable form of discourse to invite, introduce, and, if you will, *initiate* men into a spirituality that ultimately transcends gender.

For Rohr, the venue of such program should be “healthy communities.” (Rohr and Martos, op.cit., 91). He is skeptical whether “organized religion” is good at doing gender (Rohr 2012, 342). Knieling would agree that there is plenty of room for improvement. Still, the church has traditionally been accepted as a purveyor of spirituality and can be expected to remain so for many people, even if any single institutional church may no longer enjoy a discursive monopoly over spirituality.

Kuratle and Morgenthaler demonstrate in detail how gender-sensitive pastoral care can have a liberating and transformative impact on men’s concrete lives. Knieling’s analysis of the other aspects of contemporary church practice reveals a current lack of gender-sensitivity. The church could do a lot more to create men-specific opportunities for joining. His reform proposals could help to make the church a place where men can explore and develop authentic forms of spirituality. Biddulph’s commonsensical list of men’s issues (Biddulph op.cit., 15–17) could also serve as a guide towards the topics and life situations where the church might want to join men in their daily lives.

Conclusion: Reforming pastoral care

The discussion above shows that a logical link can be established between men, masculinities, spirituality, pastoral care, and church: Contemporary men suffer from pathologies that are often rooted in what

they perceive as the demands of masculinity. A liberating spiritual therapy therefore entails the deconstruction or “undoing” of such gender codes. Yet in order to engage men effectively in such therapy, it often requires gendered access points. Pastoral care and church practice more broadly need to become more gender-sensitive and gender-specific in order to offer such access points for men.

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Reforming a theology of the body: Susanna Wesley in dialogue with Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel

Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner

Susanna Wesley's writings are intricate and complex as they illustrate a theology of embodiment stemming from the Incarnation. Her meditations and journal entries reveal a spirituality of the body, a contribution in the history of Methodism that has been undervalued. This paper places Susanna Wesley (1669–1742) in dialogue with theologian, Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel (1926–2016), on the subject of embodiment. Susanna Wesley was on a continuum of change as she moved from strict societal constraints and ecclesial expectations of women in the late 17th and 18th centuries to an enlarged view of humankind. She expressed this movement as “becoming a lover of oneself.” The self-possession with which she opposed the views of her forceful father, Dr. Annesley, is noteworthy for a young girl not quite thirteen. Dr. Annesley was a leader of the Dissenting cause, which found fault with the dominant Church of England. Susanna, against her father's wishes, adhered to the Church of England!

Speaking of embodiment as the beginning and end of all God's works, Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel develops the reality of “thinking with the body,” especially from the viewpoint of violated bodies. This paper illustrates a reforming from the 17th to the 21st century using the rubric of a theology of the body. This movement leads not only to self-actualization, but the embrace of human beings in their totality and the redemption of ecclesial practice.

Introduction

As the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation is celebrated, we hear little mention of the foremothers of the Reformation such as Susanna Wesley. Yet I shall argue that Susannah Wesley is an important figure in the ongoing process of reform that the church has undergone for the last five centuries. Her para-feminist insights foreshadow the theology of embodiment advanced by feminist Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel nearly four hundred years

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later.¹ By placing Susanna Wesley and Moltmann-Wendell in dialogue I represent them as points on a continuum of change. In so doing I hope to highlight Wesley's contribution to the history of Christian theology. According to Rev. Alfred T. Day, III, General Commission on Archives and History: “... the differences she made have lived on because of the sons that she raised.”² I shall maintain that the differences she made live on because of who she was.

1 This term comes from the Latin *parare*, meaning “making ready”. The term, which I am using as a qualifier to the noun feminist, connotes a forerunner, herald, harbinger, or precursor to a movement that was termed feminism.

2 Transcript of a video produced by United Methodist Communications (Nashville, 2016) titled “Susanna Wes-





The poetry of one of her sons, Samuel, was representative of the prevailing mindset of Susanna's England. The "war of the sexes" will always be won by men, according to Samuel Wesley, Jr., in his allegory, *The Plain of Life* (all poetry excerpts are from Wesley Jr. 1736, 22ff). On the field or plain of battle, "Wisest God" has ordained that man shall always rule over woman. Each has superior merit, but man rules by "Right Divine." (See below)

II

With Words his long-disputed Cause he [Man] tries,
But Woman's equal wit disdains to yield;
At length to Arms ungenerously he flies,
As quick the Female takes the proffered Field;
Each their superior Merit to maintain:
For Man was learned and proud, and Woman fair
and vain.

XLV

Tho' Man shall awful Rule o'er Woman bear,
Not sprung from greater Worth, but Right Divine;
Yet she shall in her Turn Dominion share.
E'er to his Will her Empire she resign.

L

Still will each Sex for Sovereignty contend:
War with the World begun,
With that alone shall end.

XLII

For Heav'n made Man to win, and Woman to be
won.

XXVII

Marriage, and Love; unhappy when disjoined;
Who over Lust the surest Triumph gained;
Friends to Religion firm, by Wisest God ordained.

These poems written by Samuel Wesley, Jr., first-born son to Susanna and her husband, Samuel Sr., reflects a mindset in the 18th century that men were to rule women from a "Right Divine." Further, women were vain and sensual creatures, sometimes compared to "vessels" of procreation. According to theologian Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, Christianity was imprinted with the Greco-Roman view of the dualism of mind and body, with man associated with mind/spirit and woman with body/nature/sensuality. With the

devaluation of the body, women were also undervalued (Moltmann-Wendel 1994, 42).

In *I Am My Body: New Ways of Embodiment*, Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel presents the centrality of the body in Jesus' message and in Christianity's affinity to the suffering body. God incarnated was scandalous in the religions of the ancient world and inconveniently a challenge to present reality (Moltmann-Wendel 1994, 103–105). For Moltmann-Wendel, *embodiment* is the beginning and end of all God's works (Ibid, 105). Embodiment refers to a self that experiences selfhood and relationships through a multi-dimensional body. It is knowing that your body belongs to you. It makes up your person so that you can say, "I am I" (Ibid, xi). Embodiment "recognizes God in many human experiences which remind us that life begins in the mother's body, that it begins as a twosome, not alone, and that our bodily life represents God's life on this earth" (Ibid). This research brings the observations of Moltmann-Wendel regarding embodiment or an embodied theology into dialogue with the meditations of Susanna Wesley. Some of the meditations of Susanna Wesley were among the private papers of John Wesley and bequeathed to Dr. Coke, John Whitehead, and Henry Moore (Doughty 1984, 58).³ Unfortunately, these papers passed into the hands of John Pawson, who destroyed some of them of which he disapproved (Ibid)! This research article draws from the surviving meditations or journal entries.⁴

Susanna Wesley's life and writings illustrate some of the concepts of Moltmann-Wendel, all of which augment the word "embodiment." Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel's concepts are as follows:

- 1) Becoming one's own person (in Susanna Wesley's words, "a lover of [oneself]")⁵—Moltmann-Wendel develops the life-giving contact between Jesus

3 W.L.Doughty traces this trajectory of the *Meditations*, which were among the private papers of John Wesley, son of Susanna. Susanna lived with John at his London headquarters, The Foundery, before she died in 1742.

4 This article uses the primary sources in *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, ed. Charles Wallace Jr., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

5 Susanna also wrote to son Samuel Wesley, Jr: "The first thing that seems dictated by nature's law is self-preservation. I know that Christians generally hold that the glory of God and increase of [his] kingdom should be first in our desires and designs. And in order to it we should chiefly aim at being virtuous and religious. But forasmuch as virtuous life presupposes life, I think the first thing nature teaches us is the care of our life and to avoid

ley, Mother of Methodism." www.umc.org/who-we-are/susanna-wesley-mother-of-methodism. Susanna's sons John and Charles initiated the revival movement in the Church of England that became Methodist Christianity.

and the bleeding woman in Mark 14. Jesus charges her to go in wholeness or shalom. This belongs to her and makes up her person. It surrounds her with physical peace so that she can be sure that “you are yourself. ‘I am I.’ Liberation takes place in the body” (Ibid, xi). The body becomes the hinge of personality. (Ibid, 20).

- 2) Recalling the distinctive feature of Christianity, i.e., God became body—Moltmann-Wendel recalls the history of the mind-body dualism in the Greco-Roman tradition. Christianity became imprinted with this dichotomy. Man was associated with spirit and woman with body, sensuality, nature. With the devaluation of the body, woman was devalued. (Ibid, 42)
- 3) Demonstrating woman’s “other fertility” or her spirituality and creativity of mind and soul—“Women belong to themselves, and this ‘other fertility’ can become the beginning of their own lives.” (Ibid, 29)
- 4) Emphasizing woman’s propagation of Jesus’ *familia dei*, which is the starting point of a new female life-style—Moltmann-Wendel recalls that all life began as a twosome (mother-child). Autonomy is not enough; we all need to be in relationships. The *familia dei* has the power to nurture this need for relationships (Ibid, 23)
- 5) “Thinking with the body.” (Ibid, 85) –Feeling, sensing, intuition, sensuality are “the media of experience and knowledge.” (Ibid, 86) This epistemology opens us to new truths.

Both Susanna Wesley and Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel articulate a theology stemming from the Incarnation: God became flesh (in the body of a woman). This theological perspective not only contributes to epistemology and to the embodiment of spirituality, but it undergirds ecclesial practices in pastoral care, especially in ministry to violated bodies

E. Moltmann-Wendel asserts, “In male culture women were always associated with sensuality, the body, empathy – niches which were allowed them but which today, in parallel to some male thinkers, they are filling with new meaning” (Moltmann-Wendel 1994, 87). This analysis was certainly descriptive of the mindset of the 17th and early 18th century in which Susanna Wesley lived. In the poems of Samu-

el Wesley, Jr., we see an example of this sensuality associated with women:

XIII

Artful her Bosom heaved, her rolling Eyes
Allured with Glances whom in Heart she
succumbed;
Sweet flowed her Words with ever-pleasing Lies,
An Infant Lisp her double Tongue adored.
Her Feet half dancing, negligently paced;
Her Motion, nay, her Rest was all Design
Her Arms a Scarf, and Ribbon Bridle graced,
Whose Colors glorious in the Sun-beams Shine;
Their Hue still varying with the changing Place,
Yet each alternate Dye was suited to her Face.

However, in contrast to this emphasis on the sensuality of woman’s body, the meditations of Susanna Wesley illustrate her *spirituality of the body*, a contribution in the history of Methodism that historians often miss. In fact, with historical spotlights turned on Charles and John Wesley, two of Susanna’s nineteen children, much has been overlooked in the study of that which is explicitly Wesleyan. This paper takes another look at a theology of the body stemming from the Incarnation and does so from the meditations and other writings of the neglected Wesley.

In what follows, I juxtapose meditations from Susanna’s journals with Moltmann-Wendel’s five concepts (above). I do this in order to demonstrate the ways in which Susanna’s insights foreshadow Moltmann-Wendel’s theology of embodiment. Susanna certainly did not have a full fledged feminist theology that explicitly challenged 17th and 18th century gender roles. The evolvment of change unfolds in time in much more of a cylindrical movement than a linear one.⁶ It is not my intent to place Susanna Wesley at the end of the continuum of change that has occurred in feminism. Thus, it is not my intent to re-invent her, rather to position her on the vast spectrum of transtheoretical change that preceded the modern feminist movement. However, we would do well to realize how Susanna Wesley positioned us to contend with the sovereignty of Man over Woman and to move toward equal worth. I argue that we can see her as a para-feminist by show-

all penury or want of those things that sustain and preserve it.” “Dear Sammy” in Wallace, *op.cit.*, 42.

6 The transtheoretical model of change theorizes stages of pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance (Prochaska, et al 1992).



ing her historical place in teaching us what it means for one to be a “lover of himself [*sic*]” by moving away from binding cultural constraints and deadly dominion. From the many constrictions, societal abuses, and ill-treatment of women in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, she emerges as one who knows that her peace and happiness depend on her own opinion of herself and on being loved by God. The term, self-actualization or self-differentiation, can also be expressed as “becoming the persons God created us to be” or in Susanna Wesley’s journal fragments, citing Richard Lucas and Blaise Pascal, implied in the words, “Every man [*sic*] ought to be so far a lover of himself as to prefer the peace and tranquility of his own mind before that of others...” (Wesley 1997, 241). Many women like me who are not in the Wesleyan tradition, never heard much about Susanna Wesley. I write on the assumption that there are also women in the Wesleyan tradition who desire more. As Susanna Wesley is placed in dialogue with a modern feminist, Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, our historical debt to the mother of Methodism will become evident.

1. becoming one’s own person (EMW); a lover of oneself (SW)

The Meditation

Philosophy and morality are not sufficient to restrain us from those sins that our constitution of body, circumstances of life or evil custom strongly dispose us to. Nature and appetite will be too hard for their precepts unless a man be determined by a law within himself. They may teach him caution and give check to his vicious inclinations in public but will never carry him to an inward and universal purity. This is only to be effected by the power of religion which will direct us to a serious application to God in fervent prayer, upon which we shall feel a disengagement from the impressions sensual objects were wont to make on our minds, and an inward strength and disposition to resist them (Ibid, 324).

There are many contemporary expressions to describe what Susanna Wesley is doing with this attention to her inner self. Some of these terms are “self-actualization,” or “the authentic self,” or “the solid self.” To be a lover of herself involves honoring the precepts, the values, and the religious outlook that she herself has chosen. Furthermore, this inner core of precepts, values, and beliefs are harmonious and consistent with her life direction and actions. This is to be true to oneself, to be authentic.

“We must preserve the government of reason and not suffer our passions to get the ascendant over us.... Therefore, be sure to be very hearty and earnest in praying to God for strength to govern and regulate your affections” (Ibid, 219). Becoming one’s own person for Susanna Wesley meant resisting the image of Woman as sensual, alluring, lustful creature. This counters the depiction in her son’s poetry of the sensuous Woman: “Artful her Bosom heaved, her rolling Eyes Allured with Glances whom in Heart she succumbed....”

Susanna Wesley was a formative influence in the lives of her children. In correspondence between Susanna and Emilia, her daughter, Susanna writes: “I will not take upon me to read you a lecture of anatomy, but shall only make some general observations, which may yet be sufficient to show that even the body of man [*sic*] bears the impress of infinite power and wisdom in the order, fitness, and usefulness of every part of it....Being all knit together by an admirable symmetry...” (Ibid, 432). Influenced by a lecture given by a mentor, Richard Bentley, she elaborates on the beauty of the body – the eye, the ear, smelling, feeling – as a noble fabric.

We also note her sense of personal boundaries, the opposite of enabling behavior. She prays for great freedom of mind, for the improvement of her talents, for industry. She quotes Pascal on the goal of authentic selfhood, then follows with a description of inauthentic selves, “...They are not satisfied with that life they possess in themselves in their own proper being, but are fond of leading an imaginary life in the idea of others...” (Ibid, 219). To her children, she instructs: “Preserve the dignity of your nature. Reverence yourself, and do nothing unworthy the reason God has given you” (Ibid, 236). It is noteworthy that she instructed her daughters as well as her sons.

2. recalling the distinctive feature of Christianity, i. e., God became body

Susanna turns to an Almighty God as “a healer, a repairer of the lapse and misery of human nature, a Saviour, him whom our soul loveth” (Ibid, 321). She asks for disengagement from “sensual objects” that could impress her mind (Ibid, 324). All of these petitions are made with the assumption she has been given the grace to center her soul, body, and mind in God. This unity of body and mind is in accord with Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel’s understanding, “The message of Jesus relates to human beings in their to-

tality, in their bodies...” (Moltmann-Wendel 1994, 37). Moltmann-Wendel traces the history of the Christian church and illustrates how the woman’s body became invisible in not only the Christian church but in its theology.

the meditation (incarnation):

“To behold [God] in Jesus Christ, ‘reconciling the world unto himself;’ to see by faith that infinite, all-glorious Being assuming the character of a Saviour, a repairer of the lapse, and healer of the diseases and miseries of mankind... penetrates and melts the soul. It is something the heart feels and labors under, but my tongue cannot express” (Wesley 1997, 352). Citing Colossians 2:9, Susanna finds God as God is, by and in Jesus Christ, in whom “dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Ibid). The distinctive feature of Christianity becomes God incarnate, who in taking on flesh becomes a “repairer of the lapse” between the divine and the human. As such, the Incarnate One becomes the healer of diseases and miseries. God not only became flesh but also became flesh through the body of a woman named Mary. Through the travail and labors of a woman, the all-glorious Being became a child named Jesus of Nazareth.

3. claiming woman’s “other fertility” or her spirituality and creativity of mind and soul

Susanna Wesley, biologically fertile with multiple pregnancies, was also able to live into the “other fertility” Moltmann-Wendel describes. This shift occurs when women step into their own selves and are not identified by their biological offspring. Susanna Wesley’s meditations reveal her place as spiritual director to her sons and her sons’ friends in The Holy Club in Oxford as well as a spiritual friend to others like Alice Peard. Moltmann-Wendel introduces the concept of *familia dei* as the starting point of a new female life-style (Moltmann-Wendel 1994, 40). Again, this framework places woman in a sacred configuration of family, not bounded by blood ties.

the meditation (the other fertility)

“...’tis our highest wisdom to disengage our affections, as much as we lawfully may, from all these

transitory temporal enjoyments and to fix ‘em on those more solid, more rational and spiritual pleasures we are to enjoy when we enter our state of immortality” (Wesley 1997, 206). The New Testament introduces a new way of kinship. The terms brothers, sisters, children are not primarily in biological terms but terms of spiritual birth and connection. Through Christ as Firstborn of the Family of God, we are brought into new relationships. This rhetoric is used in Ephesians, Galatians, and Romans as “adoption.” For example, spiritual mothers and fathers are fertile through the working of the Spirit of God. Fertility is not limited to biological procreation. It is this “family of God” that Susanna offers as a complementary if not preeminent fertility.

4. emphasizing woman’s propagation of Jesus’ familia dei, which is the starting point of a new female life-style

Susanna Wesley has been acclaimed as the originator of the first Methodist meetings held in the parsonage in 1711. As numbers grew over two hundred people, she was accused by the local curate of starting a conventicle! Nevertheless, she continued ministering to the “family of God” (*familia dei*).

the letter

The letter to her husband Samuel Wesley on February 6 1711/12 stated: “As I am a woman, so I am also mistress of a large family. And though the superior charge of the souls contained in it lies upon you, as head of the family, and as their minister, yet in your absence I cannot but look upon every soul you leave under my care as a talent committed to me, under a trust, by the great Lord of all the families of heaven and earth” (Ibid 79). In the early 18th century, women were expected to become married and raise children or enter a religious order. Susanna did the former but managed to integrate her religious belief in *familia dei* into a new lifestyle, in a way, a radical ministry which was opposed by her husband.

5. “thinking with the body”

Thinking with the body is an epistemological concept, which escapes the separation of analytical thought



and the intuition of feeling. It involves a participatory attitude of involvement with the world; the body is the medium of experiencing the world. Susanna *knew* the need of the people around her. She read sermons every Sunday afternoon to neighbors in her home church. She reached vast numbers of unchurched people in the village. On February 25, 1711/12, in a letter to Samuel, Sr., who was away in London for Convocation, she wrote, "Some families which very seldom came to church, now go constantly. One person that has not been there this seven years is now prevailed on to go with the rest" (Ibid, 82).

Moltmann-Wendel develops this epistemological concept of "thinking with the body" by recalling the way women's bodies have functioned in history: "Women are seismographs for changes in culture, and their bodies are the places where conflicts become unmistakably evident" (Moltmann-Wendel 1994, 8). Social conflicts such as rape, battering, incest abuse, sex trafficking, prostitution, and abuse are worked out in and on their bodies. Moltmann-Wendel asserts that theology must begin with violated bodies and that our world perspectives should start there. Women must think and understand and intuit, not from their minds, but from their bodies. The body is the hinge of the human personality. Life begins in a mother's body. Life with God in Christ began with God becoming flesh in the body of a woman, Mary.

portraits



Unfortunately, the fire in the Epworth manse destroyed many of the Wesley family's memorabilia. There are portraits of Susanna Wesley, which I find informative of her complexity.

This portrait [pictured left] which Abel Stevens, American Methodist (1858), included in his book, *History of the Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century called Methodism*, is of a young woman with low neckline and a scarf framing her shining hair. He said of her:

The portrait is of the refined and even elegant lady of the times. The features are slight, but almost classical in their regularity... Her dress and coiffure are in the simplest style of her day, and the entire picture is marked by chaste gracefulness. It lacks not, also, an air of that high-

bred aristocracy from which she was descended... Adam Clarke [one of the earliest and most reliable Wesley family historians] says she was not only graceful but beautiful (Stevens 1858, 156).

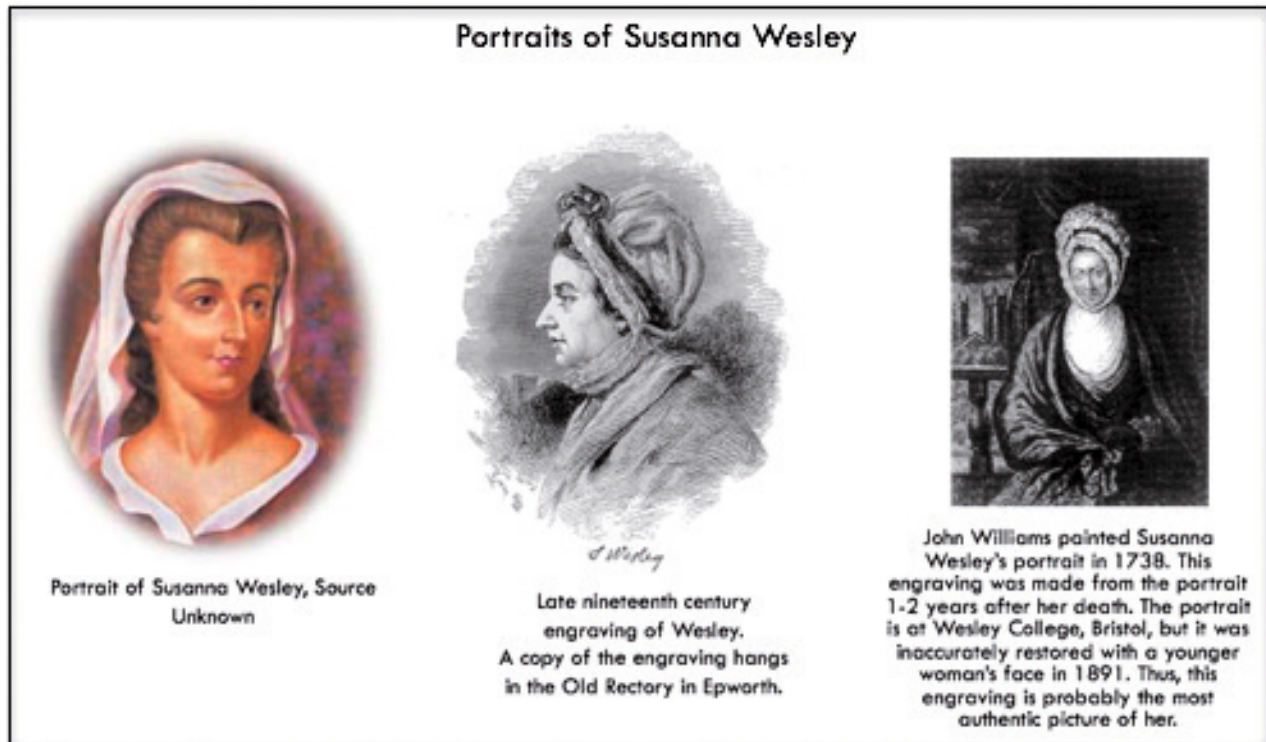
It is in Clarke's comment that the reader becomes aware of not only her acclaimed inner beauty but also of her outer physical beauty and sensuality.

Whereas historians have highlighted Susanna's intellect and efficiency, Eliza Clarke also calls attention to her beauty and fitness. According to Clarke's 1886 biography titled *Susanna Wesley*, "Susanna was slim and very pretty, and retained her good looks and symmetry of figure to old age, although she was the mother of nineteen children" (Clarke 1886, 7–8). "She was nothing if not religious; but she was a lady of ancient lineage, a woman of intellect, a keen politician, and, had her ordinary correspondence been preserved, it would have given us insight into the life of the period which would have been full of deep and world-wide interest" (Ibid, vi) In a way, the poems written by her son, Samuel Wesley, Jr., give us some of that insight.

According to an account in *The Ladies' Repository* in 1857, Susanna was "nobly descended, carefully and piously educated, highly gifted, graceful in form, and more beautiful even than her beautiful sister... was a perfect woman, nobly planned to warn, to comfort, and command, and yet a spirit still and bright, with something of an angel light" (Olin 1857, 386).

The varying accounts and portraits illustrate the complexity and the maturity of Susanna Wesley. The depictions emphasize both traditionally "feminine" qualities and "masculine" traits such as intellect, efficiency and assertiveness. For example, the self-possession with which she opposed the views of her forceful father, Dr. Annesley, is noteworthy for a young girl not quite thirteen. As mentioned earlier, Dr. Annesley was a leader of the Dissenting cause, which found fault with the dominant Church of England. Susanna, against her father's wishes, adhered to the Church of England!

She acknowledged the worth of the children she bore, not as objects to be seen and not heard, but as subjects worthy of undivided attention each week. For each day of the week, she had an hour set aside with a specific child (or two children) where they had personal attention. She was not just a vessel bearing children, she was a teacher of the children of God. When her husband fell into repeated debt,



even debtor's prison, she was resilient and resourceful. When her husband abandoned her, she asserted herself by riding 14 miles to appeal to Lady Yarborough by writing a letter of appeal to Bishop Hicke. In this way she circumvented the power brokers, the Archbishop of York and Bishop of Lincoln, to whom her husband Samuel wanted to refer. She survived a fire (probably arson) which destroyed her home, coped with the deaths of nine children, and stood resolute when disinherited from her father's will.

As we women [and men] learn to step into ourselves, to self-differentiate from our family of origin, to self-actualize, and to become the persons that God created us to be, we realize Susanna Wesley made historical advances. From one extreme, entailing hatred of the body or objectification of women as weak vessels or depictions of women as having no souls, to the contemporary advances made by theologians like Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, Susanna Wesley's journal entries, writings, and letters reveal her place if not stronghold on the continuum toward a theology of embodiment. In her exposition of the Apostles Creed, in her understanding of the Resurrection of the Body, she credited God with the power to "rebuild the same beautiful fabric..." in other words, the body—her body (Wesley 1997, 395).

In 1980, in her diary, Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel discovered, what she termed, a feminist doctrine of justification: "I am good – I am whole – I am beautiful" (Moltmann-Wendel 1997, 108). This awareness was long in coming to one who had been socialized to be "good" to everyone but herself. For women over the ages, this awareness is a calibration of the conscience and the conscious. It is not a linear construct like a timeline. Rather, it is a gradual unfolding or a cylindrical evolvment into an understanding of the beautiful fabric of the body. This fine-tuning or calibration of the conscience and the conscious has been done by women like Wesley and Moltmann-Wendel who have helped teach others to become "a lover of oneself."

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Denying the Binary – A Non-Boolean Approach to Queer Bodies in Theology

Finley Lawson

Our theological discourse is hampered by the shadow of philosophical and scientific atomism that brings to the table unquestioned, as an *a priori* truth, the fact that the world and people are divisible into parts. However, our current scientific ontology suggests that our division of the world and the people within it in to distinct Boolean categories rests not in truth about the fundamental nature of the world, but in our limited epistemology. I will argue that the introduction of a Non-Boolean account of personhood in to our theological discussion allows us to acknowledge the full spectrum of sex and gender apparent in humanity, but in doing so raises deep ethical and theological issues regarding the treatment of LGBT people by the Church. In particular I will argue that the Non-Boolean nature of trans and intersex bodies can raise important questions for our theological treatment of homosexuality.

Introduction

Perhaps one of the most contested spaces where body and politics ask us to reform our theology is the place of queer lives and bodies within and without our faith communities. Whilst sexuality has long found itself within a contested space in Christian theology, the “new” challenge appears to rest in manifold diversity of human embodiment, especially those who are visibly or vocally differently embodied. The challenge of trans, intersex and non-binary bodies to the “official” position of the Anglican church rests in their divergence from the male-female “norm” provided by the Biblical account of human nature. Yet in their divergence from the norm these bodies challenge our theology, and the narrative that the Anglican church has used to decry the validity of the variety of human sexuality.

This chapter explores a scientific account of the world that moves beyond our ingrained binary understanding towards a more nuanced view of the world around us and the people in it. I offer an initial survey of the place of transgender and intersex bodies within the Church of England’s seminal docu-

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ments on sexuality and Gender: *Issues in Human Sexuality: A Statement by the House of Bishops* (1994) and *Some Issues in Human Sexuality: A Guide to the Debate* (2003). The work is a preliminary survey to tease out the potential interplay between Non-Boolean accounts of the world and a scientifically informed theology of the body. After setting out the scientific move from Boolean to Non-Boolean accounts of the world I explore how this can and should be reflected in our understanding of human embodiment. The final part of this chapter examines the theological “problem” of queer bodies, how the logical argument against homosexuality can be seen to





be based in three premises, and the very existence of intersex bodies undermines the argument against homosexuality. I conclude that it is the arbitrary demarcation of “appropriate” bodies that has led to the “official” dehumanization of LGBT+ bodies within the Anglican community instead of recognizing the beauty of diversity involved in God’s creation.

Before exploring examining the issues noted above it is necessary for a preliminary note on terminology. Theological language is important, and this is particularly true when key terms have been conflated or narrowed in their definition in a manner that doesn’t reflect their common usage. Transgender and transsexual will be used interchangeably, whilst the non-pathologized term transgender is preferred and will be used where possible, in some instances to minimize confusion following citation transsexual(ity) will be used. Whilst acknowledging that transgender can be taken to refer to individuals who identify as non-binary, gender neutral or third gender, in order to limit the dissimilarities between transgender and binary bodies discussed by the church transgender will be taken to refer to those who have undergone medical and/or surgical intervention to embody a binary sex that is opposite to the one assigned at birth.

Within the church documents, one of the major semantic stumbling blocks is the conflation of intersex, hermaphroditism and ambiguous genitalia. *Some Issues* frequently refers to Holder’s texts ‘*The Ethics of Transsexualism*’ (1998a, 1998b) in which all three stand in contrast to transgender bodies. ‘Hermaphroditism, which is a congenital disorder in which both male and female gonads are present and the external genitalia are not clearly male or female’ (Holder, 1998a, 90). This definition of intersex bodies is problematic for several reasons, firstly it conflates all intersex conditions with hermaphroditism, which is only one form of intersex variation. Secondly, it conflates hermaphroditism with ambiguous genitalia which is not a necessary marker for hermaphroditism which is defined as the coexistence of both ovarian and testicular tissue within the same individual. Finally, there are a variety of disorders that cause ambiguous genitalia, or genitalia incongruent to the chromosomal phenotype. Unless otherwise noted references to intersex bodies refer to the diversity of intersex bodies and not solely hermaphrodites and/or those with ambiguous genitalia.

From Boolean to Non-Boolean Descriptions of the World

A Boolean account of the world has been given a privileged position within our scientific discourse. Boolean logic is based in three laws:

1. The law of contradiction: nothing can be both *A* and *not-A*
2. The law of excluded middle: *anything* must be either *A* or *not-A*
3. The laws of identity: that if anything is *A* then it is *A*

These logical premises allow scientists to make unambiguous empirical statements that can be repeated and tested by their peers. However, this doesn’t prove that Boolean logic is the result of a universe formed of ontologically discrete parts. Yet the ability to proceed by particularization (irrespective of its accuracy) has been such a successful tool that it has become ingrained in our consciousness as an ontological fact.

The scientific method is dependent upon a world that can be examined in parts and can neatly and completely fit in to discrete categories. To achieve this, scientists must decide which features are irrelevant –not based in “natural” categories but through “some convention, or by our own interest, or by our cognitive apparatus, or by the evolutionary history, or by pattern recognition devices” (Primas 2007, 11). Thus, in practice, there are no unprejudiced or *a priori* classifications outside of those that *we* describe. To make an experiment repeatable we decide what data is irrelevant and don’t include it. Boolean classification deals in discrete individuals that can be placed in clearly defined classes according to certain shared criteria, but which shared criteria are important is dependent on where we choose to draw the lines. Whilst Boolean classification is a useful practical tool it fails to take in to account the fundamentally interconnected nature of world as suggested by certain interpretations of quantum theory.

This is not to say in a world that admits a quantum reality that Boolean descriptions have no place, but rather descriptions of such a world cannot be contained in a single Boolean description. A prime example is wave-particle duality and the idea that in some instances light (or matter) exhibits wave-like behaviour and in other instances particle-like behaviour. This description refers to a duality in which the photon exhibits either/or, wave/particle where

wave and particle are in separate classifications. Current research has shown that photons can be “in particle-like and in wave-like states, but they can also be in infinitely many other states which are neither particle-like nor wave-like” (Primas 2007, 15). It is the “infinitely many” other states that mean we should talk of complementarity over duality. Complementarity acknowledges wave-like and particle-like (and the infinite many) without placing them in incompatible sets. Instead complementarity describes a world in which both descriptions are true, but it is not ontologically possible to reduce the world down in to those discrete parts. Complementarity highlights a world in which all that it is possible to know about a given object is not able to be known simultaneously and, crucially, both descriptions are needed in order to get a full understanding of the object. It may seem paradoxical, but it is only paradoxical if we insist in maintaining discrete classes in which wave-like and particle-like can be decided on a Boolean system. This example is only intended to highlight the difficulties a Boolean account can pose even within the physical sciences. If Boolean descriptions do not offer a full reflection of the objects of scientific study, it seems unsurprising that they fall even further short of the objects of the social sciences, and yet within our theological, political and ethical approaches to those ‘objects’ we see fit to proceed by particularization into discrete binary categories.

From Boolean to non-Boolean Descriptions of Persons

Our propensity for Boolean descriptions is most pronounced in our descriptions of people, and it is here that it starts to cause theological problems. I will present an analytic approach to the question of queer bodies in theology, not because the validity of LGBT+ people is a question of logic, but because difficulties with the orthodox Christian response can be highlighted by this approach. The traditional response to anti-LGBT+ thought within the church has rested in a hermeneutic and/or anthropological approach to the issue, it raises questions about the translation of scripture and the role of sexuality and love within Christian life. Whilst not denying the validity of these approaches an entirely analytic approach is able to shed new light and raise new questions regarding the premises of anti-LGBT+ religious justification. Transgender and intersex bodies

hold the key to developing this discussion as once we can understand people within a non-Boolean framework, the argument against queer bodies descends into *argumentum ad absurdum*.

Having stated this would not be a hermeneutical perspective is not to say that there is no room for scripture, after all this is analytical *theology*. At the heart of the Boolean discussion of personhood lies a single verse in Genesis: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27). The final part of this verse places male and female in separate sets – it describes a binary nature to our human bodies and it is this binary statement that causes the greatest harm in our theological approach persons. This is not a passage that fluctuates between translations; and it appears to support an assumption that people are ‘either unequivocally and exclusively male or unequivocally and exclusively female in physical terms’ (Gross 1999, 65). Interestingly within Judaism there is a ‘rabbinical gloss’ suggested by the grammatical shift from singular to plural within the verse that has led to the following tradition: “When the Holy one Blessed be He created the primal man [‘the primal Adam’], he created him an androgyne, and it is therefore said: ‘male and female he created them’” (Gross 1999, 71). This understanding highlights that the apparently binary distinction, once translated, perhaps isn’t as conclusive as it first seems.

The problem is that in reality people do not come in clear-cut binary categories. God may have created them male and female, and yet with over 50 diagnosable intersex conditions, estimations that “the presence of genital anomalies [...] could be as high as 1 in 300 births” (Rothkopf and John 2014, 23) and suggestions that “something in the order of one in 2000 infants is born intersex” (Gross 1999, 65) then it seems that we are not created solely within a binary. When one considers, in addition, that intersex conditions do not solely refer to genital anomalies but to “congenital conditions in which development of chromosomal, gonadal, or anatomic sex is atypical” (Rothkopf and John 2014, 23) then the numbers may even be much higher. On this basis we are left with two options (a) those 1 in 2000 are anomalous individuals who have a medical condition excluding them from the categories of ‘man’ and ‘woman’ (b) those 1 in 2000 exemplify the diversity and complexity of the human race. In adopting the former stance, we are making a statement about the place of those who fall short of perfection to a greater extent



than the majority, it views being intersex as a disorder or disability that raises questions about how the individual concerned can be understood as being “according to His likeness” (Gen 1:26). If we understand being made in His likeness to refer not just physical appearance but also ‘relationship and activity’ then, our “theological perspective and reflections result from our physical experiences as much as from our mental and spiritual understanding” (Deland 1999, 38). Consequently, our embodied experiences reveal God, and for those whose bodies diverge from the “norm” there is a question about whether that experience is different to those in the majority. This highlights the issues associated with adopting (a) and the need for a position in which “vulnerability, dependence, and disability are not perversions of God’s creation, but rather integral parts of its essence and infinite variety which God proclaimed ‘very good.’” (Deland 1999, 52) Viewing the world through a lens of expected Boolean norms leads to “the devaluation and elision of unusual bodies and identities” (Cornwall 2008, 185) and therefore lessens humanity, as the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:26) as whole, by not acknowledging the actual diversity of its constitution.

If we understand intersex bodies as representing part of the variety of creation, then we need to re-evaluate how we understand ‘man’ and ‘woman’ and the way these terms are currently being used in divisive and dehumanizing ways. Once intersex bodies are an integral part of the diversity of creation then our Boolean categories of ‘male’ and ‘female’ cease to be able to offer a complete description of the nature of personhood. By their very nature intersex bodies need to be described through a combination of complimentary descriptions none of which will fully describe the nature of the body in question but when held together allow for a full description. Cornwall highlights that intersex and transgender bodies deeply undermine the view that sex is a certainty on the basis of embodiment at birth, and that we have not always viewed “maleness and femaleness, masculinity and femininity as either-or, mutually-exclusive categories” (Cornwall 2009, 8). Because of the existence of ‘atypical’ views of male and female within the history of Christianity Cornwall argues that “intersexed or transsexual bodies therefore already map onto the mixed-up, much-inscribed Body of Christ. These bodies’ distinct, specific existences can speak to what *all* bodies mean in relation to one another” (Cornwall 2009, 9 [italics in original]). Ironically the Church’s deeply unsatisfactory consider-

ation of intersex bodies as the ‘natural’ contrast to ‘unnatural/chosen’ transgender bodies sets out the importance of acknowledging that intersex bodies are to be understood in terms of “sex-ambiguity as a physiological fact at birth [...] between two distinct things” (Evangelical Alliance 2000, 58) without considering the fact that intersex bodies existing between the male/female binary shows that the binary model is false “since any objection to a dualistic model necessarily undermines the model in its entirety” (Cornwall 2009, 17).

The Theological ‘Problem’ of Queer Bodies

Boolean Logic works on the principle that defining characteristics can be sorted in to discrete (mathematical) sets or subsets that can be logically manipulated and unfortunately all too often our definitions of male and female are used in a similar manner. It can be argued that the “binary sex-gender categories [...] used to demarcate humans in our society is no more than a deep-rooted convention” (Cornwall 2008, 188) especially when we consider that for the intersexed infant classification as male or female “can depend on a few millimetres’ glans size” (Cornwall 2009, 16).

The entire discussion of both the perversion of homosexuality (Bishops 1994, 7) and the damage that might lead to transsexuality (Bishops 1994, p. 26–27) is framed by an *a priori* belief that all other important aspects of our humanity are to be understood in light of the “man-woman partnership” (Bishops 1994, 7). The church goes as far as to argue that it is only through the recognition of the differences (‘complementarity’) between men and women that we are able to grow into mature adults – “It is important for the mature development of both individual men and women and of society that each person should come to understand and value [...] complementarity” (Bishops 1994, 37) and that the heterosexual union is of crucial importance in order to ensure “the fostering of true man-woman complementarity” (Bishops 1994, 38). Furthermore, love itself is dependent upon the differences rooted in their sex: “Personal bonding and mutual self-giving happen between two people who, because they are of different gender, are not merely physically differentiated but also diverse in their emotional, mental and spiritual lives.” (Bishops 1994, 37) This passage carries with it an implication that emotional, mental

and spiritual difference only occurs due to the gender of the people involved. In referring to the non-physical gender differences perhaps there is a, probably unintentional, implication that *gender* differences can rest in our emotional, mental and spiritual selves, that reach beyond the outward appearance of our bodies. However, such a reading does not fall within the spirit of the text, and it fails to allow for love between those people the same gender. The implication that men and women have different emotional lives that are fundamentally rooted within their sexually different bodies, implies that without such disparity personal bonding and mutual self-giving cannot take place.

With gender forming such a deep-rooted place in the development of one's identity and maturity it is hardly surprising that intersexed and transgender bodies are so problematic. Yet their very existence challenges the view of the male-female binary holding an "essential place in God's providential order" (Bishops 1994, 38). Such a view is only able to allow for healthy and mature development of one's gender and relationships provided this supervenes on unambiguous (and non-incongruous) biological sex. However, the existence of intersexed bodies necessitates reexamining base assumptions about the role of biological sex as the defining characteristic of identity and sexuality. To understand why adherence to the sex binary descends into an *argumentum ad absurdum*, are 3 key propositions that reflect explicit or implicit claims within the Church's approach to homosexuality, which are fundamentally challenged through the existence of inter-sex bodies:

- P1. The only appropriate sexual relationship is between people of the opposite sex
- P2. Sex is a "fixed, biological category, as the physical reality of what it means to be a man and woman" (Bishops 2003, 180)
- P3. The category of man and woman is defined by the nature of the genital organs

P1 is not intended to validate the illegitimacy of homo-/bi-/trans-sexuality, but to mirror the starting point of the debate within the church and the assumed undeniability of this statement. Likewise, P3 is based on the statement in *Issues* that "it is the interaction of the male and female genital organs which makes procreation possible", therefore "the biological evidence is at least compatible with a theological view that heterosexual physical union is divinely intended to be the norm" (Bishops, 1994,

36). Based on P1-P3 it is possible to see that homosexuality 'cannot' be allowed due to the 'interaction' of the genitals concerned. However intersexed bodies challenge both P2 and P3.

The first challenge aimed at P2 is in relation to those born with ambiguous genitalia. To determine the sex of an infant with ambiguous genitalia various other tests are performed that include chromosomal testing to see if the infant is XX or XY phenotype and medical imaging to try and diagnose which gonads are internally present. Based on these results a decision is made as to the "most likely" sex of the infant. That this arrives at the 'most likely' sex rather than a definite answer immediately points towards sex not being a being a fixed biological category, and highlights the variety of factors (chromosomal, hormonal and physical) involved. Whilst many will argue psychological criteria should be brought to bear on discussions of gender the role of psychology in both the Church of England documents is heavily swayed towards a discussion of psycho-pathology and therefore the discussion focuses on 'fixed biological' characteristics.

Some Issues relies heavily on the work of Rodney Holder who states that the 'fixed' sex of the intersex infant is arrived at through medical intervention – "generally treated in early childhood by surgery and hormone therapy, whereby the patient is assigned an unambiguous phenotype of either male or female" (Bishops 2003, 223). It is important to note the sex of the infant is *assigned* through the use of hormonal and surgical intervention, such an understanding of the possibility of medical professionals assigning a person's gender seems to directly move against the notion that sex is both a 'fixed biological category' and given determinately by God. Whilst it is theologically acceptable for an intersexed individual's sex to be determined through the use of hormone therapy and surgical intervention, in the case of the transgender individual, even though the treatment consists of "undergoing hormone treatment [and] [...] reconstruction of genitalia" (Bishops 2003, 223) there is "no doubt about their biological sex[...] they unambiguously belong to the sex to which they believe they do not belong" (Bishops 2003, 223). The justification for hormonal and surgical intervention assigning the sex of intersexed bodies but not of transgender bodies rests in an arbitrary assignment of which 'fixed' biological criteria are being used and the importance attributed to them. This arbitrary demarcation between appropriate hormonal & surgical intervention becomes even more pertinent



when P3 is also examined and it is this that I shall now turn.

In *Issues* (1994) sexual desire and activity are, perhaps unsurprisingly, associated with the purpose of procreation. The purpose of procreation is, it is argued, evidenced through the “interaction of the male and female genital organs” (Bishops 1994, 36). Yet whilst acknowledging the importance of procreation they also note that there are “other, if related consequences [...] intimacy of the parents, and the pleasure they find in each other, serve to strengthen the bond between them and so enhance their co-operation” (Bishops 1994, 36) and that the ‘utility’ of sexual affection (procreation) can “help to create the same kind of bond whether there are children or not” (Bishops 1994, 37). So where does the question of genitalia fit in to our discussion of intersexed bodies? As already mentioned not all intersexed bodies have ambiguous genitalia, and for those that do it is theologically acceptable (although ethically questionable) to surgically intervene to ‘normalize’ them so that they can achieve the ‘same’ sexual functionality. But if we are to define sex based upon genital appearance then it appears in some instances we have to sacrifice the importance of the genetic, hormonal, and potentially physical (depending on how these are defined) characteristics that are so important to disallowing transgender bodies in *Some Issues* (2003).

The two key examples of intersex conditions that challenge the correlation between genital appearance and chromosomal/hormonal markers are Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS) and Congenital Adrenogenital Hyperplasia (CAH). AIS occurs in XY (typically male body type) individuals, in utero AIS prevents their cells reacting to testosterone meaning their bodies are not masculinised. Because the foetus continues to develop along female lines, at birth the genitalia are unambiguously female. When certain forms of CAH¹ affects XX individuals (typically female body types) it can lead to partial or total virilization of the external genitals (in cases of partial virilization the infant has ambiguous genitalia). Where virtually full virilization occurs the individual will be identified as male at birth, and will

experience a typically male puberty, however they have internal female reproductive organs.

In both instances individuals would be able to engage in sexual activity with individuals with ‘complementary’ genitals. On the basis of P3 this would appear to be a heterosexual relationship. However, in both these instances we appear to arrive at the same ‘problem’ as experienced by the transsexual described in *Some Issues* in that “certain features of the original biological sex remain” (Bishops 2003, 224). Not only do individuals with CAH and AIS experience a disparity between their external bodies and their chromosomal (and for AIS hormonal) makeup which according to Holder is the distinguishing feature of transgender over intersexed individuals, but there is also a question of how they are to be understood in terms of the “validity of marriage” (Bishops 2003, 224). The question of their validity and some of the further issues associated with determining sex on the grounds of P3 can be seen through looking at R. Holder’s comments on transgender sexual reassignment surgery (SRS). Holder argues that SRS “is successful in the case of male-to-female but so far it has proved impossible to construct a functional penis in the male-to-female case – a fact which might well impinge on an ethical judgment as to the validity of marriage” (Bishops 2003, 224). The question here is what is meant by functional genitals in both instances. It is possible to create a penetrable vagina for male-to-female transgender individuals and a penis that can penetrate in the case of female-to-male; therefore it would appear that in both instances ‘interaction of the male and female genital organs’ can occur in the same manner as with cis-gendered individuals. This is echoed in Cornwall’s discussion of intersex surgery with the end goal being that “the penis and vagina are capable of penetrating and being penetrated” (Cornwall 2008, 192) and that “reproductive capacity as has been deemed rather unimportant” (Cornwall 2008, 192). So, if this is the definition of function why has it been deemed that SRS for female-to-male individuals does not create a functional penis? The apparent assumption, and the basis on which eligibility to marry is being judged is whether the male is able to ejaculate a somewhat tenuous definition of what it means to be ‘fully male’ and a return to an emphasis on man as the procreator.

Whilst the AIS and CAH individuals have a slightly different physical make up they too face the same issues, CAH men are unable to impregnate and

1 There are five kinds of CAH affecting XX or XY individuals. One form of CAH 21-hydroxylase deficiency causes the body to over-produce androgens, when this occurs in XX individuals it can lead to some or total virilization of the external genitalia.

have a genetically female make-up and AIS women are unable to fall pregnant and have a genetically male make-up. The argument is that the transgender individual has *chosen* to have their reproductive ability removed (which isn't necessarily the case even after SRS) whereas the intersexed individual is simply 'unfortunate'. If one is to define gender on the basis of genital appearance one can't cite that the chromosomal make-up is of no importance in intersexed individuals and of all importance in transgender individuals. Equally, if these additional 'physical' characteristics are referring to reproductive organs then one must allow for the CAH individual to marry an XY male or the AIS individual to marry an XX woman even though to all external appearances such a union would be a same sex marriage in terms of genitalia not being 'complementary' although the reproductive organs would be. Additionally, it fails to deal with those individuals who have conditions such as Klinefelter's Syndrome (are phenotype XXY), if chromosomal make-up is so important are they able to marry both XY and XX individuals? What about those with true hermaphroditism or mosaicism (cells within the same person have a different phenotype)? This level of inconsistency, especially when viewed in conjunction with the issues raised by P2 reduces the defining characteristics of male and female as binary God-given 'facts' to absurdity and challenges the brute 'factual' physicality of sex and gender and the understanding that male and female are separate Boolean categories.

Conclusion

A full examination of the treatment of diverse human embodiment within the central Anglican texts is not possible within the scope of this chapter. In *Some Issues* there is notable attempt to consider arguments from both sides of the debate and in doing so suggest that this is not an issue that has a "one size fits all" response. Therefore, the following conclusions are not designed to provide a definitive answer to the place of queer bodies within Anglican theology. Likewise, the purely analytic approach to the interaction between the Church's views on different aspects of the LGBT+ community was intended to highlight the inconsistencies that arise in a non-holistic approach to human gender and sexuality.

The fact that differently embodied individuals challenge our perception of male and female *must*

be brought in to our discussion of sexuality. Not because transgender people are individuals "whose sexuality feels at odds with their bodies" (Bishops 1994, 26), but because condemnation of relationships due to genitals, chromosomes, or reproductive capability is at the root of our treatment and dehumanization of intersexed and transgender individuals. Once the existence of those outside the binary categories of male and female is acknowledged then one must re-examine the principles on which we defining what is determined by God's providence. Although there are attempts in *Some Issues* to allow for the presence of queer bodies within the church community the compartmentalization of different groups within the discussion has left the approach fragmented and inconsistent as was highlighted by the issues raised in holding P1-P3.

If we are to define gender by chromosomes we must allow that there will be relationships sanctioned as 'appropriate' that appear to be 'homosexual' whether this lies in intersexed or transgender bodies. To sanction those relationships but to say two XY men are unable to be in a relationship even though their bodies appear very similar to those within a sanctioned relationship is to descend into absurdity. We either deny humanity to those outside the binary or welcome them as part of the diversity of creation. Once we have welcomed them and the challenge they present to 'male' and 'female', we *must* reexamine our understanding of relationships. To fail to do so is to make the decision of what is 'God-given' rest in man's hands and that the line, when drawn, is based in our own arbitrary categories that are ultimately decided by society's comfort level with each situation.

A Non-Boolean account of personhood acknowledges the diversity of creation and, challenges the assumption that we live in a world marked by ontologically Boolean categories of parts. If the categories of 'male' and 'female' are in fact non-Boolean and thus only able to be understood in terms of complementarity, this challenges our treatment of diverse sexuality and gender as going against the binary norm. The challenge arises whether one considers the pastoral and practical implications of the diverse nature of human embodiment or not. There is much work still to be done and moving forward it is necessary to analytically examine the basis of theological treatment of diversely embodied people in a manner that critically examines the logical fallacies of assuming a Boolean account of the physicality of our sex. With the hope that, if nothing else,



such an exploration may lead to the church holding a theology of queer bodies that is at least internally consistent.

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Addressing structural violence: Reforming our perspectives

Raymond J. Webb

Structural violence is a condition in which groups of persons are harmed by general and persisting situations not of their own choosing; from which most have no real way of escaping. Great harm, including death, and limits on the actualization of potential are the result. Three frequently contributing major causes of structural violence to be reviewed in this chapter are poverty (with resource inequality), sexism, and racism. El Salvador is used as an example. The practical theological strategy suggested here is: 1) in any context under study, raise the question of whether structural violence might be involved and give consideration of the effects of structural violence a priority even in the midst of other negative causes; 2) seek remedies against structural violence; and 3) augment the agency of the persons negatively affected. Reforming our perspectives is required to move us from focusing on small but deadly brushfires while missing the firestorm of structural violence, which deadens our social landscapes.

Introduction and definition

In this chapter, I will introduce and elaborate on the concept of structural violence and examine some contributions to the concept's development. Then I will look at the relationship of structural violence to poverty, sexism, and racism. Afterwards, I will describe and discuss the situation of the Central American country of El Salvador. Finally, I will suggest that we practical theologians reform our perspective on problematic situations by heightening awareness of structural violence, by working to eradicate it in general, and by giving individuals means to escape its effects. This paper does not contend that the whole world is structurally violent. What is argued here is that in certain circumstances using structural violence as a template may reform our understanding of those situations and hopefully offer a path to some remediation.

Structural violence, a most serious type of social injustice, is a condition in which groups of persons and even nations are harmed by ongoing general situations not of their own choosing, from which most

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have no real way of escaping. It is like having one's foot stuck in a tar pit; one can be fed but one cannot escape. People are simply trapped in the shadowy life-shortening convergences of negativity, living fewer years, with worse health, and not achieving reasonable fulfillment of their human potential. Most simply put, structural violence is 1) harmful, often lethal, 2) not immediately obvious, 3) involuntary, 4) generally unavoidable in its effects, 5) severely diminishing of the potential of certain groups of persons, and 6) often longstanding (cf. Ho 2007).

I argue here for a reform in the way we view many dire human situations. Structural violence must be recognized as causal in certain of them. Exacerbating certain serious situations are the interaction and intersection of factors such as historical conditions (e.g. colonialism, slavery, rich-poor dichotomy), biological situations (e.g. endemic malar-





ia, drug resistant tuberculosis, un-remediated toxic conditions, lack of clean water, malnutrition), and discriminatory attitudes (e.g. racism, sexism, the rich-poor dichotomy). These can exist hidden from view because they are either unrecognized or presumed to be “normal.” Examples of the presumption of “normality” include: “There will always be poor people,” “The woman’s work is in the home,” and the popular association of certain ethnic groups with gangs, crime, and drugs. Some examples of situations of structural violence are the general situation in the country of El Salvador (discussed below), Haiti, many iterations of the social situation of women, the Russian penal situation, many other penal systems, the crime ridden poorly resourced Chicago neighborhood of Englewood, the isolated living situations of certain groups of indigenous peoples, and even homes for dependent children in which order and “having a good attitude” are the dominant principles rather than the complete human development of each resident child.

Developing the concept of structural violence

Johan Galtung, the Norwegian social scientist credited with first using the term “structural violence,” described it as “the avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs or, to put it in more general terms, the impairment of human life, which lowers the actual degree to which someone is able to meet their needs below that which would be otherwise possible” (Galtung 1993, 1). Physician and anthropologist Paul Farmer elaborates extensively on structural violence, drawing from his analysis of situations in (among others) Haiti, Russia, Rwanda, and Peru. He has been responsible for making more visible the notion of “structural violence” in *Pathologies of Power* (2003) and other writings. In exploring structural violence and drawing on Galtung, Farmer, and other theorists, I will consider it first as structural, then as violent, followed by the characteristics of being hidden and “normal.”

Structural

Structural violence is hidden in structures rather than being inflicted by a specific individual or group of individuals. Andrew Dilts notes that public atten-

tion focuses on “bad apples” and “responsible parties” (2012, 192). But he contends that violence cannot be accounted for only by a “liability-based model of agency and force” (2012, 191). In situations of structural violence, power is unequally distributed, and so also the ability to trade in goods, educational opportunity, etc. Characteristic of structural violence is exploitation (where some profit more than others), leading to premature death for some, leaving others in a permanent involuntary state of poverty (illness, etc.) and segmentation, in which the “underdogs” are only allowed a limited view of the reality in which they exist (Galtung in Müller n.d.). Dilts points out that “[m]embers of the Occupy movement have pointed directly to the forms of systematic violence and domination inherent in wealth and income inequality and demanded an end to economic and political domination” (192). They have been met by naked violence and brutality by opponents, including governmental ones. Indeed, stability and tranquility often mask deeper and more pervasive violence. According to Matthew Mullen, structural violence is “built-in” systematic vulnerability and dehumanization (Mullen 2015, 462). He argues that in dealing with transitional justice the central focus should be structural violence rather than courts and commissions. Otherwise, in some way, the violent structures will continue, e.g. daily life in South Africa.

For Farmer (2005, 41) structural violence is

‘structured’ by historically given (and often economically driven) processes and forces that conspire—whether through routine, ritual, or, as is more commonly the case, the hard surfaces of life—to constrain agency. For many, including most of my patients, and informants, choices both large and small are limited by racism, sexism, political choice, and grinding poverty.

Farmer’s two most well-known examples are from Russia and Haiti. In Russia, lengthy detention before trial results in prisoners being exposed to drug-resistant tuberculosis, which they later transmit to their families after release. In Haiti, without consultation, the government expropriated land from farmers for a dam to provide hydro-electric power. People who lost their farming livelihood had no alternative but to head to Port-au-Prince for work, eventually resulting in the spread of abject poverty and HIV-AIDS in the region of the dam.



Violence

Galtung points out that, as a result of structural violence, life is shortened from what it would have been had one had the world's average amount of resources. One lives fewer years and in a diminished state of development of potential. Avoidable pre-mature death is a type of violence. As Farmer et al. (2006) put it, structural violence describes "social arrangements that put individuals and populations in harm's way." Harmful social structures, supported by stable institutions and regular experience can be invisible. Unequal access to resources, political power, education, health care, and legal standing are examples of these potentially lethal structures, says Farmer, following Galtung.

Forensic psychiatrist James Gilligan says that structural violence is the cause of more deaths than war, accidental death, homicide, and suicide together (1996, 110). It operates continuously, independent of individual acts, individuals, and groups, and is normally invisible (192). He focuses strongly on socio-economic causes. The gap between rich and poor produces more than 14 million deaths per year (195). 20% of the world's population is absolutely unable to provide for itself nor do anything about it (287–288). Gilligan (2009, 253), drawing in part on Hannah Arendt, notes that there is a certain connection between structural violence and individual violence in the sense that the more power people have, the less they need to resort to individual violence.

Structural related to interpersonal

Interpersonal violence (e.g. murder, the killing of civilians in war, especially domestic abuse, etc.) certainly co-exists with structural violence, but the two concepts must be kept separate, as Joshua M. Price (2012) indicates. Kathleen Ho (2007) notes that with violence that is obviously a violation of individual human rights, one can name the violators, while with structural violence those responsible are less easily identified. Total focus on interpersonal violence obscures the underlying causation of structural violence. Interpersonal violence can result from structural violence, as those unable to prosper in the current structure inflict violence on those "below" them, and so on (cf. Price 2012). Violence flows down the power grid; one diminishes one's own humiliation by humiliating those "below" one.

Hidden and normal

The social factors must be simultaneously considered but are "differentially weighted in different settings and times" (Farmer 2005, 42–43). As Linda Green notes, Farmer is able to use "structural violence" to make visible the social machinery of oppression, keeping the historical sources of oppression in view (Green 2004, 319). Without keeping the causes in view, the structures of violence become simply "given," a "normalization" of oppression (Farmer 2004, 317). Farmer is comfortable with Pierre Bourdieu's notion of "habitus" and sees structural violence as both "structures and structuring" (Farmer 2004, 315). It constricts the agency of its victims and determines the allocation of resources. It socializes for scarcity, exemplified in the Haitian proverb, "A full belly means trouble." Yves Winter (2012, 192–3) highlights that structural violence can be invisible but also visible in the sense of being commonplace, inherited across generations, taken for granted. Philip Bourgois (2009) describes how structural violence can be expressed in a climate of interpersonal violence, leading to a "normalization" of violence, and thereby the obscuring of structural violence.

We will now briefly review three factors frequently contributing to structural violence: extreme poverty, sexism, and racism.

Extreme poverty and income inequality: cause and result of structural violence

Eight individuals have wealth and control of assets equal to the economically ranked bottom half of the world's population. Many in the "lower half" are caught up in what Bourgois (2001, 12) calls the "global sweatshop economy." Economic powerlessness is a kind of structural violence which leads to misery and pushes people into further structurally violent situations. Thousands flee from the extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, 5,000 African refugees drowned in the Mediterranean Sea last year, 700 of them children. The drowning deaths have economic remote causes in home countries as well as proximate causes in unsafe predatory "migration industry" exploitation. This migration from central African countries and its causes and the ensuing disasters on the journeys can well be described



as a structurally violent situation. The vulnerability is endless and almost circular.

Often contributing to severe poverty and economic inequality is corruption. While occasional dictators have brought stability to countries, more likely is the corruption which skims off significant monies for the winners of elections. Another instance of corruption is many workers not receiving their fair share of the profits of their work. Rampant bribery at all levels also contributes to and perpetuates structural violence.

Attempts at foreign aid and at charity may provide immediate relief but can contribute to the continuation of the structural violence which accompanies extreme poverty. Foreign aid is both military and also infrastructural (roads, sewage treatment) as well as immediate relief (food, water, blankets). There is some help, but there may be problems with the “help.” Tim Reid (2006) raises the question of whether lack of donor oversight contributes to the support of structural violence, using violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo by Rwanda and Uganda as his prime examples.

Sexism (gender inequality) is and contributes to structural violence

Much violence against women can be interpreted both as interpersonal and structural. Women suffer from the effects of colonialism, poverty, certain immigration laws, forced sterilization, forced birth control, machismo accepted as a way of life, trafficking, prostitution, the “glass ceiling,” rape, rape as a weapon of war, and femicide (cf. Mukherjee, 2011). The structural dimension of much violence against women is usually ignored. Price (2011, 2, 30) contests the notion that violence against women is homogeneous in nature and mostly domestic. Yes, there are often serious efforts to punish perpetrators, but this action by government does not include the input of women victims. In this commonplace approach, class distinction effects are removed, as is violence by agents of government, and even indirect actions like failing to protect women from pimps and traffickers. Prostituted women are punished rather than their “clients.” Racial profiling, prison growth, and campaigns against immigrants get divorced from the study of violence. The structures are made invisible. The second half of 2017 has brought to public attention a remarkable and tragic number of sexual crimes against women by power-

ful men, leading to revelation of the scope of the issue of the abuse of women in the United States.

According to information from the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, women in the United States overall currently earn 82% of men’s weekly paychecks, for black women 68%, for Hispanic women 62%. Median earnings for women are lower in 18 of the 20 most common jobs for women (Swartz and Jones 2017, 35). The gap is projected to end by 2056 for white women, for black women in 2124, for Hispanic women in 2248. This is an example of the intersection of race, gender, and income.

Racism as a widespread dimension of structural violence

The very notion of race has political and categorizing dimensions. It moves from pigmentation and ethnicity to a stereotyping structure. It leads from colonialization to enslavement and disenfranchisement. Of course, racism is an exercise of power. The path is from description to restriction in any exercise of power. The phrase in the United States’ Declaration of Independence “All men are created equal” literally does not name women and was presumed not to include enslaved persons brought from Africa (again, the intersection of race and poverty in structural violence). It is reasonable to conclude that the motivation in the recent U.S. presidential election included a certain vigorous implicit energy against persons of Middle Eastern and African origins as well as persons immigrating from Central America and Mexico. One can also surmise that persons from Ireland and Poland who have overstayed their visas were not a strong motive in the vote. Efforts to repeal certain parts of the voting rights acts in the United States as well as the way certain voting districts have been constructed are often related to restricting the effectiveness of the votes of persons who are of African American and Latino/a origins, and ultimately to structurally violent effects.

Three other examples can further expand the dimension of racism. Interestingly, Polly Walker (2003, 37) describes the violence done to indigenous people as academic researchers force both indigenous persons and even indigenous researchers to use defined Western methodological frameworks when describing their knowledge and experience. Demanding Western categories in a variety of settings is structural violence. In a second example,

Lykes (2001, 161) attributes the violation of the human rights of all Guatemalans to a structural violence embedded to protect the civil-political rights of a small elite. Indigenous people in Guatemala were viewed as “subhuman,” justifying quasi-genocidal treatment of these Maya people. The recent characterization of many African countries, Haiti, and (perhaps) El Salvador as [obscenity] countries by the elected president of the United States is a racist promotion of the continuation of structures and inadequate resources which lead to diminished human development and longevity.

El Salvador as an example of structure of violence

I have visited the Central American country of El Salvador 60 times since 2007. 6.2 million people live in this lush green mountainous 8,124 square mile rectangle on the Pacific Ocean, enjoying warm water and warm air all year. But El Salvador’s history is tragic. On January 22, 1932, a peasant-led, largely indigenous rebellion was suppressed by government troops, resulting in the deaths of 30,000 coffee growing *campesinos* (CISPES 2016). 132 government troops were also killed. The bloody civil war between government troops and guerillas from 1980–1992 killed 75,000 persons, 85% of whom were innocent civilians. In 2015, 6,600 Salvadoreans were murdered. If this is projected out, citizens have about a 1 in 20 chance of having their lives ended by murder. The current violence is attributed to the 34,000 gang members (*Mara Salvatrucha* and their rivals *Calle 18*), some of whom learned much of their trade in Los Angeles before being deported after the 1980s war. This is an example of Gilligan’s theory that in a context of structured violence, victims (jobless, hopeless gang members) exact violence on those weaker than themselves. The recently announced planned 2019 deportation by the United States of another 200,000 currently legal United States resident Salvadoreans can only increase structural violence in El Salvador through unemployment, social destabilization, and loss of significant external monetary remittances.

The 14 rich families of the coffee growing past have given way to eight rich sectors in the economy, where 113,000 owners receive 75% of the results of labor and the 2.5 million workers only 25%. The bottom 20% of the population receives only 3% of capital; this puts El Salvador among the 20 countries

with the largest rich-poor gaps. El Salvador has many empty factories. Remittances from family members working outside of El Salvador have been a steady 17% of the GDP over the past ten years. (The GDP is 98th in the world.) 31% of the population lives below the poverty line, although unemployment is only 7%. 52% of tax revenues come from a Value Added Tax, which stresses the poor in particular as a percentage of income. While the gangs have some involvement in drugs, their main industry is extortion, from the small home owner paying \$70 per year for “collaboration” and the owner of a small central city restaurant \$150–\$500 per month (Source: personal conversations). For the owner of a small business the expense of “rent” makes it hard to make a profit, impossible for many “mom and pop” *pupusa* (filled corn tortilla) stands. A factory job, similar to work in the fields, pays \$6 per day if you can find employment and qualify. The secondary school completion rate is 34.8%. Beside the difficulty of finding employment in general, there is the added difficulty of university graduates finding employment in their fields of study.

The world’s highest rate of femicide is found in El Salvador, which also has five cases of domestic abuse every day, with many more unreported (Brigada 2016). Gangs use sexual violence to bring fear to communities. Only 1% of violent crimes against women result in convictions. Collection of child support from absent fathers is rarely accomplished. But it is hoped that a 2016 law, setting up courts specifically for crimes against women, will begin to change the situation.

El Salvador is a situation with many contributors to structural violence: the gross gap between the few rich and the many working poor, massive corruption in government and through the gangs, inadequate security, the high risk of being a victim of gang violence, the gender inequality of women raising children without support from fathers, machismo, the subtle racism experienced by the poor and indigenous, and privilege for those with European and Middle Eastern roots. Lifespans are shortened by murder, limited health insurance, and poverty. The attitude is that it will always be this way because it has been this way so long. Most of the population is “stuck.” Trying to escape to the north – to the United States – is a road of large payments (e.g. \$8,000) to “guides,” robbery, extortion, rape, kidnapping, brutalization in Mexico, with little likelihood of successful entry and achieving one’s goal of a better, safer, and gang-free life (cf. Vogt 2013).



Practice

Besides reforming the way we think about negative situations in which groups of people are “stuck,” I would like us to consider a plan of action. Our focus can be on three aspects: highlighting structural violence; remedying structures; and aiding affected persons.

Highlighting structural violence

In any problematic context under study, I suggest raising the question of whether structural violence might be involved. The focus should not just be limited to interpersonal violence. Considering structural violence should have priority even in the midst of other negative causes. Observe situations carefully and then judge what might be “underneath.” Are there traps which limit the freedom of the actors? Individual actions often will be futile against structures.

Depending on “free will” explanations for most actions, on “virtue” or the lack thereof, on real freedom of choice, or on the de-contextualized efficacy of the individual leads to ignoring or downplaying the tight hold that structures have on people and situations. The temptation in any situation may be to blame individual actors. But in fact structural violence overpowers most actors. (Fourteen-year-olds in El Salvador tell me they are not free because of the ubiquitous, unpredictable lurking of murderous extortion gangs and “independent” robbers.) Most humans are not as free as we think they are.

One suggestion is that donors to charities should expect more than short-term solutions and should raise the question of underlying causes. Without such a reform of donor concerns, there is little promise of the radical change necessary to eradicate relevant violent structures which lead to shortened lives and frequent misery. Attention to structural violence itself may lead to attention to its roots, and with enough attention perhaps to action against causal factors.

Remedying structures

When one begins to think of structures instead of individual actions, a transformation of perception takes place and one understands in a new way. Finding deep causes may lead to the possible intersected building blocks of solutions.

We can begin with the notion of the dignity of the human person and its implications. The roots

are found in religious and/or humanitarian principles. The tribalism of “some are better than others” is the great impediment to ending structural violence. Structural violence thrives when the good of the other does not matter (e.g. hedonism, self-interest, “make America great again”). Religions can contribute by promoting peace and human solidarity and rejecting nationalism and tribalism. But one sometimes must choose between one’s religious and humanitarian values and one’s nation or tribe. Two Catholic tribes committed genocide against each other in Rwanda; tribalism overran religious faith and community. And in situations where religion is a subset of nationalism, structural violence can be a result. Where patriotism is used as an argument against non-violent protests of racism, structures of violence endure.

All violations of human rights – civil, judicial, political, socio-economic, group, educational, developmental – need attention. Let nothing trump legitimate human rights. When human rights are ignored for the sake of some presumed other good, the “greater good” is inevitably structural violence (e.g. dictatorship for the sake of order). Concessions to culture (e.g. genital mutilation) are expressions of structural violence. Sectarian partisanship inevitably redounds against the particular sector. All specific instances of the violation of the human rights of individuals need attention. This is the most widely identified guide to justice.

In dealing with humanitarian crises, immediate relief should be provided, but accompanied by questions about underlying causes. Simple maintenance can result in the repetition of crises. (One may ask about the dilemma that humanitarian aid relief may take away attention from the enduring causes of structural violence.) Deaths and suffering from Haitian hurricanes and earthquakes require immediate relief but the poor construction related to earthquake death tolls and the global warming which increases the damage from an earthquake or hurricane are dimensions of structural violence.

The economic issues must be addressed. Let us keep focus on the ethical implications of neo-liberal positions. The rich-poor gap is associated with violence and other problems in individual countries. One hundred years ago, Pope Leo XIII said, “To possess superfluity is to possess the goods of others.” Fighting words today! Slavery and racism are called the American original sin. Perhaps sexism goes back to the Garden of Eden. But sin can be overcome with grace.



Aiding affected persons

Non-violent social movements should be supported, with a focus on empowering the participants. Small gains can be part of building a road.

We can accompany those living in the midst of structural violence in any way possible. Seek remedies which will mitigate the effects of structural violence in general and augment the agency of the persons negatively affected. But do not see these as more than temporary interventions and respites.

Hopefully, we will listen to persons who we realize are in the midst of structural violence. Strengthen and empower them with our attention and any help we might provide. Identify “heroes” and leaders and protect them. The non-violent opponent is considered more dangerous by some repressive governments.

Paradoxically, certain programs to alleviate the suffering resulting from structural violence can in fact perpetuate the structurally violent system, especially when a “normalization” (“this is the way it always is”) is the result and the underlying structures remain. Support those who resist dubious “normalization.”

We must support refugees and work toward improvement of situations that cause persons to become refugees. Treat migrants humanely, realizing that immigrants improve the economic and demographic situations of countries to which they migrate, as well as remit needed monies to their countries of origin. Fight the “harmful immigrant” and “potentially dangerous refugee” generalized falsehoods. Cultivate hospitality. Realize that improvements in central Africa and in Syria will decrease “necessary” migration.

Conclusion

The concept of structural violence provides an opportunity to re-evaluate the way we look at situations which are very difficult for much of the world’s population. It can reform the way we look at the rough spots in the human situation. It can move us from implicitly blaming the victim to awareness of the fact that for many people life is “beyond their control.” Using the specific insight of structural violence can bring an “aha” moment to our analysis of situations and our quest for immediate, intermediate, and long term solutions, together with some of the means to move forward. Initial compassion can

be migrated to vision and planning. Melinda Gates (Gates 2017) notes our shared humanity: “Whatever the conditions of people’s lives, wherever they live, however they live we all share the same dreams.” With a reform of our perspective, we can replace “Why don’t they get themselves out of it” (cf. Price 2012, 121) with “We can move together against the deadly shackles of structural violence.”

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Reforming Theology Inside and Out: Mass Incarceration in the US

Mary Clark Moschella

“I was in prison and you visited me.” (Mt. 25:37 NRSV)

The reality of mass incarceration in the United States, where 2.2 million people are currently serving lengthy sentences in constricted and heavily fortified spaces, clearly calls for political reform. In this paper, I describe the situation, reflect theologically upon the spatial division between insiders (those incarcerated) and outsiders (those living outside of prison walls), and offer a response. The themes considered include: proximity and distance, place and space, racial and class-based othering, solidarity, and the body of Christ. Numerous legal and political reforms are needed to address the racial injustice and punitive nature of the current system. One reforming response is described: that of teaching students from inside and outside together in theological classrooms inside prisons. The reformation of mass incarceration requires complex political and theological responses that break down the geographic and cultural walls that divide and isolate insiders and outsiders from each other.

I: Reforming Space: The situation of mass incarceration in the US

The reality of mass incarceration in the US is now well-known. The total number of persons incarcerated in state, local, and federal facilities hovers around 2.2 million. The United States now has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, higher than that of Russia, China, or Iran (Alexander 2010, 6). Notably distressing is the racial make-up of the U.S. prison population, which is disproportionately black and brown.¹ Michelle Alexander points out that “the US imprisons a larger percentage of its black population than South Africa did at the height of Apartheid,” and that in Washington, DC, three out of four young black men can expect to serve time in prison (Alexander 2010, 6–7).

1 Over sixty percent of the prisoners in the US are persons of color. For a detailed account of racial disparities, see The Sentencing Project: <http://www.sentencingproject.org/issues/racial-disparity/>.

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This is a situation that fairly cries out for reformation of place and space. In three parts, this paper: describes the situation of mass incarceration in the US in more detail, reflects upon it theologically, and illustrates one pastoral, activist response to the situation. Part I briefly describes the history and contours of mass incarceration, emphasizing both its racist roots and the resulting contemporary realities that enforce distances between incarcerated persons, who are disproportionately darker skinned, and the rest of the population (insiders and outsiders). This





section includes a description of the harsh practice of solitary confinement, a use of space that confines and isolates particular incarcerated persons from any vestige of human community. Part II brings theological reflection to bear upon this situation. In conversations with activists and theologians, I consider themes of proximity, distance, place, and space. The prevalence of racial othering is juxtaposed with notions of the centrality of the body in the life of the body of Christ. Part III offers a response to this unjust and unfaithful situation, emphasizing the need for proximity, for bringing insiders and outsiders together across spatial and cultural barriers.

In *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in an Age of Colorblindness*, Alexander reviews how the “war on drugs” language came into use in the 1970s when it became politically expedient to talk about getting tough on drugs. The war on drugs has driven up the US prison population from about 300,000 in 1970 to more than 2.2 million people today. Unlike in countries such as Norway, where the penal system seeks to rehabilitate and return prisoners to common life (Benko 2015), in the US, prisons are heavily armed places where punishment more than rehabilitation appears to be the goal.² Compounding the harmful effects of mass incarceration on those imprisoned is the collateral damage to 2.7 million children in the US who have at least one parent in prison (The Pew Charitable Trust 2010).

The recent documentary film, “13,th” named after the 13th Amendment of US constitution,³ helpfully lays out the way this phenomenon of mass incarceration came into being in the context of presidential politics. Beginning at least as far back as the Nixon administration in 1969, a very intentional strategy was used to associate African Americans with violent crime, to whip up fear of the dark-skinned other, and thus to challenge the hard-won freedoms of the civil rights movement. This “Southern strategy,” as it was called, was wildly successful in demonizing

darker-skinned and poorer people in the name of law and order (a phrase that the current administration has brought back into use). After Jimmy Carter’s one term in office, Ronald Reagan re-invoked Nixon’s language of a “war on drugs,” which was particularly focused on crack cocaine, a less expensive form of cocaine, more available to poorer people than the expensive powder. For possession of crack, unduly harsh prison sentences were imposed. George H. W. Bush was then elected president, in part by portraying his Democratic opponent, Michael Dukakis, as “soft on crime,” and using the infamous Willie Horton ads to convey the clear racial meaning of the term “crime.” In fact, the word “crime” had become code for “black,” but in case anyone missed the point, a mugshot of William Horton, showcasing his dark skin, appeared in ubiquitous television ads. Learning from his opponents, candidate Bill Clinton decided that he needed to project an image of a new kind of Democrat, one who was not afraid to lock up criminals. He employed this approach in both elections, using the baseball metaphor of “three strikes and you’re out” to show just how tough he was. He signed new laws that made mandatory life sentences for third felony offenses. Over a period of thirty years, we saw rapid expansion of the prison industrial complex in the US, with a large percentage of the new prison population confined for non-violent, drug-related claims.

While the rates of drug use in the US are roughly equal across the lines of color and class, the individuals who are picked up, arrested, charged, convicted, and imprisoned for buying and selling illegal drugs are disproportionately poorer and darker-skinned (Alexander 2010, 95–96). This is in part because police officers are routinely sent into poor and racially segregated neighborhoods in order to make drug arrests, and in fact, they are incentivized to do so (Blumenson and Nilson 1998). Meanwhile, in predominantly white suburban neighborhoods, as well as on many college campuses, such searches are rare and arrests are few. It has been convincingly argued that the practice of mass incarceration is historically related to the institution of slavery and in fact is a new form of enslavement that functions to preserve racial and class divisions in this country (Blackmon 2009).

One of the worst practices related to incarceration is that of solitary confinement. This is a particularly pernicious punishment that is estimated to affect 90,000 prisoners across the US on any given day. Solitary confinement involves locking a prisoner in a

2 For example, in 2014 the US Department of Justice compiled a detailed report of abuse of minors at Rikers Island. See <http://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/1240461/departement-of-justice-letter-about-rikers-iland.pdf>.

3 The Thirteenth Amendment reads: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.” For a trailer from the documentary “13,th” see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V66F-3WU2CKk>.

small concrete cell, usually 4' by 8' in size, which may be windowless, isolated, and completely cut-off from human community. In many prisons, a term of solitary confinement is used as a punishment for insiders who break prison rules. Other prisons, such as the infamous Louisiana State Penitentiary named Angola, "automatically and permanently place(s) prisoners sentenced to death" in solitary confinement (Stack 2017, A-17). In Angola, those in solitary are confined to windowless concrete cells for 23 out of 24 hours a day, with only one hour during which they are allowed to leave the cell, shower, and make phone calls (Stack 2017, A-17). The damaging effects of solitary confinement are well documented. We know that psychological wellbeing depends on human relationships, involving eye contact and touch (Lewis, Armini, and Lannon 2000, 80–87). Such deprivation of human contact is especially harsh for those with psychiatric conditions.

GQ magazine recently published an article called, "Buried Alive: Stories from Inside Solitary Confinement" (Penn 2017). These painful stories are based on written interviews with 47 persons in solitary confinement in prisons across the country. Insiders speak of terrible smells and loud clanging sounds, of fluorescent lights left on all night, and of the mental and emotional breakdown that many experience due to sensory overload, sleep deprivation, meager portions of rotten food, extreme cold or heat, and damage to body and brain. (Ironically, it is currently illegal in the US to subject laboratory rats to these conditions). One insider said: "It is the place they dump the trash they most want to be forgotten." Perhaps unsurprisingly, suicides and suicide attempts are rampant in solitary populations, as are increased levels of psychiatric illnesses, anger, frustration, and fear (Penn 2017). Also unsurprisingly, in New York City, prisoners in solitary are three times more likely to be black, and twice as likely to be Latino, so the unjust distribution of this punishment, as in the case of the death penalty, mirrors the larger pattern of disproportionate rates of incarceration based on race.

The damage inflicted by mass incarceration includes what happens to prisoners who have served their time and are released from prison. At present, if someone has been convicted of a felony or pled to one, that person's chances of finding employment are quite limited since they must check a box on almost every employment application indicating any past convictions. Additionally, formerly incarcerated persons are permanently barred from living in

public housing and from receiving food stamps. In many states, former felons cannot even vote. It is not hard to see why Michelle Alexander claims that we have created a new Jim Crow, a racial lower caste system—not class, but caste—because many formerly incarcerated persons find that their freedoms are severely curtailed for the rest of their lives. And this inevitably has an adverse impact on their children's lives as well, whether by depriving them of the chance to live with their formerly incarcerated parent, or by impoverishing them for extended periods of time.

II: Theology: Proximity, Distance, Race and Place

In looking at these phenomena of place, race, and confinement from a practical theological point of view, it is obvious that reform is in order. In particular, the great divisions between insiders and outsiders, those in prison and those who are free, mapped as they are to racial and class distinctions, cry out for attention. In recent years, as reformers of various stripes—attorneys, educators, politicians, journalists, religious groups, and non-profits—have worked to redress this troubling situation, it has become clear that US prisons function not only to keep prisoners in, but also to keep the rest of society out. The physical walls surrounding prisons block the view from both sides. These walls, both physical and cultural, may prevent insiders from seeing even the treetops on the land around them, while also restricting outsiders from entering, observing what goes on inside, and forming relationships with those who are incarcerated.

The noted civil rights lawyer and activist, Bryan Stevenson, in his book *Just Mercy* (Stevenson 2014), stresses the importance of experiencing *proximity* to incarcerated persons. As a young law student and intern with the Southern Prisoners Defense Committee, he was sent to speak with a man on death row in a prison outside of Jackson, Georgia. Reflecting on this experience, he writes, "Proximity to the condemned and incarcerated made the question of each person's humanity more urgent and meaningful, including my own" (Stevenson 2014, 12). Stevenson's legal work brought him *close* to insiders, such as those on death row in Holman Correctional Facility in Atman, Alabama, where the men spoke of smelling human flesh burning after executions were conducted using the electric chair, just down the



hall from their own cells. Stevenson, meeting there with his client who was later exonerated, saw and felt the terror that death row and the death penalty inspire. He also gained proximity to incarcerated persons who, when they were 13, 14, and 15 years old, had been charged and convicted as adults and sentenced to life in prison. Stevenson also got to know men and women convicted as felons in plea-deals because they had inadequate representation, as well as those who had been convicted in trials where black jurors were regularly excluded from serving in cases involving black defendants. Spending time in close contact with insiders and with their families on the outside is what led Stevenson to engage in his now well-known work of reforming the legal system through an organization called the Equal Justice Initiative. EJI has worked to overturn numerous unjust convictions, to challenge the legality of sentencing underage youth as if they were adults, and to reform racist jury selection processes, along with many other important initiatives (Equal Justice Initiative 2017).

If *proximity* between insiders and outsiders makes the humanity of both sides more urgent, the converse is also true: our humanity is diminished by the *distance* between us. In the US, many prisons have been built in obscure places, miles away from urban centers, in order to protect the presumed-to-be-innocent general population from the convicted and presumed-to-be-dangerous criminals. Whilst an argument may be made that society needs protection from the most violent offenders, such extreme physical distances and barriers function to divide insiders and outsiders from one another in unnecessary and inhumane ways, without regard to the severity of the crime or the actual level of danger that any particular prisoner may present to outsiders. For example, when parents are incarcerated for non-violent drug-related charges, their efforts to maintain relationships with their children are hampered by the long distances children must travel, the limited visiting hours allotted, and the costs of communication including phone calls and emails. Racial and class distances are also mirrored in and reinforced by the physical barriers (walls and locks) and geographic isolation of prison buildings.

Themes of distance and proximity are addressed by liberation theologians. Gustavo Gutierrez and Jon Sobrino, for example, claim a theological warrant for *accompaniment* and *solidarity* across social, economic, and cultural borders. Sobrino notes that “the place of the church is with the ‘other,’ and with

the most radical otherness of that other—his suffering—especially when that suffering is massive, cruel, and unjust” (Sobrino 1994, 21). The suffering in the criminal justice system is undoubtedly “massive, cruel, and unjust.” But how can faith communities practice accompaniment and anything close to solidarity with those on the inside, when distance has been built into the system at so many levels?

I turn for help to the work of Mary McClintock Fulkerson, who explores the idea of place theologically. In *Places of Redemption*, she defines place not as a mere geographic site, but as a “territory of meaning” that is “held” or “gathered together” by embodied social practices (McClintock Fulkerson 2007, 27–37). McClintock Fulkerson studied the life of a Methodist congregation in Durham, North Carolina, that was intentionally trying to overcome social distances based on race and dis/abilities. However well-meaning the congregation was, certain social hierarchies, with their long historical pedigrees, were found to persist. Worship services in this place allowed for the presence of diverse persons, “marked bodies,” as she calls them, in the sanctuary, but did not necessarily create a level “space to appear” for all worshippers. “Residuals of historical exclusion,” McClintock Fulkerson argues, left over from long ingrained habits of segregated worship, continued to exert a force in the life of the present-day congregation. White people who ignore this residual racism, she found, can remain “oblivious” to their own exclusionary tendencies, even while proclaiming God’s love for all. She asserts that redemption, if it is to take place in this world, has to do battle with forms of historical exclusion and their residuals (McClintock Fulkerson 2007, 231–245).

Here I suggest that mass incarceration is a phenomenon to which theologians ought not remain oblivious (Higginbotham 2013). Incarceration is a practice of the state, not the church, to be sure. But it is a practice that reifies race, class, and other intersectional hierarchies, distancing human beings from each other, and if Bryan Stevenson is correct, distancing all of us from our humanity. To allow the great distances between insiders and outsiders to persist unchallenged, is to give in to the “residuals of historical exclusion.” A reformation of place calls us to disrupt these many-layered distances and divisions that play out in the current criminal justice system.

In her book, *Enfleshing Freedom*, M. Shawn Copeland writes, “We Christian theologians in the United States work in a house that is haunted by the

ghosts of slavery” (Copeland 2010, 2). Copeland draws upon slave narratives in order to interrogate historical memory and, in the words of Johann Baptist Metz, “respect the dignity of suffering that has accumulated in history” (Copeland 2010, 3–4). Without historical memory, or worse, with a pretense of innocence or colorblindness, it is not possible to exorcise the ghosts in this theological house. As a contextual theologian committed to social transformation, Copeland calls for “compassionate practices of solidarity ... critical, healing practices that address the crusted residue of slavery in contemporary ... reenactments of violence against black bodies” (Copeland 2010, 3–4).

If we do not address the “crusted residue” of embedded racism in the criminal justice system, the more privileged among us will remain “oblivious,” and our theologies, our compassion, and our capacity to practice solidarity will be constrained. How does it happen that our compassion gets constrained when it comes to those in prison? Jim Higginbotham suggests that individualized theologies that emphasize personal sin and redemption can function to reinforce the distinction between insiders and outsiders. If we think of sin as a matter of individual wrong-doing, divorced from cultural context, we may say –or not say, but believe—of insiders, “They are guilty of a crime, so I am innocent and not like them” (Higginbotham 2015, 104). There are some psychological benefits to outsiders in this kind of thinking, benefits such as a sense of safety or even a moral logic that provides a sense of order (Higginbotham 2015, 104; 97–99.) But if we want to engage in the “compassionate practices of solidarity” that Copeland describes, we must take in the larger picture of political history, poverty, and discrimination within which the criminal justice system operates.

Copeland’s theological anthropology discerns a way forward. She argues for the centrality of the body in the life of the body of Christ. Marked bodies, stigmatized bodies, all must be included in order for the church to be the body of Christ:

The Body of Jesus the Christ, both before and after his death, radically clarifies the meaning of be-ing embodied in the world ... His love and praxis releases the power of God’s animating image and likeness in our red, brown, yellow, white, and black bodies—our homosexual and heterosexual bodies, our HIV/AIDS infected bodies, our starving bodies, our prostituted bodies, our yearning bodies, our young and old and joyous bodies. To stand silent before war and death, incarceration and torture ... is to be complicit with empire ... (Copeland 2010, 82–83).

Solidarity, as Copeland describes it, is no simple task, but a re-orientation of our lives away from the values of empire that segregate us into groups who are privileged or demeaned, and toward the radically loving ways of Jesus, who challenged social hierarchies and the domination of the Roman empire. What Copeland calls “Eucharistic solidarity” reforms our social imagination, through practices of “spatial inclusion, authentic recognition, and humble embrace” of all bodies (Copeland 2010, 127). Only thus we can resist the pull of empire in our day, and “stand the ground of Justice in the face of white racist supremacy, injustice, and domination” (Copeland 2010, 128).

Though the theologians cited here are all speaking out of their Christian faith, persons of diverse faiths as well as secular humanists are drawn to the moral imperative of recognizing the human dignity of those who are living inside prison walls. Solidarity with allies in the cause of reformation of the criminal justice system across religious, racial, and social lines is needed. Likewise, white persons must collaborate and become allies in the work of resisting the racism that has fueled the system from the start.

III: Response: A call for reformation of space, inside and out

What can be done to reform the situation of mass incarceration? What can disrupt the distances between insiders and outsiders so as to break through the historical residuals of racism? In the section of her book called “the grace of the place,” McClintock Fulkerson, referring to the church she studied, found that “it is ongoing face-to-face relationships that create a place where the sinful inheritances of vilified “Otherness” can begin to be dislodged” (McClintock Fulkerson 2007, 248). Similarly, in the case of mass incarceration, face-to-face relationships between insiders and outsiders are needed to help to dislodge the residual-laden narratives of criminality, race, and Otherness that the current criminal justice system maintains. This was clearly the case in Bryan Stevenson’s account, described above, of how personal encounters with insiders led him to pursue his activist legal efforts.

Practical theologians can contribute to the needed reformation of place in a variety of ways, including through research that sheds light on the criminal justice system and lifts up the voices of insiders. Pub-



lic voice and activism that challenge the most heinous and unjust practices of the criminal justice system, such as the use of solitary confinement, are also needed. For example, church-related groups in Connecticut recently helped to sponsor the exhibition of a mobile cell designed to replicate those used in solitary confinement (Inside the Box 2017). The cell was exhibited at libraries and the statehouse, where visitors could go inside and hear a recording made inside an actual solitary cell in order to imagine what the experience would be like. Another example of reforming space can be found in San Quentin, California, where outside journalists helped prisoners found and publish a thriving on-line newspaper, the *San Quentin News*, which is now widely distributed in prisons in California. The publication hosts a variety of articles for and about prison life (San Quentin News 2017). Efforts such as these indeed help to chip away at the walls separating insiders from outsiders and to assert our common humanity.

Some practical theologians and other educators are creating space for face-to-face relationships between insiders and outsiders by teaching courses inside prison walls. My colleague, Sarah Farmer, is one such practical theologian/prison educator, whose recent dissertation calls for “a pedagogy of restorative hope” (Farmer 2016). She finds that restorative hope is needed because “human confinement places a person’s humanity under lock and key” (Farmer 2017, 2). Farmer goes on to explain that human beings need space in which to flourish, supported by other human beings who can see them—not from Foucault’s “all-seeing but fractured panopticon gaze” (Farmer 2017, 4, referencing Foucault 1995, 195–228), as when guards in a tower, themselves unseen, observe prisoners’ every move, yet do not see prisoners as whole human beings. Insiders, like the rest of us, need to be seen as more than the worst mistake they ever made, more than their crimes, more than their carceral identities (Stevenson 2014, 290). Insiders, Farmer tells us, need spaces in which “to realize (their) humanity authentically,” spaces that function as sites of “appearing, becoming, and connection” (Farmer 2017, 9).

A growing number of scholars and educators are taking on the task of creating such spaces in classrooms inside prison walls. Teaching in prisons presents numerous challenges and constraints, which include logistical, financial, and time-related burdens. Inside most prisons, educators must deal with isolation, the rule of prison authority, and the dearth

of practical resources (Bounds 2016). In US prisons, internet research is usually forbidden, and one needs permission to bring in and leave anything including books, pencils, or paper. Endless hours may be wasted when a warden decides to cancel class. If the educator is bringing outside students in, they will need security clearances, and they will likely need extra time to travel to the prisons that have been built so far away.

Emory professor of Christian Ethics, Elizabeth Bounds, writes, “In the midst of these constraints and possibilities, students and teachers in our program practice remarkable creativity ... Texts and questions in theology and religious studies take on new meanings.” She speaks also of incarcerated students exhibiting “the intensity of the desire to learn” (Bounds 2016). The restriction of space and access to the outside world can sometimes create a charged sense of urgency to learn. Such classes are sites where the boundaries of class and race can be interrogated and theologies of place and space explored.

Temple University offers training in a particular model of prison teaching known as the “Inside Out Prison Exchange Program” (2017). I engaged in this training, which takes place largely inside the Graterford State Prison, a high-security men’s prison located on the outskirts of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. One of the first things I learned about Graterford was that the racial make-up of the prison population is 92 % African American. There I was taught by some of the insiders who have taken many classes, and who know something about “best practices” in prison classrooms. One of the practices that the Inside Out Program emphasizes is face-to-face learning involving interactive conversations between inside and outside students. In sitting face-to-face, answering class questions, listening and speaking, human connections are made, connections that challenge and begin to dislodge social distances.

Stephen Shankman, who teaches literature and ethics in Inside Out classes, writes of teaching Dostoevsky and Levinas in prison (Shankman 2013, 143–153). He uses an exercise that arranges seats face-to-face in two concentric circles, so that insiders and outsiders sit facing each other in close proximity, while answering questions. He cites Levinas’s famous reflections on the face: “There is first the very uprightness of the face: its upright exposure, without defense. The skin of the face is that which stays most naked, most destitute ... There is an essential poverty in the face ... The face is exposed, menaced, as if inviting us to an act of violence. At



the same time, the face is what forbids us to kill” (Levinas 1995, 86).

Reflecting on Levinas’s words, Shankman notes that in face-to-face learning exercises, “one feels both vulnerable and responsible at the same time” (Shankman 2013, 146). Such teaching practices enable both insiders and outsiders to see the other as more fully human. This is an example of the kind of mutual seeing we need in order to render “the Other” visible and in order to recover our humanness (Copeland 2010, 13). Students who take these classes often report being changed by them, as do professors.⁴ Commitments to political activism may be formed as the distances between us are reformed.

Conclusion

Mass incarceration in the US is a troubling phenomenon that calls for theological reflection and political reform. Rather than functioning to rehabilitate offenders, the current system functions to punish and condemn people, sometimes for life. It is a situation that leaves insiders feeling like trash, taken out of human community and then forgotten, while leaving outsiders, and particularly white people, distanced and oblivious to the suffering and injustice built into the system. In this paper, I first described the historical context of this situation and demonstrated its current dimensions. I then reflected upon “the residuals of historical exclusions” (McClintock Fulkerson 2007, 242) built into both theology and practice that have supported this unjust system of justice and allow it to continue. I made a case for active, theologically reflexive responses to this situation, highlighting in particular a rationale for theological teaching inside prisons.

Shawn Copeland writes, “Through a praxis of solidarity, we not only apprehend and are moved by the suffering of the other, we confront and address its oppressive cause ... Solidarity sets the dynamics of love against the dynamics of domination” (Copeland 2010, 126). One task of love in the situation of mass

incarceration involves remembering, remembering history and remembering the people left behind bars and seemingly insuperable cultural walls. Another task of love entails drawing near, increasing our proximity and diminishing the distances between insiders and outsiders, and for Christians, recognizing that marked, stigmatized bodies embody presence of Christ in the world. A third task of love requires working to disrupt institutionalized racism and challenging the cultural narratives and public policies that enable it. A reformation of space that breaks down the walls of separation between insiders and outsiders is needed to redress the sin of racism, restore hope, and reclaim our common humanity.

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⁴ This positive assessment of the benefits of teaching in prisons is not shared by all; for example, some prison abolitionists believe efforts to improve insiders’ lives behind bars function to distract us from that larger cause. For a critical reflection on the complexity of teaching inside prisons, see Daniel Karpowitz, *College in Prison: Reading in an Age of Mass Incarceration* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2017).



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Writing transformation: Using addiction recovery memoirs toward personal and social change

Joyce Ann Mercer

Exploring the currently popular “recovery memoir” as a contemporary form of confessional spiritual literature, this paper considers how memoirists use their writing as a practice of healing and recovery. For some, the memoir’s narration of spiritual transformation from the ravages of addiction to recovery functions as a story of inner transformation and personal integration in which the primary focus is on the spiritual re-forming of the person. A newer category of recovery memoirs seeks to bring about social reforms by fostering changes in societal understandings of addictions and those suffering from them. Together these advance practical theological perspectives on addiction and recovery.

Introduction

Addiction and recovery are embodied experiences of a spiritual reality. Recovery memoirs constitute confessional spiritual literature in which persons struggling with addictions offer readers access to their personal narratives of transformation. The transformations these memoirs describe may be among the best available test-cases that spirituality and the body are bound up together in a person’s identity. From the standpoint of practical theology’s concern with contextually situated experience and lived religion, memoirs provide a point of encounter with people suffering from addictions. Recovery memoir writing thus comprises a spiritual practice for writers that: (1) participates in the formation of a new identity; (2) provides a site for practices of confession that are largely eclipsed from contemporary ecclesial and social practice; and (3) makes links between individual embodied change and transformation within the social body.

To better understand this embodied spiritual practice, I begin by listening to memoirists. Out of this hearing of stories, I ask why people write recovery memoirs, and why they are so prevalent at present. Then I discuss memoir writing as source for a

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first-person narrative perspective through which practical theological learning about addiction and recovery may take place.

Listening to memoir writers

Sarah Hepola’s *Blackout* (2016)

Sarah Hepola’s memoir opens with a story about waking up in bed with a stranger, unable to recall how she got there. As she tells it, her experience of drinking was terrible—but living with the anxiety and fear of her own wide-awake life was more terrible. She writes extensively about a common occurrence in alcoholic drinking in which a person’s





memory of their own actions is “blackout,” inaccessible to recall. “A blackout is the untangling of a mystery. It’s detective work on your own life. A blackout is: *What happened last night? Who are you, and why are we f*****g?*” (Hepola 2016, 3, italics in original, asterisks mine). She writes:

I had wanted alcohol to make me fearless, but by the time I’d reached my mid-30s, I was scared all the time. Afraid of what I’d said and done in blackouts. Afraid I would have to stop. Afraid of a life without alcohol, because booze had been my trustiest tool. I needed alcohol to drink away the things that plagued me. Not just my doubts about sex. My self-consciousness, my loneliness, my insecurities, my fears. I drank away all the parts that made me human, in other words.... (Hepola 2016, 22–23)

Hepola stopped drinking many times, only to begin again the next day or the next year. Her account indicates that sobriety is not a once-and-for-all achievement. What we learn from listening to her stories is how painful these relapses became, and how arduous was each climb back out of that pit into recovery. She invites readers to realize the extent to which, during the years of her alcohol abuse, her thinking adjusted to make drinking and even blackouts seem normal. Hepola writes: “People who refuse to quit drinking often point to the status markers they still have. They make lists of things they have not screwed up yet: I still had my apartment. I still had my job. I had not lost my boyfriend, or my children (because I didn’t have any to lose)” (2016, 131).

Hepola gave herself credit for not being as bad as other drinkers who lose boyfriends or children, ignoring the fact that she was not in a position to lose either. She writes about her own self-deception, however, from the perspective of a person in recovery who can now see this dishonesty for what it is. As the subject of the story, Hepola is an actively drinking alcoholic who performs the unconscious mental gymnastics necessary to preserve the ability to continue drinking. As the narrator, however, Hepola is the person in recovery, looking back on her “drinking self” with full awareness of her distorted thinking and how it functioned. From this dual position, the memoirist invites readers simultaneously to “know what was going on,” and also to have compassion for the addict through a growing understanding of her anxiety.

Hepola spent years going in and out of 12-Step recovery groups, always struggling with the explicitly spiritual dimensions of the 12 Steps. Eventually she found her way to a truce with her anxieties

about God, by recognizing the power of narrative:

Even the major work-around of a ‘God of my understanding’ was way too much God for me.... The ‘higher power’ idea came to me in increments. Like sobriety itself, it was not a spectacular, flailing jump but a tentative inching in the same direction. I thought a lot about storytelling. That was a power way bigger than me. When I listened to someone’s story, when I met the eyes of a person in pain, I was lifted out of my own sadness, and the connection between us felt like a supernatural force I could not explain. Wasn’t that all I needed? I needed to be reminded I was not alone. I needed to be reminded I was not in charge. I needed to be reminded that a human life is infinitesimal, even as its beauty is tremendous. That I am big and small at once.... My spiritual life is in its infancy. But the major epiphany was that I needed one.... Whether God exists or not, we need him. (Hepola 2016, 212–213)

Hepola’s language is not theologically sophisticated, yet it points out the complex spiritual and theological realities with which she must struggle. There is an honesty to these questions, because they are tied to real, significant, embodied experiences of being alone and afraid, of trying to be in charge of what could not be directed by her efforts. This is theological reflection on experience (see Gilmour 1997). Hepola describes herself as a spiritual novice, but with a significant awareness of her need for God.

Mary Karr, *Lit* (2009)

The poet and accomplished memoirist Mary Karr, like Hepola, recounts a journey of moving in and out of recovery numerous times. Karr’s recovery memoir, *Lit* (2009), aptly describes the intersection of class wounds and addiction. She describes digging her way out from lower class Texas origins into upper class surroundings in an elite Midwestern college. The same issues of social class followed her into marriage with a man from a wealthy family. Alcohol provided some respite from the constant feeling that she was not okay and did not belong.

Karr tells of a brief period of temporary sobriety during pregnancy and the early infancy of her son, and of returning to drinking when he was still an infant. She confesses that drinking became so central to her ability to function that it even superseded her care for her sick son: hearing him cough in the night, she stopped to take a drink of whiskey on her way to help him, although alcohol’s palliative effects were diminishing as her tolerance to the drug increased:



A drink once brought ease, a bronze warmth spreading through all my muddy regions. Now it only brings a brief respite from the bone ache of craving it, no more delicious numbness. Slurping these spirits is soul preparation, a warped communion, myself serving as god, priest, and congregation. ...In the next room, my son clings to the crib bars like a prisoner. ...But before I change him, before I squirt the syrupy acetaminophen into his mouth, I haul him whooping down the stairs to the kitchen. I open the stove where a near empty bottle of Jack Daniels squats like the proverbial troll under the bridge. Needing neither glass nor ice, I press my lips to the cool mouth, and it blows into my lungs so I can keep on. (Karr 2009, 161)

In this confession, the now-recovering narrator invites readers to be as shocked as she is that her craving for alcohol took precedence over even the need to tend to her sick child. The narrator and the reader recognize what the actively drinking alcoholic subject of the narrative could not see, namely, how completely her life was directed by alcohol, and how muddled her thinking had become.

Karr's memoir details not only her journey into recovery but also her eventual conversion to Roman Catholicism. Initially, she had difficulty with the idea of a higher power. She offers this description of her first attempt at prayer:

... I take a small cushion down and get on my knees for the first time in my life—prayer number one. Higher power, I say snidely, where the f**k have you been? The silence envelops me. There's something scary there, some blanket of dread around me that feels like God's perennial absence, his abandonment, if he does exist. (Now I'd call it my deliberately practiced refusal of his presence.) ...A few seconds later I say: Thanks for keeping me sober today. I get up. Wait, the sober mind says—that's trying? You could've died last night. I flop back on my knees. And help me. Help. Me. Help me to feel better so I can believe in you, your subtle bastard. Such is my first prayer. (Karr 2009, asterisks mine)

There is an irreverent, humorous edge to much of this memoir seen here in the way she reports the content of her prayer. Importantly, though, Karr soon began to pray regularly, a practice that more than any other seemed to shepherd her into her new identity in recovery.

Karr's story of recovery is more explicitly religious than is Hepola's, even though the two of them shared an initial longstanding avoidance of spirituality. Karr eventually joined a Catholic parish and was baptized. She recounts theological conversations with her priest, her friend, and her sponsor as she sought understanding of faith.

Prayer became essential to her. *Lit* ends with these words, an expression of her faith that the mystery of God enfolds her even in the deepest fear and suffering:

Every now and then we enter the presence of the numinous and deduce for an instant how we're formed, in what detail the force that infuses every petal might specifically run through us, wishing only to lure us into our full potential. Usually the closest we get is when we love, or when some beloved beams back...It can start you singing as the lion pads over to you, its jaws hinging open, its hot breath on you. Even unto death (Karr 2009, 382).

Why memoirs? Why now?

The above investigations raise the question as to why this genre of literature is so prominent at present. Hepola offers a clue: "Every sobriety tale is a cliffhanger. None of us knows how our story ends. But these ...conversations [with fellow alcoholics] are good for me. They deliver me from my own sorrow. They remind me of my usefulness. They keep me from forgetting. How I got here, how I climbed out. I forgot too many things for far too long. Not just what we did last night but who I was, where I wanted to go. I don't do that any more. Now I remember" (Hepola 2016, 230).

People suffering from addiction write memoirs because, like the narratives told aloud in 12-Step meetings, a recovery memoir is a way to share one's experience with fellow sufferers, to prophylactically cement the memories of how bad things got while using drugs, and to integrate the story of drug use and recovery into a new identity.

Of course, there are many other possible reasons for writing such a memoir. Influenced by social media trends, it has become appropriate—even expected—to talk about one's self in great detail with the full expectation that others want to hear the story. Such sharing makes public matters like addiction which once remained private—a change some welcome as a mark of greater openness and health because it works against secret-keeping that can perpetuate dysfunction. But perhaps the boom in memoir production stems from the context of a narcissistic, "selfie-" oriented environment of tell-all talk shows that market personal struggle as a form of entertainment. Memoirs that make a spectacle out of addiction's debauchery, abuse, and humiliation will sell (Rak 2013; see also Duff 2013). Some such



memoirs have the appearance of a truth-telling confession, but their disclosures take place in the absence of narratives of forgiveness and transformation (cf. Lansky 2016).

Michel Foucault's critical connection between confession and the workings of power comes to mind here. Foucault identified Christian confessional practices as complicit in domination and the workings of power, involving people in participation in their own surveillance. He specifically considered writing about the self as a form confession can take when it reiterates normalizing discourses and produces the socially "required truth" about oneself (Foucault 1988, 30). According to Foucault, truth-telling as a technology of the self shifts during modernity from its religious domain in pastoral practice to the domains of medicine and psychotherapy, as discursive practices of power become more dispersed in a secular society. Under the guise of liberating the self, required truth-telling disclosures actually become ways that a person's verbalizations participate in their own domination.

In several of his later works, however, Foucault turns to an exploration of certain "techniques of the self" from the Greco-Roman period organized around the art of self-care. He considered ways that people can "effect, by their own means, a certain number of operations on their own bodies, on their own souls, on their own thoughts, own their own conduct, and this in a manner so as to transform themselves, modify themselves" (Foucault 1993, 203). Self-writing/autobiography may be a technique of self-care in which a person participates in their own *subjectification*, an act of constituting or transforming the self, when it involves a critical look at the ways one has been constructed by social practices of power, says Foucault.

From a practical theological perspective, it is possible to see both elements—domination/oppression and self-transformation—at work in recovery memoir writing. While memoirs certainly can play into the cultural narcissism of truth telling as spectacle, if we listen to writers like Hepola and Karr, the most important reason the authors themselves indicate for writing memoirs is that the act of narrating their move from active drug use to recovery participates in a transformation of life through narrative re-formation of the "old self" into a new person-in-recovery.

Memoir as a source of first-person encounter with addiction and recovery

Memoirs offer first-person encounters in which the primary agenda is to learn about the experience of addiction and recovery *from the perspective of addicted persons themselves*. Sally Brown puts into words why this is so important from the perspective of practical theology when she writes, "At its core, practical theology is critical reflection, both socio-cultural and theological, on living texts of human action. The ultimate goal of such practical-theological investigation of action may be to guide individuals and communities toward better faith praxis, however, the immediate goal is not to get at what human beings ought to do but simply to learn what they actually do and what they actually experience" (Brown 2013, 31). As Peter Gilmour notes, in our time memoir functions as a "postmodern sacrament," for "outward signs of God's grace are sacraments, and these signs of God's grace may be and indeed are most commonly found in the ordinary experiences of human beings. The stories of these encounters are sacraments: actions of God" (Gilmour 1997, 71–74).

Practical theology's methodological concern for contextual, situated knowledge suggests the importance of hearing first person accounts of addiction and recovery. Commonly, we access such narratives through ethnographic research and interviews. But as Kathleen Greider (2007) has demonstrated in her study based upon the memoirs of persons who suffer from mental illnesses, there is wisdom in memoirs' storytelling that cannot otherwise be gleaned. There undoubtedly exists within the academy a tendency to discount these books, as many are published on the popular "trade book" market rather than for academic libraries. Nevertheless, memoirs as works of self-interpretation offer an important means of learning about the experiences of addiction and recovery from the perspective of recovering persons themselves.

In memoir, addicts are the experts on their own lives--the ones naming what is true from their perspective, the ones in charge of how their addiction and recovery is portrayed. This creates conditions for upending the usual power relations between experts (including theologians) and addicts, in which the experts tell people struggling with addiction how they should understand their experience. Thomas Couser, writing more generally about illness me-



moirs, put it well when he said, “Ultimately, illness and disability narratives are too important to be left to physicians; as much as possible such narrative should be authored by those with the condition in question” (Couser 2016, 7).

Performing a recovering identity through writing

“Therapy rescued me in my twenties by taking me inward, leaching off pockets of poison in my head left over from the past. But the spiritual lens—even just the nightly gratitude list and going over each day’s actions—is starting to rewrite the story of my life in the present, and I begin to feel like somebody snatched out of the fire, salvaged, saved” (Karr 2009, 300). With these words, memoirist Mary Karr begins to describe her transformation from a life centered around alcohol’s numbing effects to a new life in recovery. It is not accidental that she speaks of this new identity through the metaphor of a rewritten story. As a poet and writer, Karr is keenly aware of the connections between narrative and identity, just as she names here the connections between spirituality and her new recovery life-story. Through her recovery memoir, *Lit*, Karr performs the narrative re-writing of her identity, from a person for whom alcohol “shrinks me to a plodding zombie state in which one day smudges into every other,” to a person self-consciously living by the grace of God in recovery (Karr 2009, 177). Scholars and practitioners in the field of addiction studies agree with Karr that the move into recovery necessitates inhabiting a new narrative (Winslade and Smith 1997; Miller and Rollnick 2013).

“Illness memoirs” offer first-hand stories about personal encounters with disease, the medical establishment, and healing. Their common template resembles what psychologist Dan McAdams (2006) refers to as “redemptive narratives.” That pattern involves a person whose beginnings are not extraordinary, who then experiences the occurrence of a seemingly insurmountable difficulty (illness, poverty, tragedy, loss). This is followed by narration of how the person triumphed over these difficulties, concluding with a new story of identity based on the wisdom, strength, and character attained through the struggle of overcoming the difficulty. The subject of the story experiences suffering as “redeemed” (justified, made worthwhile) by its products in the

life of the narrator, in ways that give hope and are satisfying to readers.

Recovery memoirs constitute a subset of illness memoirs and redemptive narratives, following a similar template of an encounter with difficulty, transformation, and the emergence of a new self. Thus Heather King ends her memoir, *Parched*, saying, “I don’t know why God allows obsessions, cravings, disease: I just know I’m really glad that when Christ stood among the Pharisees he said, ‘Healthy people don’t need a doctor; sick people do.’ I just know that anything that is worthwhile about me arose, in one way or another, from the suffering of those twenty years of drinking” (King 2006, 276). Tracey Mitchell, a recovering heroin addict, similarly writes in the prologue to her story, *The Big Fix*:

To some, my story, my journey to recovery, is a cautionary tale. To others, it is a light in the dark world known as addiction. When I look at the life I have built for myself, it is hard for even me to believe that I was ever a hopeless drug addict. To this day, when I reflect on how I went from college student to junkie, I have more questions than answers.... What I do know is that when I hold my child’s hand or help a person in need, all of the pain I suffered becomes transformative. I have learned from my journey that I am strong. I am capable of great things. Not despite my past but because of it.... We can all do something that will make a difference. I am the proof. (Mitchell 2016, 7)

As written accounts that construct and disclose a narrative identity-in-process, recovery memoirs can become for their authors a spiritual practice through which they deal with addictive pasts and construct present-tense recovering identities that they hope will take them into a different future, even as they offer help for others who similarly struggle.

Memoir as spiritual practice: Making space for confession

Many recovery memoirs take on a confessional tone. Even though some writers take an explicitly non-Christian stance, their narratives still bear the marks of a theological practice of confession when they name and acknowledge their participation in wrongdoing/harm/sin in the hopes of forgiveness and perhaps even reconciled relationships. I read this situation as the convergence of three phenomena: (1) existence of a basic human need for practices that facilitate a person’s address of wrongdoing and



need to be unburdened from guilt; (2) the decline in spaces where rituals of confession take place, both ecclesially and in secular contexts; and (3) the dominance of 12-Step programs in shaping the discourse of addiction.

Some scholars (cf. Jones 2006) attempt to restrict forgiveness to its explicitly theological meanings apart from psychological or sociological elements, and similarly to narrow the practice of confession to its liturgical and/or sacramental occurrences. While confession is theological and liturgical, it also is a basic human practice beyond its instantiation in the church, related to the need for the repair of relationships and communal bonds that are torn by the ways people harm each other (Wuthnow 2000). At the same time, theologians recognize that even in churches today people express declining interest in individual practices of confession, while liturgical confessional practices may be so general or poorly executed that they do not address the human need behind them (Morrill 2014; Ramshaw 2016; Dallen 1991). In non-ecclesial spaces such as courtrooms, confession is a carefully scripted strategy aimed at minimizing negative consequences of wrongdoing, rather than a practice connected to repairing damaged social bonds. The result is that there exist fewer spaces legitimating genuine practices of confession.

12-Step programs, of course, are an exception to this. It would be difficult to overestimate the influence of the 12-Step movement on conceptualizations of addiction, recovery, treatment, and even the criminal justice system's dealing with addicts, in North America. This movement is not without its critics, and its position within medical and criminal justice agencies dealing with addicts is increasingly contested (Sered and Norton-Hawk 2012). Despite such criticisms, however, 12-Step programs strongly populate the landscape of addiction consciousness in North America, creating a particular, widely shared framework for understanding and narrating these experiences (Warhol and Mitchie 1996). Socialization into AA culture entails formation via a particular narrative pattern. Recovery memoirs tend to adopt the shape of 12-Step narratives, regardless of whether the writer is active in a 12-Step group, because of the influence of these programs on the wider societal discourse of recovery. Recovery memoir writing becomes another such performance of a recovering identity, because to be in recovery *means* to tell such stories and in this particular manner.

Writing toward social transformation

Increasingly, recovery memoir writers also display an educational and/or activist agenda, bringing not only experiential but also theoretical expertise to the work of understanding the selves they narrate. Using neuroscience, feminist theory, critical race theory, or other perspectives that help addicts make sense of what has happened in their lives, memoirists make available these explanatory paradigms. Journalist Sarah Hepola (2016), for instance, having amassed a great deal of knowledge about the blackouts she experienced, teaches readers about what is happening in the body and brain of addicts who drink to the point of blacking out. Former drug dealer turned neuroscientist Carl Hart (2013) indicts racism in the US for its role in shaping even the science of addictions. Neuroscientist Marc Lewis (2012) intersperses substantive lessons on pharmacology and the neuro-biology of addiction with his personal story of drug use. Christian social ethicist James Nelson (2004) offers a theological reconsideration of sin and grace in relation to addiction, as he also shares his own experience of late-in-life recognition of alcoholism, treatment, and recovery. By combining two kinds of expert testimony, direct personal experience of drug addiction, and explanatory theoretical knowledge, these memoir writers shift their interest in transformation from a purely internal focus to the social realm, in an effort to change the paradigms through which readers understand addiction and recovery. As Rabbi Marc Margolius (1995) asserts, in Judaism, spiritual autobiography is practice of *tikkun*--repair of the world--suggesting the possibility that recovery memoirs can have social, not just personal, impact. Extending the practice of recovery memoir writing beyond personal transformation, these writers seek to participate in repair of the world insofar as inadequate understandings of addiction maintain stigma, impair help-seeking, and keep open the broken spaces in social relations damaged by addiction.

Conclusion

Recovery memoirs constitute a spiritual practice for their writers through which they endeavor to come to grips with addiction and live into a new narrative identity as a person in recovery. Memoirs constitute a form of first person encounter, and therefore can



be a resource for practical theologians who seek better understanding of what addiction and recovery are like from the perspectives of those who suffer with them, that cannot be grasped through propositional thinking. Instead, “narrative thinking” is required for this kind of knowledge about addictions (Bruner 1986). Memoir as personal narrative has the ability to “grasp” readers as it conveys not only the details of an addict’s drug use, but also something of the bodily, psychological and emotional processes that go on in the lives and inner worlds of addicts.

Memoirs as a spiritual practice constitute spaces for confession in a society where such spaces are disappearing. It is possible for recovery memoir writing to become part of the surveillance culture of domination critiqued by Foucault, especially in convergence with postmodern cultural forces that create entertainment out of suffering. It is also possible, however, for recovery memoirs to act as a counter-narrative to these technologies of domination, becoming instead what Foucault referred to as “technologies of the self” in which persons may participate in their own transformation. Recovery memoirs often bring into full light the kinds of spiritual/theological issues raised by addiction and recovery, and the close-to-the-ground grappling with these large questions. Increasingly, as writers offer their personal experiences interpolated with explanatory paradigms they find helpful, the emphasis of recovery memoirs shifts from an exclusive agenda of personal transformation to the work of bringing about social change and tikkun, repair of the world.

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Relationality as the basis of hope: embodied experiences during life-threatening illness

Auli Vähäkangas and Suvi-Maria Saarelainen

In this chapter we will give examples of embodied experiences during life-threatening illness from various empirical studies conducted through the years. Through our research, we add more theoretical knowledge on hope and despair of those suffering from cancer and AIDS. We have seen a great need to formulate a relational theology in the context of embodied experiences during the process of life-threatening illness. Relational theology will consider both the positive and negative aspects of human relations between themselves and God.

Introduction

Pastoral care has always involved an encounter between persons. The mode of operation is often verbal and the focus of the encounter intellectual. The problem in this type of encounter is that in many cases it does not approach people holistically and it does not recognize the different ways people express themselves during their illnesses (Demmons 2008, 365). The focus of counseling is on the relationship existing between persons. Through the relational turn, the encounter between persons and also between humans and God himself has become even more important in pastoral practice and in practical theological research (see for example Cooper-White 2004; Lartey 2006, 63–66). Relational theory stresses that a person's identity is constructed through relationships and that we are all embedded in a web of social relationships and that all our decisions are affected by responsibilities towards those who are significant to us (Nedelsky 2011, 19–20; Harding 2014).

A relational theology is a key in understanding the embodied experiences during life-threatening illness. Pamela Cooper-White writes: “A relational theology both models and makes room for difference, for a multiplicity of ways of knowing, and a flux among sensation, hunger, emotion and rational

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thought. It is a theology that is not set abstractly apart from bodies but locates itself in and between them” (Cooper-White 2004, 184). Relational theology begins with a personal relationship to God or a higher power and to other people. Both of these relations are important for one's wellbeing (McClure 2010). Within relations, people seek to be accepted; stories are shared in order to be heard and encountered. Yet, the hearers of the stories can be other people or transcendent (Ganzevoort 1998; Ganzevoort 2010).

Further, physical bodies are related to our thoughts and knowledge. Therefore, cognitive processes cannot be detached from bodily experiences.

Bodies include the physical body itself. Additionally, emotions and passions are embodied experiences (Miller-McLemore 2013). As embodied experiences, emotions include a physical and cognitive dimension. Emotions motivate us to search for and live a meaningful life; emotions motivate us to make changes when needed (Moschella 2016, 25–27). Rituals are also connected to emotions; in crisis situations rituals assist in grasping the reality of life and constructing meaning in the midst of chaos. Moreover, the tactile element of the ritual makes it a strong bodily experience, and rituals are likely to carry “symbolic and existential significance” (Dambolt & Stifoss-Hanssen 2011, 30).

The experience of meaning is related to the experience of hope (Saarelainen 2017). In the relational theological understanding of hope it is important to note that hope has two dimensions. First, hope in earthly life focuses on relations to other humans. Second, the spiritual dimension of hope covers eternal life and relations to God during earthly life (Moltmann 2003). Hope is easier to identify by its contradictions and negations; Hope builds on belief in God, whereas despair is an outcome of sin (Moltmann 1967). Yet, hope and despair are often intertwined, as in difficulties a tinge of hope appears when individuals plead with or curse God in their misery (Lester 1995).

For cancer patients, hope is constructed from the mental distance kept from the disease, the soundness of the body, the treatment, a positive attitude that includes future plans or projects, downward comparisons, and the existence of a positive model (Salander, Bergknut & Henriksson 2014). Whereas people with HIV have been reported to live “in the empty present” (Davies 1997), trauma was still tangible. Further, Davies (1997) describes his HIV positive interviewees as locked in the past. Earlier illness narrative studies show a relation between the crisis and time (e.g., Davies 1997, Ezzy 2000, Frank 1995). Nevertheless, if the research focuses only on the linearity of time, the complexity of the illness process is easily neglected (see Bülow & Hydén 2003). To be able to share personal illness experiences and to be provided with emotional support rather than consumption of time, seem to explain the experience of finding meaning in life during and after cancer crises (Saarelainen 2017).

This chapter encompasses experiences of two different life-threatening illnesses and two different contexts. The narrated experiences of life-threatening illness are from cancer and HIV/AIDS.

Our aim is to discover how the occurrence of despair and hope can be interpreted from a Christian perspective.

Data and methods

The empirical data for the present study is formed from three different field works. Auli Vähäkangas conducted interviews with people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Finland in the year 2006 and in Tanzania in 2009. Both data collections were sponsored by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working with PLWHA. In Finland the NGO called The Positives, a nationwide peer support organization of PLWHA, was the sponsor. Five PLWHA were interviewed, four men and one woman. The sponsor for the interviews in Tanzania was the Selian Palliative Care Program. Eight people were interviewed, four of each gender. In addition, Suvi-Maria Saarelainen interviewed sixteen emerging Finnish adults, aged between 18 and 35, in 2011 and 2012 after their cancer treatment. The timing between the treatment and interview varied from a few weeks to five years. These interviewees were recruited with the assistance of Finnish Cancer Society. Twelve females and four males were interviewed for the study.

All of the interviews had an autobiographical approach with a focus on the impact of the disease on their life story. Furthermore, the interviews of emerging adults with cancer began by drawing a life-tree drawing (see Saarelainen 2015, for visual-narrative analysis). The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. The translations of the direct quotations from Finnish and Swahili are done by the authors. The processes of analysis began by reading and open coding. As a result, several categories and themes were found, including fear of death, importance of support, impact of the context, and significance of the worldview. The findings of the tree drawings followed a similar analysis pattern.

These different cases are not intended to be generalized to a broader population. Rather, they provide an in-depth perspective which may contribute to an understanding of hope in the context of a health crisis. Nor do we directly compare the experiences of cancer and AIDS patients. We do, however, point out general differences and similarities in the patients' narratives of hope. Three main experiences were found from the data: the importance of social relationships as a source for hope, the difficulties of stigma and suffering during severe illness,



and the importance of rituals during the crisis of an illness. These three main findings give the structure to the following sections.

Social relationships as a source for hope

In the context of severe illness, hope cannot simply be considered an individual expression of emotion, but rather is a social construct. Realities and subjectivities are constructed in and by language and, in one way or another, in a community with others. Moltmann (1967, 303) brings out that the “co-humanity” provided by the Christian community becomes highly important during the hardships of human life; the Christian calling for the priesthood of all believers actualizes as a shared intention to create a meaningful future together. Within our studies, the significance of important others was described within all the informant groups. The participants spoke in their narratives especially about family and peer support.

Moreover, within the life-tree drawings of emerging adults with cancer, the support was strongly drawn. Most often, the support was depicted as roots as of the tree that symbolized the importance of family during the cancer process. For instance, Tom narrates that the roots symbolized “the outstanding support provided by significant others.” In Tom’s drawing, the tree itself has strong roots and the roots of other trees keep the tree standing. This type of description also highlights a tangible—embodied—description of this support. In addition, for some the support was drawn as a sprout that balanced the tree, or as leaves of the tree. Every now and then, the roots were not actually drawn, but the drawer stated that there were “supposed to be roots” that represented the family, significant others, and their importance. When the emerging adults talked about the received support, the support included emotional and practical aspects that were found to be equally important. Emotional support was described as being given the opportunity to discuss and share one’s thoughts. The practical support received included the relief of not having to worry about daily responsibilities, as many of them moved back to their parents’ house. Only for a few did emotional support include an aspect of religious support.

The importance of peer support was expressed in various narratives of the HIV positives. As Tanzanian Pascalina expressed it: “I feel great when I am close to people. Then I always feel comforted. Then I

feel that I am fine. I get hope from what I am doing.” The importance of peers also became significant for those emerging adults who received active peer support from former patients. From the meetings with peer patients, emerging adults discovered encouragement; from the others they could see how life can be lived after cancer. Previous research on peer support found that such support improved the psychosocial well-being of the participants while some peer support groups have transformed the lives of their participants (Kumakech et al. 2009).

In the context of HIV/AIDS, hope was conveyed not only as an individual experience, but also as a communal expression. Communal expressions of hope gave individuals the chance for a new life. The feeling of not being left alone was an important expression of hope among the Tanzanian PLWHA, as Furahini explains: “I get hope mostly from what you are doing here. I am encouraged by you. I feel that you give me courage.” These Tanzanian expressions show the importance of human relationships for healing. Social relationships are also important for relational counseling and in building feelings of hope. Further, some of the Finnish emerging adults expressed that their cancer suffering carried an existential meaning when they understood the importance of significant others (Saarelainen 2017).

Experiences of bodily stigma and suffering

Stigmatized HIV/AIDS victims, deepening poverty, and other more negative aspects have been emphasized many more times than hope in connection with the pandemic. Moltmann’s reading of eschatology and hope is helpful in the context of life-threatening illness because it recognizes the need to transform the present. Christian hope is in essence the hope of resurrection and differs from other hopes in that it deals with past, present, and future (Moltmann 2003).

Olli, an HIV-positive man in Finland, no longer goes to his church because he feels rejected and unworthy because of his sexual orientation: “Why are some people worthy of being in God’s image and others are not? I was born just as I am.” He had a strong bodily experience of being stigmatized because of his sexual orientation. For young people with cancer, the bodily experience of stigma was highest during the cancer treatment. The interviewees described challenging changes in their body im-

age such as losing weight and simultaneously having swelling in their face. Moreover, losing hair (all the body hair), not recognizing oneself in the mirror, having fertility issues, and having physical scars that will never heal made them feel different from others. The roughest and longest-term embodied stigma were also visualized as part of the life-tree drawings, as Thea described her life tree by saying: "The tree is mentally stronger than before, but physically it is riddled." She connected her physically demanding operations and months of rehabilitation with being "riddled," since it was likely that her body would never be the same again; the dead branch symbolizes cancer and it is a substantial part of the drawing. Moreover, the falling brown leaves stand for elements of the self that she wishes to shake off from herself. Still, she concludes that she is "mentally stronger" than before. Overall, changes in one's body were strongly linked to the experience of the self: when one's physical body was healing, the experience of recognizing oneself was regained.

Daniël J. Louw has written on the theology of the cross during the era of HIV/AIDS: "[It] does not inspire HIV people to ignore their suffering; it seeks to encourage people in their struggle and urge them to find meaning in their suffering. Resurrection hope fosters the courage to be, and impels us to resist evil. Hope is only hope within suffering, not a flight from suffering, nor an attempt to bypass suffering." (2006, 110–111) Christian hope is the basis for counseling those who suffer. Hope connects healing with social responsibility and helps the counselor assist in the struggle against suffering and promotes discovering meaning in life. These notions reinforce the ideas that hope is rooted in human dignity and that both hope and dignity are socially strengthened. Often, the stigma was alleviated among loved ones who provided their love without any conditions.

Yet the self longs for meaningful social relations in order to stay healthy (McClure 2010, 22–27, 47). Others (e.g., community or significant others) can provide consolation, which helps to deal with the pain. Loneliness and pain are rooted in the feeling of being abandoned (Lester 1995, 94–96; Zylla 2012, 114–122). Therefore, painful stories are always shared in the hope of their acceptance and to obtain a response from the audience (Ganzevoort 1998). This indicates that relations are essential while people suffering from life-threatening illness are searching for meaning in life in spite of stigma and suffering.

Embodied rituals

The interviewees shared various narratives on embodied rituals. Most of these rituals were religious and some were more helpful for coping with life-threatening illness than others. Only one emerging adult, Sophia, included church attendance in her story. Sophia explained that after the diagnosis she and her mother searched for alleviation "everywhere they could" and one of the places of comfort was a local charismatic movement. She was given a blessed linen cloth to bring comfort and God's protection. She said that she carried the cloth with her to the treatment and that she believed that the cloth brought her protection. The importance of tactile elements was also highlighted by Thea and Chloe who carried angel figures to their treatment. Thea described an incident where she accidentally dropped her angel and was scared that she had broken "something," something besides the angel figure. These angel figures strongly carried protective powers and the figures were related to a perception of having protection. Further, these tactile elements carried long-lasting value. Five years after treatment, Sophia reflected on the importance of the blessed cloth by saying: "I still believe that the cloth carries protection." The angel figures were also described as carrying important symbolic meaning years after the treatment. These anecdotes illustrate the importance of tactile elements in meaningful rituals. Moreover, the tactile can be seen as an embodied element of the presence of God or a higher power and bring comfort during and after health crises.

The HIV positives had quite similar experiences to the cancer patients on the importance of embodied rituals. For instance, Pekka's experience shows the embodied experience of positive support from the Christian community: "Warmth, power, hope have clearly arrived, really concretely, even though my mind says that I am a sinful person not worthy of anything... It is certainly something bigger." Arja's experience, however, indicates denial and stigma: "In a prayer meeting I wrote my special prayer request. Nobody read it or took any notice of it. I was disappointed." Arja explains that she looked for another parish and went to a bigger prayer meeting with a famous Finnish prayer healer Pirkko Jalovaara who she thought would accept her situation and pray for her. This new prayer was especially important after the first disappointing experience: "Jalovaara prayed for me and took part in my inner suffering and it felt so good." This second experience



was comforting even though she was not physically healed through prayer. Through this prayer recognition she felt she was accepted by the church community and by God himself.

For emerging adults with cancer, the first moments of despair often included “why” questions in terms like “why would God allow this?” Even though the young people rarely found themselves as Lutheran or Christian, still, most of them turned to a higher power or God in both asking for a reason and searching for comfort. Most of them prayed and these prayers took place when they were scared of the treatment, during the nausea, or when they were worried about survival from cancer. Once, as Sarah recounted, God’s support was tangible as she explains: “I had such a strong nausea that I thought I have to go back to the hospital ... I went to the living room, I curled up and prayed. Then I fell asleep and when I woke up, I felt much better. So it was really concrete.” As Sarah demonstrates, praying as a ritual was strongly linked to alleviation of bodily agony.

In Chloe’s story, bodily rituals became intense by communing with nature. Chloe narrated how she discovered her personal relationship to God through the embodied experience of these nature walks. During the deepest misery, Chloe kept walking in the woods; after weeks of extensive walking, she suddenly understood that there is no need to worry or feel powerless; she found that life itself and God would take care of her. Still, Ava was the only participant who captured her worldview in the life drawing; she drew a red thread with hearts and the thread runs through her tree from the roots up to the leaves. As Ava explains her tree: “the thread symbolizes my inner power ... the way I have always believed that life itself carries ... Moreover, it symbolizes God and his guidance in my life.” It can be interpreted as her belief that her personal strength becomes interwoven with God’s comfort.

Embodiment was found to be important and a form of physically touching AIDS patients is a central part of spiritual counseling in the studied Selian Hospice and Palliative Care Program in Tanzania. As explained in the interviews, touching, not just talking, breaks the stigma of HIV/AIDS. This reflects traditional African ideas of the value of human encounters. Physical touch is used during prayer for the sick at the end of each counseling session. Another element in contextualizing the counseling in the program studied here is that the counselor blesses the medicine given to a client already beforehand when a client consults the medical personnel of the

team. The program leaders interviewed pointed out that their patients had no need to approach the traditional healers for blessing of the medicine because the ailment had already been cured with spiritual power. What is practiced in the Tanzanian end-of-life care clearly follows Emmanuel Lartey’s reflection: “What seems significant about all researchers and writers on African pastoral care and counseling is that they engage with indigenous people’s beliefs and practices of traditional healers in their attempt to evolve a truly African approach to pastoral care that is relevant and effective” (2006, 66).

The Christian understanding of hope does not pretend to give solutions. However, it provides a meaningful framework for proceeding with life. Louw further analyses: “Theologia resurrectionis provides pastoral theology of a paradigm that can contribute to the healing of life and the human attempt to signify life within the realm of suffering, death and dying” (Louw 2014, 8). Christian understanding thus stresses the significance of the salvation on the cross as a part of the personal experience of hope. Moltmann (2003, 150) emphasizes that Christianity is a hope for the hopeless, and he wants to emphasize that all humans need God’s salvation; Resurrection means a broad space of freedom, a fresh new beginning of being born again to living hope. The eternal hope, as seeking comfort from God, provided rays of hope in the midst of the despair of the health crisis with the help of the above-discussed embodied rituals.

Hope is based on relationships

According to our findings, hope itself is a process. In the theology of hope, human dignity and value are emphasized through Christian faith and the theology of the cross. Perfect human value is seen only through God’s salvation. Moltmann writes: “Nobody is required to be perfect, but everyone must be able to start anew. All that matters in life and death is the new beginning. If a child falls down, it learns to stand up again. Failures and disappointments are not a problem, but it is important to stand up and try again” (2003, 157–167). A human being is perfect in the eyes of God through the salvation of Jesus Christ; salvation on the cross is a channel that leads from a feeling of unworthiness to the understanding of human dignity. Dignity has been defined as “an inherent characteristic of being human, which can be felt as an attribute of the self, and is made

manifest through behaviour that demonstrates respect for self and others” (Jacelon et al. 2004). Street and Kissane additionally argue that “dignity is relational and constructed through relationships with others” (Street & Kissane 2001, 97). The people suffering from life-threatening illness found hope in the feelings of dignity through significant relationships and embodied rituals as is seen in the following figure:

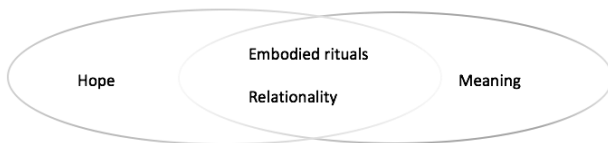


Figure 1: Hope and meaning in life during life threatening illness

Overall, as the figure above sums up, our studies showed that hope was needed in order to experience meaning. Hope and meaning were closely connected to hopelessness and meaninglessness. Yet, embodied rituals provided a tangible means to alleviate the troubled mind. Besides the stories we live by, the bodies in which we live are also products of culture. When the body is seen as a cultural product, it leads to the understanding that bodies are culturally contested and that body images are accepted by negotiating with cultural master narratives. Then it is the cultural master narratives that have an impact on an individual’s body image, embodied practice, and the way that the individual expresses bodily gestures. Furthermore, when countering a life-threatening illness, it was common to question meaningfulness in life.

The experience of being accepted had an embodied dimension that was described as a part of the narratives and drawings. The bodily changes were rarely drawn, even though stories of a challenged body image were often narrated. Crises that arose from physical changes in the body focused more on the treatment period; therefore, the bodily changes were expressed only in the drawings of those who had longer-lasting or permanent changes in their bodies. Furthermore, some of the drawers had had demanding operations, requiring long-term physical rehabilitation. Besides the manifold aspects of hope and despair, the narratives of the emerging adults pointed out something about the nature of a crisis with cancer. The body-related changes were linked to the experience of stigma.

Hope is hope in suffering, not a way of getting out of suffering (Louw 2006, 110–111). Jesus himself

suffered on the cross, and through this suffering he understands those who suffer. Through the theology of the cross, human dignity is emphasized. Hope is seen in the narratives of suffering (Moltmann 2004, 90–93). The theology of hope is based on the relationship between the human being and God in a situation in which a person sees an opportunity to share despair and pain with the suffering of God himself. Christian hope without the theology of the cross is impossible but this type of hope was not central to all of our interviewees.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to discuss embodied experiences during life-threatening illness. The aim was reached in studying narratives of two different life-threatening illnesses, namely experiences of cancer and HIV/AIDS. Our data from two very different contexts has shown the importance of or difficulties in relationships during life-threatening illness. AIDS still carries stigma which was seen in the narratives of HIV positive people both in Finland and in Tanzania. The strongest support for the HIV positives was peer support. One reason for lively peer support was that many of them had not revealed their HIV positive status to those close to them. The stigma with cancer was found to be different, as the negative experience, at least partly, toned down with time. The emerging adults suffering from cancer in Finland had experienced mainly positive support from their family and friends they were able to feel belonging instead of exclusion. The emerging adults described their cancer as an embodied experience that exposed them to emotional effusion, changed their identity, and affected their physical bodies.

Our studies show that hope was needed in order to experience meaning. The experience of being accepted had an embodied dimension that was described as a part of the narratives and drawings. The people suffering from life-threatening illness found hope in the feelings of dignity through significant relationships and embodied rituals. Hope itself is a process and it refers simultaneously to hope, despair and hopelessness. These findings show that both hope and despair grow from the experience of belonging; hope builds on social relationships and human dignity, whereas despair deepens with the experience of being different. Some relations increase suffering rather than help the process of searching



for hope during life threatening illnesses. This negative side of relations is also important to keep in mind when re-formulating relational theology.

A traditional relational theology like Cooper-White's model focuses mainly on the relationship between a counsellor and a counselee but our research findings indicate the importance of peer and family support during life threatening illnesses. In which way these different relationships influence the process of the search for hope and meaning needs further study.

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Moving theology: perspectives of practical theology as hermeneutics of lived religion in Brazil

Júlio César Adam

This study reflects on the possibilities of thinking about practical theology—especially liturgy and homiletics—as a hermeneutics of lived religion on the basis of Brazilian pop culture and cinema as spaces where culture, body, politics and religion shape the paradigm of movement and the search for alternatives, opening up hermeneutical possibilities for practical theology to rethink a church and a society being perpetually reformed. These possibilities are reflected on by considering the concrete case of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB) as a migrant and moving church and by looking at the hermeneutics of lived religion in cinema as a form of a continuing movement and a moving theology.

Introduction

The Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB) originated from a migratory movement in the first half of the 19th century. German immigrants and refugees migrated to southern Brazil in search of new prospects and alternatives for survival. This migration movement has marked the life and theology of this church: the quest to integrate and become inculturated within the context of religion; the articulation of liberation theologies as spaces for social and political transformation; inter-religious dialogue; and the development of a practical theology as ex-centric and postcolonial reflection are some of the marks of this migrant and moving church and theology. Continuing the movement, this study reflects on the possibilities of thinking about practical theology—especially the liturgy and homiletics—as a hermeneutics of lived religion on the basis of Brazilian pop culture, starting from two films, *Central Station* (Walter Salles 1998) and *The Motorcycle Diaries* (Walter Salles 2004), as spaces where culture, body, politics and religion shape the paradigm of movement and the search for alternatives, opening up hermeneutical possibilities for

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practical theology to rethink a church and a society being perpetually reformed.

A moving church

Movement is a fundamental category for understanding human life and human beings, the cosmos. Everything that lives moves, and movement gives shape and content to everything that exists. It is not by chance that religions were organized around and based on movement. Religions move (Buntfuss 2009). *It is no different with the small Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB), which originated in a migratory movement that occurred during the first*





half of the 19th century when European immigrants and refugees, mostly German, emigrated to Brazil, especially to the south of the country, seeking new prospects and alternatives for survival, as clearly portrayed in Edgar Reitz's 2013 film Die andere Heimat. Through this movement, people came into contact not only with another geography, but also with another culture, other people, other forms of religion, the harsh reality of facts. In these clashes, they reinvented themselves as persons, congregations, synods, churches, moving as part of a reality. As the families grew, one century later members of the church migrated within Brazil itself, to regions further north, or to Paraguay in search of better living conditions. Later, they moved from the countryside into the cities, following the abrupt rural exodus of Brazil in the last decades of the 20th century.

This migratory movement, whether through physical movement or movement in its symbolic dimension, has marked the life and theology of the IE-CLB church. When crises occur, some kind of movement can be seen in this church. This took place in the sixties and seventies, when the church, driven by the theological reflection first developed at its main educational institution, sought to integrate and inculturate itself into the Brazilian context. It moved to become a Brazilian church, a church relevant to the local context (Schünemann 1992, 55). Amid a socio-political crisis, influential sectors of the church articulated themselves ecumenically through the theologies of liberation as spaces for socio-political transformation in a movement that was not only an approach to reality, but also of awareness building regarding the possibility of reinventing the church itself and its theology. Practical theology has been a major space for ex-centric and autochthonous reflection. In other words, such crises and movement, which are marks of this church, create the possibility of making not only a theology, but a theology incarnated within this particular context and culture (Schünemann 1992, 56).

Based on this category of movement, I have chosen to focus on a further step taken by this movement. One of the great contributions of liberation theology was that it opened up a space for thinking about a contextual and localized theology. As Westhelle says, "the problem here is the insertion of the God who acts in history in the delimited contexts of our regionality. It is the attempt to think about religion within the sphere of the region, understanding the universal gestated in its particularity" (1990, 258). For this reflection, theology itself had to come out of its own shell and articulate itself

based on other fields of study, such as sociology and politics. It had to engage in dialogue with other churches and, later, with other religions and religiosities, such as the indigenous and African-Brazilian ones, with mysticism, syncretism and religious hybridism, which are all marks of Brazilian culture and society (Bobsin 2008). The step also requires the movement to think about theology beyond the explicit and institutionalized field of religion, and to advocate a theology based on everyday life, culture, pop culture and the media, i. e. to think about practical theology not only starting from the practice of the church, but from the practice of people in their individual, everyday (Reblin 2008), mediatized lives, to make a hermeneutics of this lived religion. For this exercise, I have partly used what in the European context has been called a hermeneutics of lived religion (Ganzevoort 2009).

Practical theology as a hermeneutics of lived religion

I learned about the concept of lived religion primarily through the studies done by Failing and Heimbrock (1998), Gräb (1995, 2000, 2002, 2006) and Ganzevoort (2009, 322), and more specifically through Gutmann's texts (1998, 2013) on its relationship with pop culture. This concept became important to me when I was sent by the church to serve as a school pastor at an evangelical school in the south of Brazil. There, I dealt on a daily basis with children and youths who were not linked to the church, who had little involvement or interest in the church and in religious issues, who resisted the classical traditions of theology and who were indifferent to biblical and theological issues. Based on the forms of pop culture that the adolescents knew and valued, such as songs, films, advertising, games, characters and Internet content, it was not only possible to hold a dialogue with them, but also to reflect together on issues that made sense. Besides, I myself was discovering a new theological richness in the materials of pop and media culture, which fascinated me precisely because it brought theology closer to the context shaping the young people's lives.

In Brazil, we do not experience the phenomenon of secularization as markedly as in the European countries, a fact clearly verified by, for instance, Peter Berger (2001) and Pollack (2015). The vertiginous growth of Pentecostalism is but one example (Bobsin 1999). At the same time, however, the num-

ber of people professing no religion has grown considerably, according to census surveys. On the other hand, regardless of the power of religious groups and trends, the practices and experiences of pop culture, such as soccer, cinema, TV, the Internet and music are widely disseminated throughout Brazil. It should be asked, to what extent do people seek in these environments—which in Brazil are full of elements with religious origins and institutions—something that is also religious? To what extent do young people, people who not find space for their spirituality in Pentecostalism or in the evangelical and charismatic movements, find in pop culture or in everyday spirituality an expression of spirituality? But the main question addressed in this chapter is as follows: To what extent can lived religion provide us with a theological movement that enables us to think about a practical theology based on Brazilian pop culture and its religious expressions?

The concept of lived religion is complex and controversial. Dietrich Rössler, discussing the term in 1976, claims: “Die gelebte Religion bleibt unbestimmt, vage, unüberschaubar und schwer einzugrenzen” (Rössler 1976, 67). My purpose here is not to explore its definition, much less to enter into this controversy (Herrmann, 2007). In this essay, I am satisfied with its use as a functional concept: lived religion is a way of looking at and perceiving religion and theology not based primarily on their theoretical, sociological or dogmatic concepts or on the tradition of the Church, but rather on the basis of that which culture and people do and say is religion and religious, as understood by Ganzevoort and Roeland: “The concepts of praxis and lived religion focus on *what people do* rather than on ‘official’ religion, its sacred sources, its institutes, and its doctrines. As such, practical theology has much in common with what in disciplines like anthropology, sociology, and media studies is known as ‘the practical turn’: the turn away from institutes and (cultural) texts to the everyday social and cultural practices of ordinary people” (Ganzevoort and Roeland 2014, 93). This applies both to the Latin American theologies that dared to practice theology based on what people experience and express as being theology and religion and to expressions of pop culture, such as the movies. This discussion on normative theology and experiential theology requires further study (van de Matijts 2011).

It should be mentioned that lived religion does not involve only implicit forms of religion and the religious, but also explicit forms, which is ascer-

tained by evaluating people’s everyday theology, the way they interpret their spirituality and church experience. In both cases, therefore, religious traditions and origins are important because they provide the foundation for understanding lived religion and putting it in dialogue with theology itself. Obviously, when I take up a concept like this one, even if only functionally, I am considering the concept of religion as something broad and open. In this sense, from a sociological perspective Thomas Luckmann’s concept of “invisible religion” and, from a theological perspective, the method of correlation in Paul Tillich’s theology of culture are important.

Film as the movement of a lived religion

Films are essentially about movement. According to Morin, movement is the only thing that is real in film:

Photography was immobilized in an eternal instant. Movement brought the dimension of time: the film develops, it lasts. At the same time things in movement realize the space they cross and pass through, and above all are realized in space. ... The conjunction of the reality of movement and the appearance of forms provokes the sensation of concrete life and a perception of objective reality. The shapes provide movement with its objective structure and movement gives body to the shapes. (Morin 1980, 108)

Films are dense and complex cultural and artistic constructions and, as such, they must be judiciously analyzed and interpreted (Monaco 2009; Aumont and Marie 2004). In this essay, I will take two films as the space in which lived religion moves, based on what, according to the director, their narrative and their characters express as being aspects of religion and theology. Both films present a narrative that takes place in movement, as “road films”, the reason for which they were chosen. I believe that films are mirrors of culture and, consequently, mirrors of people’s lived religion. According to Kunstmann, “popular culture offers the ideal mirror for that which is consistent for the individual and gives life meaning. Without it, it is impossible to understand life today” (2009, 11). I will therefore take only the narrative dimension of the film as a basis for analysis (Ganzevoort 2014, 214–223). Unfortunately, it is not possible to give a thorough description of the narrative and characters here for reasons of space.



Central Station

Central Station (Central do Brasil, Walter Salles, Brazil/France, 1998) is a French-Brazilian drama about a woman named Dora (Fernanda Montenegro) who works at the central train station, Central do Brasil, in Rio de Janeiro, writing letters for illiterate people for money. Every day, after taking the crowded train, she sets up her small booth next to the chapel at the station, writing letters for illiterate people: love letters, letters to distant family members, letters to begin a relationship, angry letters, and so forth, all according to her customers' needs. At home, with her friend, she decides which letters will be mailed, which will be torn up and thrown away, and which will wait in the drawer (like in "purgatory", they say) for a later decision. Dora is a retired schoolteacher who works with the letters to supplement her pension. She is a sensitive person, despite her harshness with the customers and the subterfuges she uses to solve situations (the so-called Brazilian "jeitinho"). Dora does not let herself be affected by the difficult situation of the station and of her customers.

One of her customers, Ana, comes with her son Josué (Vinícius de Oliveira) and asks Dora to write a letter to her husband, Jesus, who lives in Bom Jesus do Norte, in the Brazilian backlands. This is a common situation in Brazil: people from the northeast who migrated to the large city centers in the southeast (Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo) remain apart from their relatives for years. Ana writes scolding her distant husband, who is an alcoholic—"the worst thing that happened to me", she says—to tell him that Josué would like to visit him. When Ana came to Rio, she was pregnant with Josué and had left her husband and two other children in the backlands. As she leaves the station, Ana is run over by a bus and dies. Josué, only 9 years old, who has nowhere to go and no one to protect him, is forced to live at the station. Dora feels sorry for him, and against her principle of keeping emotional distance from the dramatic situations at the station, she decides to help him, first by taking him home with her and then by taking him to his father. Several times in succession, she attempts to get rid of the boy and send him on his way, as though he were one of her letters. She even tries to sell him for adoption. She is not successful. She has to go with him herself, take him "home", deliver him personally.

Aspects of a lived religion in Central Station: clues to a moving theology

According to Santos (2002), the "central" theme of the film is seeking the other and fleeing from the other. With the pretext of seeking the father, Dora and Josué go to the backlands in search of themselves and of each other. As to the theme of religion, although the film contains a large number of religious images and moments, especially of popular Catholicism, the theology of the film does not lie in its religious elements, but beyond them. According to Santos, the dramatic high point of the film is when Dora and Josué are at the very heart of the Bom Jesus procession. Dora is looking for the boy, who had run away. Desperate, abandoned and tired, Dora faints and is then sheltered in the boy's lap (which Santos identifies as an inverted Pieta, the image of the film poster), which portrays the profound care for the other and for oneself. This is the main theological element, the "central" aspect: the miracle does not lie in the procession, not in traditional, formal religion, but in the profound and committed finding of oneself in the other, in the encounter with individuality outside oneself. That is where redemption lies. The transcendental aspect is the human condition as something other, something ultimate, beyond the expected.

A moving theology, one starting from the IECLB and designed for it, may be instigated by at least two aspects of the movie: (a) its genre and narrative; and (b) an analysis of the film's central theme. As far as genre and narrative are concerned, the movie challenges theology and the IECLB to move beyond their respective boundaries. For a church that still has strong ethnic features and a theology that is still quite dependent on Europe, such as the IECLB, this means accepting the challenge of going to the "backlands", facing adversity and risks. Making theology in Brazil means taking risks along the way, encountering other religions and religiosities, dialoguing with the hybrid and syncretic ways in which the people make theology, with all the tricks of daily lived culture, but, first and foremost—like Dora and Josué—it means discovering that an authentic theology renounces theological truths and rules for the sake of life, for the sake of individual, relational and social dilemmas. A moving theology has to do with the concrete struggle for survival and dignity, however minimal. It is right there, in the encounter with the other, in the exchange of gazes, in the relation-

ship—in Buber’s terms—that an authentic and actual transcendence (Ganzevoort and Roeland 2014) takes place. The church and its theology of movement do not need to take a metaphorical bus in search of the father and of themselves in Brazil’s northeast. It is sufficient to look at the border areas, the peripheries, the religious elements next door, the alternative cultures surrounding our churches in the country’s different regions. There we can find a pulsating, challenging, disturbing, ex-centric religion on the basis of which we can and must reinvent ourselves theologically.

The second aspect of a moving theology based on this movie broadens the first one. It is related to the movie’s central theme, namely the caring for and finding of oneself and of the other as the central theme of lived religion in *Central Station*. In this respect, it should not be forgotten that encountering the other involves estrangement and flight from oneself, flight from the other as the means through which the encounter becomes authentic. A moving theology that starts from this center redirects our gaze beyond tradition, beyond proper theology, beyond the correct administration of the sacrament, beyond the IECLB’s cultural and theological isolation. It involves taking oneself and the other seriously, understanding that the encounter with oneself and the other, even when so different and perhaps repulsive, is what promotes Christ and should move theology. Liberation theology, which has had such a strong impact on the IECLB, already announced and denounced the difficulty of making a theology starting from the other, from the poor. Usually this finding led to, besides a change in theological discourse, the setting up of social and diaconal programs with vulnerable groups. The encounter with the other, however, did not always take place. The traditional congregation moved its assistance to the periphery and the periphery remained where it was. The encounter of Dora and Josué, the sheltering in the lap, is much more than that. They teach us the meaning of essential care and transformation, where we authentically encounter God.

Motorcycle Diaries

The film *Motorcycle Diaries*, also by Walter Salles (Diários de motocicleta, Walter Salles, Brazil/Argentina/Chile/Peru/USA/UK/France/Germany, 2004), tells the story of a young Argentine, Ernesto Guevara (Gael García Bernal), and his journey of

discovery through Latin America together with his friend Alberto Granado (Rodrigo de La Serna). The script for *Motorcycle Diaries* is based mainly on a book of the same name by Guevara, with additional elements supplied by *Traveling with Che Guevara: The Making of a Revolutionary*, written by Alberto Granado.

At the age of 23, Ernesto, who has asthma, set off on a motorbike, the “Poderosa” (Powerful One), together with his friend Alberto in search of amorous adventures and surpassing limits, giving free rein to their adventuresome and hedonistic desires through an extreme experience, something common among the young, especially wealthy youth. We are in Buenos Aires, in 1952. The two young men are university students, bored with life and an already established future as members of the Argentine economic elite. Ernesto is finishing medical school; Granado has already finished biochemistry. The expedition should cover eight thousand kilometers in four months, along the Andes Cordillera, in the south of Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela.

The film begins as an adventure comedy, but gradually it becomes a drama, not primarily because of all the difficulties that the trip imposes on the two young men, but also due to their contact with the social ills of the continent, especially their face-to-face contact with the indigenous people and the misery they are subjected to by the large, powerful landowners, the exploitation of human labor in the Chilean mines and the isolation of people living in a leper colony, where those who are most ill remain confined on an island on the other side of the river. A world of injustice, segregation, misery and inequality, completely unknown to the two travelers, is revealed to them during the trip, so that Guevara finds himself profoundly changed by his observations on life. At the same time, he realizes the need for a radical response to the profound social and human inequalities imposed on the excluded. It is as though the situation of the people whom they meet along the way was not in harmony with the adventure.

Aspects of a lived religion in Motorcycle Diaries: clues to a moving theology

The film barely contains explicit religious elements. The few explicit elements of traditional religion (e.g. the lepers must participate in the mass as a condition for receiving lunch) appear more as a critique



than as a contribution to the plot. Lived religion is found in the human aspects of the film, such as the change in the gaze, in the realization of human misery, in finding a reality that should not be: “How would Latin America be if there had been no Conquest?” Ernesto asks himself at Machu Picchu. It is a theme of becoming aware of oneself and one’s role in the world. At many moments, through altruism and in proximity to the other, Ernesto reminds one of Jesus, as in the proximity to the lepers, treating and cleaning a patient’s feet, his identification and solidarity with the miners, his radicalness and daring to think differently.

The central theme of the film, in my opinion, is this change in the gaze. At some moments, Che talks about the gaze: the empty gaze of the sick old indigenous woman, waiting for death, “involving us in the great mystery that surrounds us”, as he says; the dark, tragic gaze of the mining couple who have been stripped of their land and possessions, of themselves. Furthermore, the film often concentrates its focus on the gaze of Ernesto himself, as when he looks astonished at Machu Picchu and asks himself how could he feel nostalgic for a world he did not know; or his angry gaze at the small boat crowded with poor people, together with the animals, being towed by the comfortable boat on which he is standing; or the moment when Ernesto, on the evening of his birthday, looks at the distant island where the contagious lepers are kept, who for that reason are separated from the others, as he himself had concluded a few days earlier. Ernesto dives into the river and swims across to be with the lepers. In my opinion, this crossing is the high point of the film. It is not by chance that the theme song of the film is *Al otro lado del río* (To the other side of the river), by Jorge Drexler (Drexler 2011). Here too, I think, is the religious heart of the film: the crossing of the river, the moment of awareness, facing the risk of death, as a true baptism, to be reborn as a new person, one with a purpose.

Crossing the river summarizes and symbolizes the crossing of the entire trip and the itinerary of his transformation of himself, the crossing of himself: *Sucedió algo en la ruta que tengo que pensar por mucho tiempo. Yo ya no soy yo* (Something happened on the road that I must think about for a long time. I am no longer myself). This is Ernesto’s conclusion at the end of the film. By losing everything, the safe life of the future physician, his girlfriend, the “powerful” motorbike, his money, his belongings, in essence losing himself, Ernesto finds himself as a new

person, something to think about in light of Luke 9:23 and 24: “If any person would come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save their life will lose it; and whoever loses their life for my sake will save it.” There is a meaning beyond that which is visible and apparent. This meaning is gained by a new way of gazing.

Whereas the former movie opened up a horizon to the concrete reality of life and relationships in Brazil, this film takes us beyond, to Latin America, to the discovery of the ground we are actually walking on. The image revealed to the viewer’s gaze is at the same time fascinating and frightening (Rudolf Otto’s “numinous”). In other words, Latin America itself is a *locus theologicus*, a theological reality in itself. This is an important aspect to be considered.

A second aspect has to do with conversion. In the case of the IECLB, the film’s narrative with all of its metaphorical and symbolic nuances, such as the crossing of the river via Ernesto and Drexler’s theme song, challenges us to a process of changing our gaze, of conversion. Usually conversion—whether of a social or more personal nature—in the IECLB is encapsulated within imported and traditional models. Ernesto, with his friend and his motorcycle, his gaze and his path, teaches us another type of conversion, a conversion brought on by the adversity of the journey, a conversion brought on by human shock, a conversion of the gaze that becomes aware of human misery. Here we have an important key aspect of lived religion, one that can move the church and its theology.

Besides these two aspects, another question that profoundly provokes me in this film—and that surfaces in a subtler manner in the former one—is the absence of explicit religious elements. The religious element in the film, lived religion, is human. It has to do with a profound encounter, with becoming aware of the injustice and lack of dignity to which many people are subjected, it has a concrete relationship with lepers. A moving theology incites us to find again the place where the religious element pulsates. In the film, this element is diluted in life, in misery, in neediness, in abandonment. In other words, lived religion here is actually a lived, experienced, pragmatic, real religion. It is in the change caused by the exchange of gazes. To move theology on the basis of this narrative means to become aware of this change. The theology constructed on the basis of this exchange of gazes will be a different one, at the very least a moving theology.

Practical theology as a moving theology: a conclusion

Whereas the classical reflections of theology and the traditional work of the Church are based on paradigms such as interpretation and textuality, the way religion is presented on the basis of what culture perceives is more connected to life in its rawness and fragmentariness, physical and emotional experience of very simple everyday situations, packaged in a beautiful poetic, artistic, aesthetic construction. According to Jörg Herrmann (2007, 326), there are at least three points of view that must be taken into account when one analyzes the contents and forms of the media context, such as films, based on theology: the meaning of the aesthetic, of the bodily-emotional and of the mimetic.

The two films are movements according to all meanings of the concept of movement. The two films bring us out of reality, presenting us with and exposing us to crisis and adversity, to the void represented by the northeastern backlands and by the social desert of Latin America, so that there we can experience how people discover themselves in the other's lap and gaze. In order to find themselves, they must lose themselves. Both are ultimately transformed. Thus, mimetically the films transform their characters, but also those who watch them. The two films are a dive into the reality of misery and suffering, but also into the common and simple everyday life of our dramas and dilemmas, and precisely therein lies the great mystery of existence, the meaning of the personal life of human beings. It is a meaning that has not been established beforehand, but that shows itself to each one insofar as they allow themselves to move toward the other and, in so doing, beyond themselves, to be able to discover themselves as beings. In the case of the two films, the answers lie not in the formulations, rituals and traditions of formal religion, but beyond them.

It seems to me that herein lies the great contribution of this kind of perception of lived religion: it puts us in touch with that which pulsates in the life of a human being and which in the theological and ecclesiastic tradition often no longer seems to communicate and make sense. Salles, consciously or—more likely—not, places theological and religious elements within the drama of life in the Brazilian and Latin American context. This appears to me to be the great contribution to contextual practical

theology, something very different from an academic, rational, formal, closed theology. We thus have a moving theology, without answers, without simple solutions, without a closed moral. It may be said that in neither film do the characters find what they are seeking (the father and adventure), leaving the solution open to the audience.

The film, a mirror of culture as a space of lived religion, becomes a mirror of theology itself, of practical theology. Would this not be precisely one of the primary roles of the liturgy and homiletics as a representative action (Schleiermacher's "darstellendes Handeln"): to be the mirror of a person and a congregation in the encounter with the mystery of existence within simple and complex life, in everyday movement? Certainly, we have in this type of hermeneutics of lived religion a rich space to reflect on practical theology in Latin America and contribute to the movement of the contextualization of churches, like mine, thus creating a movement to approach the theology and lived religion present in pop culture.

Concretely, this moving theology takes place in reflection, in articles such as this one, but it should not be limited to this space. The movies might be watched and discussed in the context of a congregation, in youth groups, among groups of adults, in worship services (such as the *Film-Gottesdienst* in Germany). The narratives might be used in a sermon as a way of establishing a dialogue between the biblical text and the context. But a moving theology should not stop there. The two films encourage me to think about actions and rites that enable movement, such as pilgrimages and processions, and the IECLB might create concrete movements—such as representative and actual actions—within its context, movements that enable a genuine exchange of gazes, an authentic encounter with oneself and the other, estrangement and mirroring, movement in the sense of the two movies. Thus, by reflecting on, by analyzing, the films in the congregation and by moving concretely, we could articulate a beautiful moving theology that might lead us to sing: *Sucedió algo en la ruta que tengo que pensar por mucho tiempo. Yo ya no soy yo! [Something happened on the road that I must think about for a long time. I am no longer myself!]*.



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Doing theology with and amongst living bodies in contested spaces

Johann-Albrecht Meylahn

Space is always situated in time, and time defines space. Therefore, in contemporary global geo-political time one could perhaps define space as contested space. European space is contested, NATO is contested, the world is being reconfigured into new spaces and blocs (for example BRICS). We are living in a time of post-and de-colonial thought, which is trying to re-define space or create space for alternatively defined and identified bodies and bodies of knowledge. Time-spaces are filled with bodies, and they give to those bodies an identity and place. On the other hand, bodies carry out time-spaces and thereby, in a sense create, such time-spaces as a place or rather a home of and for these bodies, or else the place serves as a place of exclusion and marginalisation. One could say that there is a close connection between bodies and spaces and the consequent identity politics of those spaces, as they become places of either belonging or of not-belonging and exclusion.

Introduction

In Europe, we are currently witnessing how space, both political and cultural (religious), is being challenged by the migration and displacement of bodies. New bodies, different bodies and even political no-bodies enter into, or attempt to enter into, this space. Their presence calls for new interpretations and identifications, and therefore, question the politics of identity of that place. Bodies of different colors, bodies with different practices, bodies speaking foreign languages, bodies worshipping differently, as well as maimed bodies, hurt bodies, war-torn bodies, the family body fragmented, orphaned bodies, widowed, broken, hurt and scarred bodies, and angry bodies press against the borders of these places, asking for, pleading, demanding space and thereby challenging the geographical, cultural, economic, religious and political borders of that place. It is not only the geographic-political borders that are being challenged, but with them the epistemic boundaries as well. These new bodies challenge the norms of the

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oikos-nomos and thereby question the limits of the hospitality of that particular place. This chapter will rethink this interaction between space-bodies and the politics of place with the help of Alain Badiou (2009), who specifically focuses on language-body dualism, which he calls democratic materialism. The central question addressed in the chapter is as follows: What can practical theology contribute to this *re-formation* of space, if it understands itself as *doing* theology with and amongst living bodies in contested spaces seeking a place?





Forming space-time for bodies: the creation of Zeit-Spiel-Raum

The theme of the 2017 International Academy of Practical Theology conference in Oslo is *Reforming: Space, Bodies and Politics*, yet before one can reflect on reforming space-time for bodies, and consequently politics, it is important to understand the formation of space-time. Thus, I will start by reflecting on the forming and/or creation of space-time, or the carrying out (*Austrag*) of a world, namely the bringing together of space and time as the stage for bodies, a world for bodies and the politics that identifies, categorizes and stratifies such bodies.

For Heidegger (1971) it is language, and for Ricoeur (1984) it is narrative that brings time and space into relation with each other in the creation of a *Zeit-Spiel-Raum* (see Caputo 1993, 30), thereby creating a world for bodies both animate and inanimate as well as bodies of knowledge, or *tekhnē* in Stiegler's (2015, 30–31) sense of the term, as the externalization and individuation of the human as no-etic being. It is language, narrative, that carries out (*Austrag*) a world of and for bodies with its dimensions of time and space.

Lévi-Strauss (1985, 219) argued that it is myth that turns time into space. According to Nancy, “with myth, the passing of time takes shape, its ceaseless passing is fixed in an exemplary place of showing and revealing” (1991, 45). Walter Otto argued that myth and *Sprachgesang* are fundamentally one and the same thing (Otto 1962, 285), that the speaking of language and myth are one and the same, that which conveys a world. Nancy again: “Myth is very precisely the *incantation* that gives rise to a world and brings forth a language, that gives rise to a world in the advent of a language” (1991, 50). World, language and community are intimately connected, as myth and community are bound together, precisely because myth arises only in “community and for it: they engender one another, infinitely and immediately” (Nancy 1991, 50).

A world, a *Zeit-Spiel-Raum*, is the creation of the *Sprachgesang* of a particular community, binding that community to its world, binding (*religare*) the community to its myth or logos (Nancy 1991, 54), while at the same time incanting it.

A world is brought about via the bodies (things) that populate it (see Heidegger 1971, 200f), and it is the world that gives specific place to each body in that population (*ontology*), sorting and stratifying

the bodies according to hierarchies based on power. The body without organs is stratified into organs (identifiable bodies) (see Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 11; 2011, 150). What binds this world is the myth (logos),¹ which also gives a specific place, a status, to different people thanks to the role of power. As Stiegler (2014, 55–56) argues, “language is always accompanied by power”. Badiou (2009) argues that it is the logic of the *ontology* that gives a specific place to each thing (*onta*) of that *ontology*.

Various spaces, various worlds, have been created by different myths, such as that of nation-states and collections of nation-states like the European Union, NATO, United Kingdom, or BRICS. Each of these worlds is brought about via a *Sprachgesang*, the silent speaking of language, the silent myth, or the logos of that world. Yet, these myths, the logoi of such worlds, are not recognized as myths, but are seen as the way things are. They present themselves *as if* they are given, *as if* they are natural, as the way things truly are: as facts. Through a change in the population of bodies, these worlds have now become contested spaces. They have become contested spaces because the bodies (*onta*) in these specific spaces, the people, are changing, or rather different people are moving into these spaces, and are therefore changing the *onta*. Once the *onta* has sufficiently changed, it begins to challenge the *ontology* of those spaces. It challenges the myth, the logos, of such spaces.

Are these spaces really changing? This is certainly a fear that is being exploited by numerous populist and neo-nationalist movements, but is it truly changing the space? Badiou argues in his book *Logics of Worlds* that true change occurs when the epistemology changes; otherwise, it would make more sense to speak of modification (Badiou 2009, 259). In other words, are these changes in the population of bodies changing the epistemology of these spaces, or is it only a modification? Are the different bodies that are moving into these spaces changing the *oi-*

1 Nancy argues that myth and logos are one: “In myth the world makes itself known, and it makes itself known through declaration or through a complete and decisive revelation” (Nancy 1991, 48). She adds: “The greatness of the Greek—according to the modern age of mythology—is to have lived in intimacy with such speech and to have founded their logos in it: they are the ones for whom *muthos* and *logos* are ‘the same.’ This sameness is the revelation the hatching or blossoming of the world, of the thing, of being, of man in speech” (Nancy 1991, 49).

kos-nomos, the law, the norm, of these spaces (*oikos*)? Is the economy of these spaces being transformed?

If one takes Badiou's understanding of "true" change seriously, then at the moment these spaces are not changing, but are, at best, only being modified. Badiou argues that for change to truly occur an exception is required, "an exception to the laws of ontology as well as to the regulation of logical consequences" (Badiou 2009, 360).

In a sense, that is what one is experiencing in these contested spaces, a challenge to the epistemology, a challenge to the myth of Europe, the myth of NATO, the myth of the United Kingdom, the myth of BRICS, the myth of the West and Western civilization. For years, new people could be absorbed into the ontology of Europe, with minor or major modifications, in Badiou's language, but all of a sudden it seems that a transformation of epistemology is required; with a change in epistemology, the *oikos-nomos* transforms and the economy will be transformed. A change in epistemology is required in terms of how one *thinks* (epistemology), how one individuates, how one singularizes, how one categorizes in these spaces the laws and norms of thinking, the carrying out of global changes as the *tekhnē* changes: the exteriorization of human intellect. All of these different bodies—bodies of different colors, bodies with different practices, bodies speaking foreign languages, bodies worshipping differently, as well as maimed bodies, hurt bodies, war-torn bodies, the family body fragmented, orphaned bodies, widowed, broken, hurt and scarred bodies, and angry bodies—are challenging the body-politic of these spaces as well as the bodies of knowledge (epistemologies) and the regulation of the logical consequences (*oikos-nomos*) of these political bodies.

Reforming politics: the transformation of a body-politic: polis

Aristotle says that we live in cities—this is the *political* way of life—not for reasons of need, but for a higher reason itself without reason, namely to "live well" (*eu zein*): here "well" means neither a comfort, nor a having; it is the ownmost difference of man, which means also, for Aristotle (but for Plato as well), the sharing of a *logos*. (Nancy 1991, xxxviii)

The being *in* common of a city, of a *polis*, is based on the idea of creating a common identity, or of being bound (*religare*) into a shared *logos*: the myth of the

community, being bound (*religare*) into and by the *Sprachgesang* of that space (world) while singing (*tekhnē*) the song of the community and thereby creating the community, individuating the community, while also individuating oneself and thereby becoming subject, noetic spirit, in community.

Stiegler (2014, 45) unpacks this becoming of a singularity, individuation, as a process that is both psychic and collective, that is within a community, and later he adds technology (exteriorization) (Stiegler 2014, 51). In other words, he posits a three-fold process: psychic, collective and technological. This becoming of the self through the collective could be understood as the *work of the community*, this labor or *tekhnē*, as the social construction of the community (Stiegler 2015, 34). A process of individuation (psychic) always occurs within a "we" (collective) through the work (*tekhnē*) of externalization.

The role of the collective, the work of the community, represents the secondary and tertiary retentions and protentions (see Stiegler 2014, 52). The work of the community, the *tekhnē* of the community, represents these retentions and protentions in the various bodies of knowledge (epistemology) and constructions that give meaning to the ontology of that world. It is with these knowledges that the strange and the stranger can be encountered and even expected and defined as *the other*. The problem is when the other is no longer a singular other, but becomes an increasing population of others. This increase in the population of the *other* eventually becomes a question of how many others can the *same* accommodate before the same is "destroyed"?

According to Derrida (2000), true hospitality is impossible because at a certain point the host is taken hostage by the guest and the home (*oikos*) is taken over by the guest, who in that sense becomes the *hostis*: the enemy. Is it not the threat of the enemy that constitutes the city, asks Carl Schmitt (see Derrida 2009). Is that not what we are currently experiencing with the rise in populism and neo-nationalism: that the foreigner, the migrant, the refugee, is not welcomed as a guest, but is interpreted as an enemy, one who will threaten the integrity (the norms, the laws of the *oikos*) of the *polis*? The foreigner, migrant, refugee seeking *hospitality* is interpreted as the *hostis*, an enemy of the polis, coming to destroy the body-politic, the norms, the values of the city.

A radical hospitality, a radical love of the other, a welcoming of the other, is politically impossible unless we rethink the meaning of the political, as Jean-



Luc Nancy (1991) argues in *The Inoperative Community*. A reformation of the political is needed to create space for different bodies.

I believe that practical theology can find itself in this task.

Reformation of space: doing theology with excluded, marginal bodies

Is it the task of practical theology to create space for different bodies? The answer depends on how one understands and interprets practical theology. What is necessary is both a *Theos* and a logos, that is, a *praxis* interpreted as *poiesis*.

If *Theos* is interpreted as the creator, the religion that binds people into a community, which provides the secondary and tertiary retentions and protentions, if *Theos* is understood as divine *Sprachgesang* that creates the world, the space for bodies, then I believe it would be difficult for theology to play such a reforming role. As such, theology interpreted as *Sprachgesang* is always exclusive; the *Sprachgesange* is always violent since it is the language of the powerful, those who decide what is good, who is right and who the enemy is and who, therefore, needs to be excluded. A *Sprachgesang* that brings about a particular world is the myth, the logos, of the powerful. It is for this reason that Nancy seeks a different kind of myth, but not a non-myth, as a non-myth would only be the myth of the absence of a myth and again it would be related to power. Therefore, what is needed is not a non-myth, but rather an insistent interruption of myth, even the interruption of interruption, which Nancy has found in literature (see Nancy 1991, 61). Literature, poetics, as sacred and therefore perhaps a different interpretation of the divine, opens the door to a different kind of theology.

A myth interrupted, or a logos interrupted, a religion interrupted, is not necessarily interrupted by something, as that something would need its own myth to become visible, to be revealed or unconcealed. Therefore, the myth is not interrupted by something outside of itself, but is interrupted by the realization that all is myth (see Nancy 1991, 52). It is interrupted at that precise moment when one realizes that all is myth and that one cannot escape myth, nor should one seek to escape it, as any attempt at escape would only become possible through a myth of escape.

Myth interrupted and the impossible possibility of community and/or church

Myth interrupted is the realisation that all is myth. Would such an interruption have the possibility of bringing about a new type of community or a world? Would the myth-interrupted be a kind of *Sprachgesang*? No, because the moment it carries out (*Austrag*) it would no longer be an interruption, but a myth itself. Can identity, community, be found in myth-interrupted? Maybe this is the challenge for the Church, to be an interrupted community, or an interruptive community *in* the world, but not *of* the world (see Meylahn 2012). It would need to be a community that has an identity, but only an identity as sinners (idolaters), sinners who are only (*sola*) justified through Christ, grace alone and faith alone. It would need to be a community whose identity is always and only the identity of the sinner (idolatry), but justified, *simul justus et peccator*. But its justification would be a “foreign” justification, as it would come through grace, faith and Christ alone.

Nancy offers an interesting interpretation of a different politics, different than the politics of Carl Schmitt, who understands being *in* common as “*no longer having, in any form, in any empirical or ideal place, such a substantial identity and sharing this* (narcissistic) ‘*lack of identity*.’ This is what philosophy calls ‘finitude’” (Nancy 1991, xxxviii).

I would disagree with Nancy and argue that a lack of identity is impossible, as it is contrary to the noetic spirit of being human, and a “lack of identity” could also become an identity: a nihilistic identity. Therefore, I find his idea of myth interrupted more useful than the idea of a lack of identity.

Yet, Nancy unpacks what he means by a lack of identity, saying that he is not seeking to establish a myth of lack-of-identity. Accordingly, “finitude, or the infinite lack of infinite identity, if we can risk such a formulation, is what makes a community. That is, community is made or is formed by the retreat or by the subtraction of something: this something, which would be the fulfilled infinite identity of community is what I call its ‘work’” (Nancy 1991, xxxviii-xxxix). A community’s constant striving, its *tekhnē*, which is the individuation of the community, is an unfinished task. Human beings cannot escape this task nor be liberated from it, the eternal return to idolatry, but the realization, that all is myth is a liberation in itself, but one without the liberation becoming a new myth. It is a liberation not from or to something, but liberation as continuous

interruption, without the interruption becoming myth.

For Nancy, community is made from that which retreats from it. This is the work of the being-in-common. This is the work of the political, which can never be presupposed, but which is continually exposed, if the political is the binding into what is common or binding into the *work* of the being-in-common. The work of the political is the work of being exposed—exposed to the “voice of interruption”, of “shattered” love, of the “coming” of “joy” and of “places” of “dislocation”, and it is always the same bond (the bonding of the political work): “a bond that forms ties without attachments, or even less fusion, of a bond that unbinds by binding, that reunites through the infinite exposition of an irreducible finitude” (Nancy 1991:xl).

The work of the political is the in-common of the community as it continually redefines itself via the victims of previous definitions.

In this sense, community becomes resistant to exclusion, resistant to the belief that one has incarnated (immanence) the essence or the true identity of oneself or one’s community.

According to Nancy, “community is, in a sense, resistance itself: namely, resistance to immanence. Consequently, community is transcendence: but ‘transcendence’ which no longer has any ‘sacred’ meaning, signifying precisely a resistance to immanence (resistance to the communion of everyone or to the exclusive passion of one or several: to all the forms and all the violence of subjectivity)” (Nancy 1991, 35).

Nancy refers to the interruption of myth as literature, writing. In his words: “literature interrupts itself: this is, essentially, what makes it literature (writing) not myth. Or, better, what interrupts itself – discourse or song, gesture or voice, narrative or proof – *that* is literature (or writing). Precisely what interrupts or suspends its own mythos (that is to say, its *logos*)” (Nancy 1991, 72).

For Badiou, an exception is required, as already mentioned earlier, and the exception is that which breaks open the democratic materialism (language-body dualism). This exception is, for Badiou, truth (2009, 4). Truth alone is not enough, however; it needs subjects who are faithful to the truth (see Badiou 2009, 53).

For Laruelle, these truths together with their faithful subjects are probably too mythic, and therefore, he rather seeks generic victims, victim-in-person (see Laruelle 2015a). The focus on generic vic-

tims rather than on actual or particular historic victims is important because historic victims would only be identifiable in the language of their specific myth, which allows them to appear, or to be, unconcealed. Yet, historical or actual victims always provide an occasion to think about the victim-in-person. Generic victims would perhaps be similar to what Laclau refers to, in reference to Hegel’s “peoples without history”, as being entirely outside historicity (Laclau 2007, 40).

They are equivalent to what Lacan called *caput mortuum*, the residue left in a tube after a chemical experiment. The break involved in this kind of exclusion is more radical than the one that is inherent in the antagonistic one: while antagonism still presupposes some sort of discursive inscription, the kind of outside that I am now discussing presupposes exteriority not just to something within a space of representation, but to the space of representation as such. (Laclau 2007, 140)

Historic victims or faithful subjects can only become visible (unconcealed) through their own myths, and it is for this reason that one should seek out literature rather than myth. Literature is fiction that is aware that it is fiction and does not present itself as logos, truth, or founding myth. This is also what Laruelle (2015b) sought in his Christo-fiction. The Christo-fiction provides the literature that introduces the victims, the faithful subjects, but without these victims and faithful subjects becoming again myths of a new world order, but rather the occasion for continuous interruptions of the myths of the current world orders.

Following Nancy, as already mentioned earlier, I turn towards literature or writing, and in a sense the holiness or the sacredness of literature as being a divine space: it transcends the current world order, but without becoming present, incarnate, within its own *Sprachgesang*, but rather by disrupting, interrupting, the power of the dominant *Sprachgesang*.

Divine places without gods, with no god, are spread out everywhere around us, open and offered to our coming, to our going or to our presence, given up or promised to our visitation, to frequentation by those who are not men either, but who are there, in these places: ourselves, alone, out to meet that which we are not, and which the gods for their part have never been. These places, spread out everywhere, yield up and orient new spaces: they are no longer temples, but rather the opening up and the pacing out of the temples themselves, a dis-location with no reserve henceforth, with no more sacred enclosures – other tracks, other ways, other places for all who are there. (Nancy 1991, 50)



What would the praxis be in such interrupted myths? What would the praxis be of such literature? Badiou argues for faithful subjects, subjects who are faithful to literature alone without becoming fanatics of a new myth. This is maybe only possible if one turns to a praxis of love.

Love does not call for a certain kind of thinking, or for a thinking of love, but for thinking in essence and in its totality. And this is because thinking most properly speaking, is love. It is the love for that which reaches experience; that is to say, for that aspect of being that gives itself to be welcomed. (Nancy 1991, 84)

As Nancy nicely explains, love is the extreme movement, beyond the self, of a being reaching completion” (Nancy 1991, 86).

Conclusion

In this sense, theology, the praxis of being a church, the praxis of being a *reforming* church, could provide the world with the literature of love so as to continually interrupt and disrupt the spaces, and through such disruptions, *reform* spaces. The Church’s role could be, as a community of the literature of love, to interrupt spaces so that these spaces are opened up by offering hospitality to previously excluded bodies. What is important here is the notion of a literature (fiction) of love and not an orthodoxy or an orthopraxis, as any kind of correct dogma or correct praxis is exclusive. With this story of love (Christ’s love), the Church can be an instrument of disruption, even as it continually reforms itself.

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Reforming space: migrant agency and reimagining community and belonging

Federico Settler

In this article, I offer an examination of migration and its intersection with religion, focusing on (1) how increased migration disrupts the idea of the nation-state, (2) how migration expands our understandings of church and pastoral practice, and finally, (3) the ways in which migration raises key questions about what constitutes religion and religious work. Through the exploration of two case studies, one from South Africa and one from France, I seek to demonstrate that migration should not be conceived merely as liminal, or non-space, and that migrants actively construct social worlds through which they make sense of their life situations and ambitions for the future. Finally, I argue that focusing on migrants' beliefs and practices makes possible a greater appreciation of the agency of migrants in reforming religious spaces and their own mobile futures.

Introduction

In recent years, scholars of religion and migration have agreed that migration has had a significant impact on the identities and compositions of the sending and host nations as well as on transit communities and settlements. The increased mobility of people, capital and ideas has also impacted the shape of churches and other religious institutions. These changes present pastoral challenges that not only reform the character and focus of confessional communities, but that have also begun to reform what can be considered religion or religious work. In this regard, I offer an examination of the significance of migration and its intersection with religion insofar as (1) increased migration disrupts the idea of the nation-state, (2) migration expands our understandings of church and pastoral practice, and finally, (3) migration raises some key questions about what constitutes religion, theology and religious work.

Thus, I will start with a broad, but brief, survey of how migration has, or is, reforming communities (nations), reforming churches and reforming religious practices. I propose to do this through explor-

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ing and problematizing two key turns in the field of religion and migration. The first is the idea of *migrant as victim*, insofar as the trope of migrant as victim continues to shape developmental, humanitarian and theological discourses related to migration, where focusing on the vulnerable operates as a prerequisite for certain brands of theological and pastoral engagements. Secondly, I propose to problematize the idea of migration as a *liminal state*, a *non-space*, an in-between space that people occupy as they move from one place to another. By challenging the idea of migration as non-space, I propose to demonstrate migrants' agency through highlighting how migrants create social worlds in





contexts of transition and migration. I will show how migrants use religion and social support networks to assert agency, not only through planning and imagining future migrations but also through re-inscribing and reforming religion and religious practices and beliefs within the non-spaces of migration—such as refugee camps, transition settlements or neighbourhoods, and transit centers.

Reforming community

While migration has been a constant throughout human history, producing a wide range of diasporic communities, transnational networks and practices, it has only been during the past few decades that we have begun to theorise about migration (Vertovec 2009; Glick-Schiller 2005). This task has been made all the more urgent by legislation and policies that regulate and manage different forms of migration, for example through drawing stark distinctions between migrations for leisure, religious work, labor migration and asylum-seekers, with each being afforded different degrees of access to citizen's rights, resources, opportunities and protections (Carsens 2013; Wellman and Cole 2011).

What scholars like Asad (2003), Levitt (2004), Huwelmeyer and Krause (2010), and Adogame and Spickard (2010) draw our attention to is that with the increasingly transnational movement of people, it is not only ideas about migrants and migrations that are changing, but also local economies, networks of belonging and religious beliefs and practices. While some scholars draw our attention to the mobility of religion across borders, they largely rely on the idea of religion as tradition—a fixed set of beliefs and practices brought from a migrant's place of origin to be unpacked at the points of settlement. Nevertheless, in the field of religion/theology and migration there are primarily two subjects of interest: (1) how migrants use and move with their religion and (2) theological and pastoral responses to migration through discourses of reception, incorporation and hospitality.

The first subject of interest consists of sociologists of religion and how they point to the uses of religion within the context of migration, whether to make meaning, cope with anxiety or build networks of belonging, information and exchange. Adogame and Spickard (2010), for example, express a general sentiment that when migrants move, they take their religions with them, while other studies focus on (a)

how migrants use churches and mosques as the primary sites for building social networks during and after migration (Baas 2012), (b) the extent to which religion serves as a resource for helping migrants to cope with the challenges of migration (Hagan and Ebaugh 2003), or (c) how migrants replicate religious traditions at various sites of settlement as assertions of cultural and religious identity (Levitt 2001, 2007; Huwelmeyer and Krause 2010).

The second subject of interest can be referred to as theologies of migration and hospitality. These traditions are concerned with the theological and moral imperatives that underscore and motivate faith community responses to increasingly visible migrant populations and the failure of the state to adequately respond to changing geographies and demographics. Theologies of migration variously seek to incorporate a range of themes, such as hospitality (Groody and Campese 2008), the Church as a host that welcomes the stranger (Cruz 2010), the Church as a suffering body in a posture of solidarity (Rivera-Pagán 2012) and theological narratives of inclusion and incorporation (Baggio 2008).

Both analyses of migration rely on a few basic assumptions: first, they rest on the presumption that migrants and hosts share a common set of beliefs; secondly, they submit to and rely on the idea of the nation-state as stable, robust and homogeneous; thirdly, they replicate the notion of the migrant as victim, state-less and vulnerable. In view of these assumptions, I wish to pause and reflect on the victim-villain dialectic in migration studies. Recently, there has been increasing scholarship concerned with the coupling of migrants with crime (Collins 2007), meaning that migrants are routinely portrayed as villains and as a threat to social order, resulting in a prejudicial public stance against migrants (Mahalingam and Rabelo 2013, 26). At the opposite end of the spectrum, Goodey (2009) and Agergaard and Engh (2016) note that where the media or the public assume a humanitarian stance, migrants are routinely spoken of as victims of exploitation. Effectively, both positions result in the silencing and fetishizing of migrants as either victim or villain.

I suggest that religion, and faith communities, are particularly susceptible to the fetishization of victimhood (Anderson 2004; Naqvi 2007). Here, I draw on Marcella Althaus-Reid, who in her critique of liberation theology and political theologies argues that theology not only requires a redeemable subject—the poorest of the poor—but also that this

poor, marginalized subject should be domesticated and asexual. Althaus-Reid (2000) pointed to the way in which the idea of a vulnerable, licit, asexual victim defines much of liberation theology; and in the same vein, I suggest that theologies of migration are also not immune to the fetishization of victimhood. Similarly, feminist scholar and critical theorist Sara Ahmed (2000) argues that scholarship about humanitarian efforts concerned with migration tends to be fixated with the migrant as a victim. She argues that in advocating for humanitarian interventions, activists and humanitarian groups tend to script migrants as victims, and in so doing erase the possibility of imagining migrants as agentic, politicized and sexual subjects. Below, I argue that through further interrogating the victim-villain dialectic, we are able to not only consider the limits of theological scholarship in relation to migration, but also to reveal the ways in which migrants change and reform community—reforming geographies of belonging and belief.

Reforming church

In this regard, I draw your attention to two case studies pertaining to religion in the context of migration. The first case study is the “makeshift” Eritrean Church constructed in the migrant encampment outside Calais, known as the “Jungle”. The settlement was home to 7000 people, and the church was reported in the UK *Guardian* newspaper as a “place of raw prayer and defiant hope”.¹ Although the fragile structure symbolizes the material manifestation of long hours of labor and migrant aspirations, most media reports focused on the persistence of hope and the impossible conditions people found themselves in (Sandri 2016). This focus on the squalid conditions of camps, and the hopeful but fragile structure, continued to fix migrants as victims; in doing this, most media reports overlooked the material and religious “work” that motivated this faith community to build the church.

The second case study is from South Africa, when in 2008, in response to widespread xenophobic violence, the Central Methodist Mission in Johannesburg opened its doors and welcomed hundreds of



people into the church as refugees from the violence beyond its doors. The African migrants who had experienced such violence quickly filled up the church—to the extent that bodies were “spilling out the doors”—as they sought refuge and shelter (Hankela 2015). In the accompanying image, you will note that the church was literally a place to rest, lay down one’s head and find shelter from the hostility. While Bishop Paul Verryn’s use of the church as a sovereign refuge from both the populist and state violence against African migrants was widely applauded, the institutional church soon grew impatient with the long-term nature of the occupation. Members complained that the use of the church as a social welfare center was understandable but costly (Mpofu 2015). Church members were particularly offended that the church had become a social world (from which they were excluded)—one in which migrants were settling down “permanently” and establishing an underground economy. This occupation had, according to some church members, changed the church beyond recognition; it had become a space they no longer recognized, could relate to or felt comfortable in.

1 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2015/aug/07/migrants-church-in-calais-place-of-raw-prayer-and-defiant-hope>



In both case studies, it is possible to depict the church as a site of exception because religious communities have had a long history of offering sanctuary and being afforded extra-judicial status (Logan 2003; Rehaag 2009) and also because the church in certain cases assumes a kind of sovereignty within the nation-state (Lechner 2007). However, both the Jungle Church in Calais (France) and the Central Methodist Mission in Johannesburg (South Africa) allow us to consider how a church as a sanctuary or sovereign space presents a counter-narrative to nationalist regimes of exclusion. These two case studies also point to how membership in a church and affinity with particular religious beliefs and practices ultimately disrupts the idea of the nation-state, which is premised on native-settler relations. Finally, both cases also show how religious work is being done in the liminality of migrant experiences.

Sadly, both of these religious sites and communities were removed and no longer exist in their previous locations or forms. What we should take away from these two case studies are reflections on how migration, though precarious and liminal, seems to disrupt and reform our ideas about what constitutes religion or religious work.

Migration as a liminal and non-space

There has been increasing interest in idea of liminality in migration (Grau 2011; Hankela 2014), which is partly due to the recognition that complex social worlds are produced as a result of migration. Giorgio Agamben (2005) suggests that as a way of dealing with migration, the State has created “states of exception”—places and periods where migrants may live within a particular state but without enjoying the protections of the state. Thus, for Agamben “the state of exception is not a ‘state of law’ but a space without law”.

Loren Landau, reflecting on the African context, suggest that as “governments consciously suspend elements of their normal legal order to address crises they feel threaten sovereignty... [they] create categories of people within the national territory—refugees and undocumented migrants for example—who become alienated from their hitherto inalienable human rights” (2009, 3). Agamben (2005) refers to some of these places of settlements as *non-places*, liminal spaces between place of origin and place of settlement. It is precisely his denoting of the exceptional as a non-place that has drawn

harsh criticism. They suggest that Agamben’s work is too narrowly focussed on the force of bio power—framed by the media and policy rhetoric of “war on terror” and “refugee crisis” as circumstances that endanger the safety of the nation-state.

Agamben’s analysis is useful insofar as it not only shows how the state gives “legal form to what cannot have legal form”, but also because it opens the possibility for recognizing that transit centers for migrants or refugee camps as *productive* social worlds where people live, for a period, in zones of exception. I contend that narrow conceptions of a state of exception—as a form of rule outside the legal order—results in a failure to recognize the social world that exists within such supposedly liminal spaces. Drawing our attention to the embodied lives of migrants, Trygve Wyller (2014) has argued that while state and humanitarian organizations variously compete for control over the mobility of migrants, such a focus does not account for how often religious persons subscribe to and invoke a “sacred law” that allows then to imagine the migrant as other in a distinctly non bio-political manner. This allows us to view the case studies of the Jungle Church at Calais and Central Methodist Mission in Johannesburg as a counter-narrative to the force of bio-political discourses of containment or expulsion (Landau 2009). This is possible because it draws on ideas of the Church as sacred and sufficiently sovereign to serve as a sanctuary for migrants (Logan 2003), and it makes visible the social world of migrants by allowing migrants to assert some agency in relation to their material needs and future ambitions.

The Johannesburg Central Methodist Mission differs from the state because it refused to classify migrants in simply legal terms, such a documented or undocumented. Hankela (2014) argues that under the then leadership of Bishop Paul Verryn, the church produced a counter-narrative to the state notion of migrants as either victims or villains, and instead placed them at the heart of its humanitarian and theological enterprise. Migrants who had been displaced by a hostile citizenry began to reconfigure the church space in order to attend to their needs for safety, economic security and possible future migration. Within this lifeworld of the church, migrants organised social services, educational support and health services. The subsequent disagreements between Bishop Verryn and the church leadership centered around the fact that the resident migrants had established an underground economy within the precinct of Johannesburg Central Methodist

Mission where they exchanged and traded skills, such as translation work, transport and protection services, hairstyling and the sale of consumable leisure goods like cigarettes and airtime for mobile phones. Venkatesh (2009), for example, argues that often such relations of exchange within a not-so-underground economy rely heavily on the illicit and extra-legal norms of acquisition and exchange—aspects of the occupation that outraged church members.

Thus, the lifeworld of the migrants not only displaced the primary congregation and their routine, but also their idea of what constitutes a church. Consequently, this ongoing occupation of the church disrupted ecclesial and theological orthodoxies about the sacrality of the sanctuary and the pastoral practice of the church as much as it undermined the state's effort to expel the migrants. Despite the fact that the last migrants were removed from the church in early 2015, following a protracted court battle with church leaders, for a period of time this community provided a counter-narrative on migration; and this pastoral practice reformed the church as an alternate site of exception through which migrants were able to assert agency over their lives and destinies.

Migrant agency and the production of mobility

Scholars of migration have, in recent decades, developed increasing interest in the processes and practices through which migrants “sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Basch, Glick-Schiller and Blanc-Szanton 1994, 6). Others, like Asamoah-Guyadu (2015), Huwelmeier and Krauss (2010), and Adogame (2014), argue that these relations are further strengthened by religious affiliations. What this suggests is that migration is not just about networks of movement, or about flows of person in various stages of settlement and transition *en route* to an imagined ideal destination, but is about deliberately maintaining connections to their homelands while simultaneously becoming embedded in their new places of residence (Glick Schiller 2005; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). This simultaneous embeddedness is sustained throughout migratory processes, in that it is not just a matter of linking “societies of origin and settlement”, but that migrants produce active social worlds in

the *non-place* of the refugee camps and transit centers, or in the Jungle at Calais and the Johannesburg Central Methodist Mission.

The Jungle Church is a good example of how migrants assert their agency through producing structures and symbols of meaning that (a) captured the shared interest and beliefs of those who lived within the Jungle Church, as well as (b) signalled migrants' refusal to accept and submit to the life-denying conditions of this supposed non-place. Once images of the Jungle Church circulated in the media, widespread attention was drawn to the plight of the migrants who lived within this dense square mile (Ibrahim and Howarth 2016). The physical structure of this makeshift church stood in stark contrast to the muddy, cold and austere field on which it was erected. While for many it represented the resilience and faith of the migrants who worshiped there, it was also the product of deliberation, careful planning and collaboration. This suggests that their shared religious practices and beliefs predated the building of the structure. Finally, through building this structure the Eritrean congregation asserted their link to communities of origin and also invoked transnational networks of shared faith and belief, transcending nationalist ideas about who belongs and who does not belong. So powerful was this affinity of shared belief that the BBC's religious program “Songs of Praise” televised one of its Sunday church service from within the Jungle Church. In support of the program, the religious community of Iona publicly asserted “People of Calais—God's good people—you do not sing alone”.²

It can therefore be argued that the makeshift church represented a vibrant and productive life among the religious Eritreans within the settlement. In this regard, it tells us (a) that migrants are active in mediating their shared experience of displacement and belief as the foundation of creating local networks of exchange and support, (b) that migrants are deliberately reproducing communities of affiliation, such as churches and cultural associations, and (c) that migrants are active in forging and maintaining transnational networks of faith that disrupt the idea of the nation-state through (religious) schemas of affinity, inclusion and belonging. I therefore suggest that these aspects of migrant lives become more visible when we move beyond the victim-villain di-

2 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/16/songs-of-praise-calais-migrants-common-link-christianity>



alectic and reimagine these case studies in terms of migrants' agency.

While I recognize that for many people migration is often imagined as the pursuit of liberty and modernity, it is my view that a narrow focus on the structural forces of migration obscures the *agentic* dimensions of migration. For example, Sherry Ortner (2006) argues that structures are not only macro-level phenomena related to socio-economic and institutional relations; they are also established, expressed, resisted and reconfigured in the micro-level interactions between social actors. Ortner (2006) helpfully distinguishes between "agency-as-power" and "agency-as-project"—the former is concerned with the domination of others and the resistance to domination, while the latter is seen as "a form of intention and desire, as the pursuit of goals and the enactment of projects" (2006, 153).

In the context of the Johannesburg Central Methodist Mission and the Jungle Church at Calais, I suggest that agency became manifest in those practices that resisted indignity, on the one hand, and those that showed how migrants navigate zones of exception to fulfil their migrant ambitions. In their article "Gendered Geographies of Power", Pessar and Mahler assert that "much of what people actually do transnationally is foregrounded by imaging, planning and strategizing" (2003, 817); hence, our understanding of agency must encompass the "mindwork" that emanates from the social and religious imaginaries of migrants. I have argued that in the case of the Jungle Church, deliberation, planning and collaboration predates the building of the makeshift church. Thus, migrants' structuring of their hopes and future desires should be seen as constituent parts of agency in the contexts of religion and migration.

The production of migrants' mobility incorporates both agency-as-project and agency-as-power as an intrinsic condition related to a migrant's own ambitions, ideas and intentional efforts for transnational movement (Engh, Settler and Agergaard 2017). The significance of such intentional efforts is best understood in relation to networks of affinity and the migrant's position within power geometries in different localities—including sites of exception. The deconstruction of the knowledge-power matrix and local power geometries, often analysed in terms of the victim-villain dialectic, makes it possible to analyse migrants' ability to acts as "initiators, refiners and transformers of these locations" (Pessar and Mahler 2003, 817).

Though focusing on the agentic dimensions of migrant lives, I hope to have shown how, in these sites of exception—despite xenophobic hostility in South Africa and the strict governance of migrant mobility in Europe—migrants resist erasure, create conditions for a meaningful life and build networks of support that transcend and disrupt the strictures of Agamben's *non-places*, such as migrant settlements or transit centers. As I have argued above, migrants at the Johannesburg Central Methodist Mission did not simply establish necessary relations of exchange through trading skills in translation, hair-styling, tailoring, and so forth; they also established a lifeworld that included relations of trust, knowledge exchanges and shared belief. Through these efforts, migrants reformed conditions within the church and society, and in so doing also reformed the idea of just what constitutes a church. In Calais, the construction of a makeshift Eritrean Christian church was not just a testimony to the resilience of the faithful, but also an effort to forge relations of affinity with the transnational body of believers—invite them to look into the situation at the Jungle Church, be outraged and bear witness to the indignities suffered by those who had otherwise been regarded as non-persons. So, while the migrants in Johannesburg disrupted the idea of what purpose a church serves through occupying and remaking a migrant social world within the church, the Eritrean efforts in Calais did the opposite insofar as they built a church structure that reproduced a community of believers locally and transnationally, and in so doing undermined nationalist fantasies about who belongs and who does not.

Conclusion

However, an examination of these two case studies as zones of exception show how migrants use religion to stay connected to the places they leave behind, building networks of support at every point in their migratory lives and thereby forging new forms of transnational belonging (Levitt 2007; Getahun 2006, 189). What I have sought to demonstrate, on the one hand, is that for most migrants "religious faith offers stability and helps resolve tension" during their migration (Getahun 2006, 189). On the other hand, these case studies have shown that "religion provides migrants with a simultaneously local and transnational mode of incorporation that may configure them not as ethnics but as citizens of

both their locality of settlement and of the world” (Glick-Schiller 2009, 126). Here, migrants make use of religious beliefs and communities to support their migratory aspirations, while also resisting the dehumanizing force of surveillance, regulation and expulsion.

Further, what the discussion of these two case studies makes possible is the recognition that while Agamben and most scholars of religion regard migration as a liminal *non-place*, a focus on migrant agency not only reveals resistance to the victim-villain dichotomy, but also demands recognition that migrants are productive in forging social worlds that include new forms of incorporation, belonging and belief. These case studies help us recognize that migrants do not simply use religion as a way of coping with or navigating migratory processes, but that through their efforts to make meaning, migrants are reforming religion, religious work, authority and community in ways that disrupt both the nation-state and ecclesial orthodoxies.

This last perspective on migration and religion demands a reform of theologies of incorporation or integration—those discourses where the norm remains intact and migrants are placed at the margins. This necessitates questions about what kind of theology or discourse of religion emerges when migrant marginality and indignity are brought to the center of our scholarship. Finally, I have sought to argue that in producing room for extra-legal regulations and regimes to discipline migrants through sites of exception, or in the state’s efforts to discriminate between migrants as victim or villain, exceptional circumstances are also created for migrants to produce religious, social and economic practices that operate outside of normal civic and ecclesial traditions. Ultimately, I hope to not only have explored the ways in which religious beliefs, affiliations and practices shape migration, but also, significantly, how migrants’ expressions of their agency shapes our understandings of what constitutes religion, religious work and practice.

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Space as an instrument to interpret the role of religion and churches in Central and Eastern European societies

Ana Thea Filipović and Tibor Reimer

The denotations and metaphors of space that allow us to interpret and understand the role of religion and churches in Central and Eastern European societies, especially in Slovakia and Croatia, after the fall of the communist regimes are examined in this article. The terms “periphery” and “center” are seen as useful for analyzing the shift that occurred with respect to the place and role of religion and churches in these societies during and after communism, with a focus on its advantages and disadvantages. The analysis also relates to certain concepts in space theory, especially those used by Foucault. The transition from churches in the periphery to churches of the periphery is identified as the basic challenge and connected to the theological reflections of Pope Francis and his concept of the “outcoming Church”.

Introduction and theoretical background

Over the past few decades, the category of space has been discovered as a central, analytical-interpretative concept and instrument in the social sciences and humanities. This phenomenon is known as the *spatial turn* (Bachmann-Medick 2006; Döring and Thielmann 2008). Space is understood not only as a physical category, but as a relational, societal, cultural and symbolic category that includes discursive, virtual and imaginary spaces as well. The actions and metaphors of taking up space, conquering space, settling in space and using space that we take and use in everyday life are connected with the idea of power or the deprivation of power, and therefore, they have a relational meaning with regard to individuals and social groups. Philosophers have explained and demonstrated that spaces are produced through social practices (Lefebvre 1974), and that spaces are also producers of social relations, of power and control (Foucault 1984).

In Foucault’s analyses of space as a set of relations, he pays special attention to two types of spaces that are linked with all the others, “but in such a way as

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to suspect, neutralize, or invent the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect” (Foucault 1984, 3). He identified these spaces both as the unreal spaces, the utopias, that “present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down”, and as the real places, existing in every culture and civilization, something like counter-sites, which he invoked “by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias” (Foucault 1984, 3–4). The heterotopias take quite varied forms in different cultures and societies. As different spaces, other places, they are “a sort of simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space in which we live” (Foucault 1984, 4). This concept can be helpful in understand-





ing the role of religion and churches in Central and Eastern European societies.

Religion as a social practice takes place in social relations, realities and processes. The space of a lived religion is not a separate space or a separate sphere. The “spatial turn” raises the question of whether space could be a productive factor for religion. Not only does lived religion form a spatial reality, but space even shapes religion and opens new horizons of lived religion and religious practice (Erne and Schüz 2010).

In this contribution, the denotations and metaphors of space will serve as an instrument for interpreting and understanding the “place” and role of religion and the Church in the post-transitional societies of Central and Eastern Europe. Examples from Slovakia and Croatia will be presented. The analysis uses some theoretical concepts of space, especially drawing on the work of Michel Foucault. The transition from churches placed in the periphery to churches of the periphery will be analyzed as the basic challenge that churches in Central and Eastern Europe are still facing.

Religions and churches in post-communist countries: expulsion to the margins and return to the center

During the period of communist regimes in the socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (which lasted from 1944/1949 to 1989/1991, depending on the country), religious communities in these countries were forcefully ousted from public spaces. Churches were stripped of large portions of their property and defamed with respect to their worldview. Their life and activities took place in very restricted and private spaces, under constant supervision by the state and political authorities.

Although this was a situation marked by exile, marginalization, ghettoization, descent into the underground and deprivation of power, in such an atmosphere of constant supervision, fear, distrust and uncertainty religious communities were at the same time a sort of *different space*. Using Michel Foucault’s terminology, these “heterotopias” or “other places” are places in which “all the other real sites that can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (Foucault 1984, 3). Religious groups, in the eyes of the regime, were what Foucault calls “heterotopias of deviation”, or places “in which individuals whose

behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed”, but viewed from the perspective of believers these were “crisis heterotopias” in which individuals or groups were “in a state of crisis” (Foucault 1984, 4–5).

Essentially, this was a space of symbolic freedom and internal power, albeit one created as a result of their exterior powerlessness. Faith became a personal or family commitment for which it was necessary to pay a price (e. g. dishonor and loss of a good reputation as well as having lower ranked positions in the labor market and in the socio-political community). These circumstances of exclusion, repression and control elicited feelings of solidarity among believers with their religious community and its leadership. This created, on the one hand, an atmosphere of connectedness between communities and leaders, but, on the other, it inhibited greater internal institutional transformation within such communities. In relation to the Catholic Church, which is the largest religious community in both Slovakia and Croatia, it is related to insufficient implementation of the Second Vatican Council’s new ecclesiology, theology and spirituality.

With the collapse of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, religious communities and Christian churches moved from the social margins to the center. From the underground, or from invisible spaces, they emerged into public space, into the very center of social events.

The example of Slovakia

Slovakia is a country with a strong religious tradition: according to the last census, 76 % of the population declares itself religious. A large majority belong to the Roman Catholic Church (62 % of the population). In addition, 17 other churches and religious communities are recognized in Slovakia as well. Religion, especially Catholicism, has clearly held a central place in Slovakia over the centuries.

Between 1948 and 1989, the Church and, more generally, religion were brutally attacked by communists: religion was violently suppressed and pushed *from the center to the periphery*. Between 1949 and 1950, all diocesan seminars were canceled and all convents and monasteries were closed. The Greek Catholic Church was abolished, and Czechoslovakia (from which Slovakia became independent in 1993) broke off all diplomatic relations with the Vatican. The result of this persecution was as follows: more than 71,000 citizens were sentenced to prison in Slo-

vakia during the 40 years of communism. The Communist regime killed more than a thousand people and evicted more than 15,000 people from their homes. The forced labor camps in Slovakia had more than 13,000 inmates (Mikloško 2009).

During communist rule, a paradoxical phenomenon was evident: this persecution was counterproductive; in fact, it enriched at least some part of the Church. Almost all the leaders of Catholic culture were imprisoned or in exile during the Stalinist era. As a result of these ordeals, some of them experienced a strange metamorphosis in prisons and labor camps. In comparison to their previous lives in an isolated Catholic milieu, they were now behind communist bars in forced coexistence with people with different worldviews—Christians or those of other faiths, even socialists and non-conformist communists who had fallen into disfavor. Nevertheless, they quickly realized that many things—not only resistance to communism—united them. For many persons, meeting with priests and religious persons in these extreme conditions brought about significant transformations: many non-believers discovered a positive relationship with religious persons, or at least developed a deep respect for their testimonies, for religion and for the Church. Paradoxically, *Slovak Catholicism in this periphery came out of its ghetto*, at least in terms of the ideas and attitudes of its best representatives. Churches, forcibly stripped of their institutional supports when there was a general lack of trust, became close to young people, especially in the form of spontaneous communities. From this example, in contrast to the formal institutional forms of the Church, it is clear that the life of the Catholic Church “spilled over” into small communities where it became productive.

The fact that the Communist regime in the former Czechoslovakia tried to create a “national church”, one separated from the Vatican, provoked the phenomenon of the so-called “secret church” or “underground church”, which began in Slovakia after 1969. Primarily, religious and cultural intellectuals, male and female religious orders, as well as almost all those in the lay movement belonged to the “secret church”. They started to publish *samizdat*¹ and organize pilgrimages for young people.

They also initiated the first petition against the regime. A hunger strike among seminarians was also staged at the Theological Faculty in Bratislava. The Communist regime, with its professed scientific atheism, wanted to suppress religion and push the Church into an insignificant periphery, which paradoxically created *an intense center* of deep religiosity that became a major force in the fight against the Communist regime (Mikloško 2009).

Nevertheless, the “loss of religiosity” can be observed in post-communist Slovakia. One general opinion is that the Church did not meet most people’s expectations after the democratic changes. Therefore, its unprecedented moral authority, culminating shortly after November 1989, gradually faded; the expected “big boom” of religiosity did not take place. The Catholic Church is no longer one of the more popular and widely esteemed institutions of Slovak society. Today, we can say that the Church in Slovakia *is in the periphery*: a result of 40 years of communism and the failure of the Church to fulfill society’s expectations (Halík 2000). The Church was too decimated by decades of oppression; it could not promptly take a prominent place among the transformational forces of society. The Church had been *expelled from many spheres of public life* for decades. It now lacks experience in unrestricted public activity in the spheres of education, health, media, social communication, political life, and so forth. The Church was accustomed to a particular clerical style. It was not immediately able to open a space for the laity and teach the clergy and laity a new, more mature and affiliate pastoral style after communism.

Tomáš Halík thinks that Catholicism today, in the era of globalization, could have an important role under certain circumstances. It could even take the lead in the dialogue with world religions and secular humanism, because both have their points of contact in the Church’s experience during communism. The key question is whether current Slovak Catholicism would be able to embrace this dimension of the Church’s mission in the new millennium (Halík 2000).

The example of Croatia

In Croatia, the majority of the population has traditionally been affiliated with the Catholic Church. According to the 1953 census, 73.9 % of the population still declared itself Roman Catholic several years after the beginning of the communist era. Immediately after the establishment of a democratic

¹ *Samizdat* (etymologically derived from Russian: self-published) was a form of dissident activity across the Eastern bloc in which individuals reproduced censored and underground publications by hand and passed the documents from reader to reader.



society, this number reached 76.6 % according to the 1991 census (Nikodem 2004, 264).

Like other religious communities in the former Yugoslavia, which Croatia was a part of until its independence in 1991, the Catholic Church in Croatia was the target of ideological denunciations by the Communist Party. After Zagreb's Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac disagreed with the separation of the Church from the Vatican, he was accused, sentenced and detained in 1946. As a result of the Holy See's decision to appoint him as a cardinal, Yugoslavia discontinued diplomatic relations with the Vatican in 1952. As many as 500–600 priests were killed; many others were imprisoned or had to flee the country. The Communist government carried out a general nationalization, whereby many properties and institutions were confiscated from the Church, such as hospitals, schools and dormitories. Religious education was no longer a part of the school curriculum and the Faculty of Theology was no longer a part of the University of Zagreb. In addition, all Catholic lay organizations were banned and publication of religious material was minimized and subjected to permanent government control. The Communist Party carried out a systematic push to make everyone in society atheist (Boeckh 2006; Jakulj 2015, 482–483).

The Catholic Church supported the change in social system after the first multi-party elections in 1990. It advocated the rights of people to self-determination and endorsed the proclamation regarding the sovereignty, autonomy and independence of the country after the referendum on its independence in 1991. Real civic opposition did not exist in Croatia during the era of communist totalitarianism, unlike in some other socialist countries, such as Poland or Czechoslovakia. Hence, after the political turn of events the Catholic Church was particularly recognized as the force that could contribute to the development of a democratic society. In the early 1990s, the Church attained an important role in the formation of a new society, in cooperation with the state. Undeniably, it played a positive role in the democratization processes of society in those first years (Filipović 2014, 643–645).

The constitution of the new state guaranteed all citizens freedom of conscience and religious affiliation, free public expression of their faith and worldview, legal equality as members of any religious community and the possibility for inclusion in society through the establishment of their own public institutions; this was done simultaneously with the separation of religious communities from the state

(Sabor Republike Hrvatske 1990, Art. 14, 40, 41). Agreements were signed between the Republic of Croatia and The Vatican on cooperation in numerous fields of social and public life: upbringing and education, pastoral care in hospitals and other social institutions, the army and police (Ugovor između Svete Stolice i Republike Hrvatske 1997). The new legal framework provided the Church with legal protection and the necessary funds for executing its mission to the benefit of individuals and society. The Church considers believes it now has legitimate right to instill Christian values in a population, which, according to the latest statistics, is still predominantly Catholic (86.28 %) (Državni zavod za statistiku 2011).

In the first years of democracy, there was also a certain degree of triumphalism, disorientation and confusion in relation to the new role of the Church in society and its relationship to state authorities. Like in other transitional countries with majority churches, the Catholic Church in Croatia was also exposed to attempts of being used as an instrument to the advantage of political parties and structures. A more decisive critical shift away from political authority can be observed from 1997 onward, when the Church had already started legally based cooperation with institutions of the state. In the meantime, the development of civil society, which had yet to be built after the fall of communist regime began to emerge.

Compared to previous times, *the new positioning of religious communities* in society gave them a different kind of power. This power was based on the right of public activity that was denied to them in the previous period. It also included material rights and income in the form of returned property that was once seized as well as inclusion in social institutions with corresponding financial remuneration (Filipović 2014, 647–649).

As an urgent response to war devastations and property demolition suffered by the population during the war between 1991 and 1995, the inclusion of the Catholic Church as well as other religious communities in civil society began in Croatia in the early 1990s. The Church provided shelter to refugees and to those that were exiled. It has also promoted peace and justice. After the war, the Church had a different and more comprehensive approach to charitable work compared to socialist times. The institution of Caritas helped families, by establishing counselling services and promoting voluntary work. Its aim was to make Caritas recognizable in society,

cooperate with other institutions and initiatives as well as integrate Caritas into the overall pastoral care of the parish Church (Filipović 2014, 651–657).

Attainment of external power evoked in one part of the clergy and laypeople a pre-Second Vatican Council image of the Church and a mentality of integralism and nostalgia. This was enforced in the face of increasing globalization and pluralization of world views. Ideological opposition between Catholic associations and atheist groups, which also have been growing in strength and fighting against the “de-secularization” of society, are frequently mediated and emphasized in the media. It is not easy to find a balanced position: for the secular and secularist groups to accept the democratic premise that religious communities also have the right to public activity and articulation of their own views in public, and for religious communities to be open to communication and different views, to seek roads to dialogue and to respect different opinions (Filipović 2012).

The deprivation of official spaces and iconic-symbolic spaces during the communist regimes was for the Churches an attack on the established church identity. However, this was transformed into an underground identity, a “heterotopic” identity that gives Churches new roles in society. It certainly would be a mistake not to take advantage of this potential in new democratic circumstances and to reclaim, in modern times, the Church’s old central place of power, based on the historical significance of the Church in a particular nation.

From center to periphery: toward a new presence of Christian communities in society

The churches in Central and Eastern Europe had the opportunity to become visible in society following the crisis (“crisis heterotopias”) and to contribute to the establishment of a free society. They had to integrate their experience of suffering by building a new model of the Church’s presence in society in the modern world. Using both Christian and Foucauldian images, we can say that it was a church as a boat or ship on turbulent seas, but through its faith it served as the “greatest reserve of the imagination”, the “heterotopia par excellence” (Foucault 1984, 9). It was a church where authentic life and personal testimony of faith were important, where fraternity and solidarity were experienced, a church geared to-

wards serving instead of being served. With its experience of being a marginalized church, the Church must now go back to the margins to take the side of those who are marginalized, stigmatized, excluded, to stand up for the “losers” in a world that is permeated by egoism and injustice. This is the path of the Church, which must follow its Lord and teacher Jesus and which should protect and nurture the growth of every seed of good, regardless of where it might be found.

Incentives of Pope Francis for an outcoming Church

The required decentralization of the Church receives its theological foundations from the teachings of Pope Francis. His program of the “outcoming Church” (Francis 2013, no. 20–24), which is central to his pontificate, captures this new ecclesiological orientation. Significantly, Pope Francis expresses this objective via the strong and concrete image of the “periphery”. In opposition to “self-reference”, in which a Church is at the center of all reports and seeks its own place and status, the Pope emphasizes a Church that is oriented towards the peripheries (Francis 2013, no. 20; 30; 46; 63; 97; 191). In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* Pope Francis explains his position as follows:

I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and which then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life. More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: “Give them something to eat” (*Mk* 6:37). (Francis 2013, no. 49)

Rather than a geo-political or geo-economic concept, which implies a power-centered vision of the world, the idea of a “periphery” seems to refer, in Pope Francis’s view, to another side of the world and its history, one which is neglected and marginalized (Ferrara 2015). According to Ferrara, Pope



Francis's discourse on the periphery has to do with the concepts of exclusion (Volf 1996) and expulsion (Sassen 2013). Since the periphery, for Pope Francis, is an important place, it could be interpreted in a Foucauldian sense as the "other place". In this context, Andrea Riccardi's interpretation of Pope Francis's peripheries is also interesting: "Today in the peripheries we are faced with the challenge of integration of refugees and immigrants, but institutions do not make the integration, it is the communities that integrate, but these communities are no longer existing. We need to revive a great civil and even religious passion for the peripheries, to inhabit them again. There is no future in our cities if the peripheries do not rejoin to a destiny and a common vocation" (Riccardi 2016). Therefore, Riccardi says, the Church must discover lay actors or a community in the peripheries for its new presence, one that would be open and accessible to all. A rootedness in the peripheries, close to the people, requires rethinking the relationship with territory (Riccardi 2016).

Peripheries as "different places" open up other possibilities for churches instead of the traditional, central places of power. The periphery offers a possibility to "enter into the reality of other people's lives and know the power of tenderness. Whenever we do so, our lives become wonderfully complicated and we experience intensely what it is to be a people, to be part of a people" (Francis 2013, no. 270). A "pastoral conversion" is therefore needed: to go out to the peripheries to meet people and to meet Christ, who is already present and active amidst his favorites. Only through following Christ can the Church "get out of itself" and break free from the temptation of self-reference (Valente 2016). Peripheries give the Church the possibility of encounters and of dealing creatively with differences and contrasts.

Challenges for churches in Central and Eastern European countries today

There is a tension between the center and the periphery. How can churches in Eastern Europe become churches that are not in the periphery, but churches of the periphery?

Churches in Central and Eastern European post-communist countries must learn to rethink space. Considerable transformations in recent decades reflect a growth of "non-places". According to Marc Augé, postmodernity brings forth non-places: places of solitude, without a point of reference or

history, transit areas such as shopping centers, highways, railway stations or airports (Augé 1992, 69–72). The role of the Church is to enter these new spaces. Religion is also lived in secular spaces. Indeed, religion is encountered today in different fields of religious, secular and post-secular religious relations (Knott 2005).

Tomáš Halík uses the image of the basilica of St. Peter's in Rome to call attention to the importance of the idea. The basilica includes the area of the square with a colonnade: so in fact even those people who flow through the colonnade are somehow in the temple, though they actually are not aware of it. If the Church had built an impenetrable wall instead of the colonnade and tried to close the interior of the basilica, this would not be an image of Catholicity—for such an image also includes open arms, open space and the "hall of faith"—a necessary point to consider (Halík 2000). By creating interspaces, we find new places of interactivities and meeting points, or, in the words of Sophie Wolfrum, "Möglichkeitsräume", spaces of opportunities (Wolfrum 2007, 8–13).

In these reflections on creating interspaces, or spaces of opportunities, we can rely on one important feature of Thomism: recognition of the importance of "nature". Thomism opposes a certain type of theology that advocates only two spheres, divine and demonic; instead, he also saw some "neutral" *natural* spheres (Aquinas 1975, III-2). On a similar basis, the Second Vatican Council, in its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* from December 7, 1965, formulated the principle of the legitimate autonomy of "secular realities" (GS 36). Thus, it contributed to the courage of the Church to renounce the temptation of triumphalism and clerical dominance and was open to dialogue with the outside world.

Churches of today have to become schools of Christian wisdom: but not in the meaning of classic catechism teaching and instruction; it is more about making space for people with questions, doubts and uncertainties as well as creating space for those who are intricately seeking their own spiritual path. In this context, Halík's distinction between *dwellers*, or parishioners, and *seekers* is helpful: "*Seekers among believers* are those for whom faith is not a *treasure* of final truths, but rather a spiritual *way* while *seekers among nonbelievers* are 'spiritual but not religious', and seekers occupying a middle ground between believers and nonbelievers are '*simul fidelis et infidelis*'. Seekers are not fully identified with organized religion, with the teaching and regular practice of insti-



tutional churches. In this sense, these seekers may be thought of as ‘the new Zaccheuses’” (Halík 2015).

The necessity of accompanying seekers, to travel part of the journey together in dialogue, is evident. The principal goal of this accompaniment is not to push seekers back into the already existing structures of the Church, but, through mutual dialogue, to enrich and to enlarge existing structures by integrating their experiences to enrich faith. The greater understanding that ensues will also enable the Church to open wide its treasures of spirituality to those who are seeking, and in ways that are most relevant to the seekers’ journeys (Halík 2015).

Conclusion

The aim of this contribution was to examine the place and role of religion and churches in Central and Eastern European post-communist countries using the denotations and metaphors of space. By showing the situations in Slovakia and Croatia as case studies of what similarly happened in other countries before and after the transition, a few conclusions came to light. The churches in those two countries were pushed to the margins of society, defamed and persecuted during the communist regimes. However, in these circumstances they had the opportunity to build a new image of the Church: a church of internal power, of living faith, of small communities, and of closeness between hierarchy and laity. They were open to dialoguing with others, although they also developed a stance of defensiveness against the attacks of atheism.

After the fall of the communist regimes, they acquired freedom of action and regained external power, associated with the restitution of material goods and their positions in society. In several countries, they came from the margins to the center and have experienced the ambivalence of power at the center precisely because they had lost their previous internal power and credibility.

The words of Pope Francis emphasize that the Church must leave its self-referentiality and go to the peripheries, not only in the geographical sense, but existentially, to encounter people and to acquire a new point of view. This is a good guideline for churches in Central and Eastern Europe. They must utilize their experiences as suffering churches and become churches that are no longer in the periphery, but churches of the periphery. In the periphery, which is the main metaphor of our time, churches

have to introduce evangelical values: dignity of the human being, social inclusion, justice, respect for rivals, openness to universality, while overcoming nationalism, racism, xenophobia, and so forth. In the peripheries, they can reach the seekers and find the people living in poverty not only in the material sense, but also in terms of their spiritual experience and religious certainty. With this turning point, by creating interspaces for seekers and providing companionship along the way, Christian communities as *different places* can join Christ’s paschal mystery and transform *the non-places* of the periphery into places of new life and new meaning.

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Political leadership transformation through churches as civic democratic spaces in Africa: a public practical theological approach

Vhumani Magezi

Churches are challenged to play a critical role in transforming leadership within the context of bad governance in Africa. This transformation occurs when churches adopt a strong, public, practical ministerial role where church spaces are utilized as democratic civic spaces that can be harnessed to practically effect leadership transformation and change. This article reflects on a possible public practical ministerial role for the Church to transform leadership. It unveils the challenges and opportunities for this practical ministerial role in African contexts.

Introduction and background: problematizing the issue

Africa¹ is severely affected by bad leadership and bad governance, which Igué describes as “a troubled African leadership” (Igué 2010, 2). The bad leadership is evident through corruption, dictatorships and many other bad governance practices.² The state of bad governance and leadership has been documented in a detailed empirical study by Owoye and Bissessar (2012, 1). Efforts to correct the situation from various sectors of society tend to be ignored. Efforts taken within civil society and by churches seemingly make no difference. In the worst cases, churches and civil society organizations have been accused of being used by Western powers to destabi-

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lize governments, hence they are suppressed (Dombo 2014, 145–148). In some cases, churches have joined forces with other national structures in an effort to address bad governance and leadership, albeit by employing knee-jerk and often unsystematic approaches. Coertze (2005, 96) rightly observes that the churches’ response to political and governance issues is an area that the Church in Africa needs to better understand. Agbiji and Swart (2015, 10) note that despite some Christians being involved in politics and governance, it is hardly evident how Christians are impacting the situation. In such a situation, it is justifiable to argue that churches as part of community structures (Magezi 2007) are required to contribute to the goal of good governance.

Notably, the Church and politics have received considerable attention, but with little focus on how to effectively leverage churches to strengthen demo-

- 1 The discussion in the literature indicates that while Africa is not homogenous, the general point of reference has been to Africa south of the Sahara. However, the entire content is worth reflecting on when it comes to leadership issues. The focus and interest of this paper is on discussing the notion and concept of Africa. I use Africa to refer to a geographical space (the African continent).
- 2 See Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index report by Ernst and Young (2014, 9) for an analysis of corruption.





cratic structures particularly in Africa. There has been little focus on examining how to employ church structures to strengthen and advance the democratic cause for improved leadership in many African countries. Where churches have been analyzed in Africa, the focus has repeatedly been on their advocacy role (Agbiji and Swart 2015, 9), but with little emphasis on analyzing them as strategic democratic community levers for leadership change and improvement.

It should be noted that the relationship between the Church and political leaders in Africa has generally not been very good. On the one hand, some political leaders expect churches to support them during elections. They want to use church spaces as campaigning platforms or to seek endorsement from church leaders so that the church members vote for them (Makgoba 2017; Dombo 2014; Nhlabathi 2017; Maqhina 2016; Gathogo 2007). This position was clearly indicated by the former President of South Africa when he was criticized for his actions after reshuffling the cabinet, which resulted in the country's currency losing significant value. The churches and wider South African society voiced their concern. The South African Council of Churches (SACC) attempted to hold a meeting with him to provide moral and pastoral guidance, but they were snubbed (Nhlabathi 2017). In response, he publicly accused churches of meddling in politics by stating, "it is sad to see the church leaders getting mired in matters of politics instead of praying for leaders. I urge the church to pray for us" (Maqhina 2016).

On the other hand, some church leaders use their church platforms as entry points into politics, which angers politicians because they view such church leaders as abusing their churchly positions. At the same time, churches are unclear as to whether they should officially use their platform to campaign for or against certain political leaders. There is a lack of understanding on the relationship and separation of church life and politics. Allaby (2010, 195–197) therefore warns that even though some Christians want to make a genuine political impact, there are pitfalls that sincere Christians should be aware of as they engage in political actions. These include naiveté about what being a (Christian) politician involves and the danger of being co-opted by civil organizations that will be used to legitimize some political leaders. Allaby (2010, 195–197) gives examples of good Christians who were corrupted by government, resulting in their image being tarnished,

such as that of the former president of Zambia (1990–2000), Frederick Chiluba.

In view of the above introduction, the questions that could be posed to guide this discussion are as follows: *How could the Church engage in politics from the nexus of strengthening democratic structures by using its membership and networks without being accused of meddling in politics? To what extent could this role be designated as theological within the public sphere?*

On being a public practical church within governance issues—a framework

To address the above questions, a practical theology for public engagement with political leadership structures is proposed. It is proposed that theology in Africa should intentionally include on its agenda a well-considered theology and praxis of public practical theological engagement wherein churches' grassroots presence and local communities' influence are harnessed as levers for life-giving and hope-inspiring interventions that transform political leadership. To that end, a theology and praxis within the interlocking space of politics and theology in Africa is proposed. Such a proposal entails a practical theology geared to engage political leadership through the utilization of churches as democratic civic spaces. Linking public theology and pastoral care as a subfield of practical theology, Koppel (2015, 151) usefully maintains that the desire to practice public theology requires that pastoral care practitioners and theologians take seriously and engage mindfully with issues that concern groups of people and whole populations. Thus, governance issues are one such issue affecting populations that theology should reflect upon and engage with.

Democracy³—a lever for good governance

Bassiouni et al. (1998, 5) remark that democracy is one of the most commonly used terms in political vocabulary because it touches on the very fundamentals of the life of human beings in society. Their

3 Due to limited space, the discussion on democracy will be handled in a cursory manner.

(1998) monograph *Democracy: its principles and achievement* explains, among other things, that democracy is a system of government whereby citizens exercise power directly, or else elect representatives from among themselves for a governing body, such as parliament. It is sometimes called rule of the majority. The term democracy refers to liberal democracy, which is a variant of representative democracy. It includes such elements as political pluralism, equality before the law, the right to turn to elected officials for redress of grievances, due process, civil liberties, human rights and elements of civil society outside the government. Civil society is identified as one key institution within a democracy (Scruton 2007). The concept of democracy has its origins in Greek: *demos* means people and *kratos* means power. The compound word democracy means “power of the people” (Ober 2008, 3). However, the question is: *power in what sense?* Ober (2008:3) is cynical about reducing democracy to a decision-making mechanism through voting because, if the system is flawed, then the political system will be flawed as well. To gain a detailed understanding of the term, Ober (2008, 8) observes that democracy’s original meaning referred to the “collective capacity of the public to make good things happen in the public realm”. The *demos* (people) were composed of a socially diverse body of individuals, each of whom was capable of freely choosing his/her own interests. The *demos* (people) were not unified by any single ideology or desire, but by various interests (Ober 2008, 7).

According to Diamond and Plattner (2010), one of the leading scholars in the field of democracy studies, democracy consists of four key elements:

- (a) a political system for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections;
- (b) the active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life;
- (c) protection of the human rights of all citizens; and
- (d) a rule of law in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens.

It may be worthwhile to discuss in detail the various aspects of democracy, which include its history, types, theories, and so forth, but this article’s interest is on the active participation of people as citizens in politics and civic life to effect public change. Accordingly, the discussion will be confined to the aspect of people’s active participation.

Democracy, as indicated above, recognizes individual people as autonomous. When the people

come together, they have the power and capacity to change things within the public sphere. The challenge, however, is to ensure that such collective power is mobilized, nurtured and leveraged to effect the necessary public changes. The structures where *demos* (people) are located and exist, such as communities, need to be awakened to the meaning of *demos* as power. The churches, as subsystems of societies (Magezi 2007, 175–177), are positioned to participate in and contribute to democratic processes. Church people are church members who are also citizens who should participate in civic life. Even though citizens may have power, as Ober (2008, 7–8) states, many of the people are unaware of their democratic power and responsibility. Hence, there is a need to awaken the democratic spaces where people are located through church systems. The responsibility of churches and their members to participate in democratic processes implies an inevitable role of churches to engage in politics and governance issues as part of its public ministerial role.

Churches’ engagement with politics as church ministry and public theology

The discussion on separation of church and state has been going on for many decades. The debate is underpinned by the notion of a duality between church and state or politics and religion. Waldron (2014) noted that the separation of church and state was not accomplished until the medieval assumption that all of society was the body of Christ was rejected in favor of a church called out of the world. While the discussion of the relationship between church and state is worthwhile, our focus is not on discussing the nature of this relationship, but on how churches can practically leverage their religious spaces as democratic spaces within the framework of public practical theology.

Forster (2012, 1) remarks that the problem of church and politics is part of a larger problem of how the Church relates to society. He adds that Christians’ task is to live out biblical principles in the context of culture, within society. However, the Bible does not offer a blueprint on how to live this life. Foster’s assertion that Christians are to live in societies and demonstrate biblical principles is an important comment. His advice however, seems to suggest that Christians should simply figure out the framework of living life within society, which can-



not simplistically be accepted. Various biblical approaches can be discerned that can function as frameworks, but *how theologically and biblically acceptable are they?*⁴

The Church is a mystery and has a mission (de Aquino 2013, 482). One cannot understand the relationship between the Church and society as well as politics without understanding the people of God. The Church, as constituted by the people of God, has a responsibility to offer the message of salvation to mankind and transform everyone and every system, such as unjust structures that hinder the coming kingdom of God (de Aquino 2013, 482). The relationship between the Church and the world suggests bias towards the poor and oppressed from a social justice standpoint (Luke 4).

However, de Aquino (2013, 482–484) has made the following two important observations when discussing church and politics. First, the Church is not a political organization, although it cannot be indifferent. The Church has a purpose and mission that cannot be reduced to the political organization of society. The Church has a mission that relates to the historic achievement of the reign of God in this world. This is notwithstanding the fact that the Church is a social force. The Church employs resources available to it in interfering with political life. These resources include popular mobilization, social pressure and speaking for the oppressed. Second, churches should participate and intervene in society. However, a distinction should be made between the Church as an institution, individual Christians and the actions taken by a group of Christians. Christians act in politics not only through the ecclesial community, but also through other social forces available to citizens. To engage in politics and determine what actions to take or who to support, churches should be guided by their mission of realizing God's reign and whether the political forces advance or suppress the rights of the poor and oppressed. Institutional churches can campaign against structures opposed to this mission. Churches should also encourage their members (citizens) to align with political structures that support their overall mission.

These approaches indicate the level of public engagement of churches, which should be examined

from a public theological perspective. Bezuidenhout and Naude (2002, 8) describe public theology as an attempt to understand the relationship between Christian convictions and the broader social and cultural context within the Christian community. It deals with how the public can be described and how to theologically engage with the public. Juma (2015, 3) states that public theology is about interpreting and living theological beliefs and values in the public realm. Public theology is about ensuring that theology engages with issues within public spaces and not only within the Church. Van Aarde (2008, 1229) offers a basic definition of public theology that is operationally fitting. He states that public theology is about the role of Christians in public as well as the public's theology. While Van Aarde's definition resonates with that of others, it has two important implications for the discussion concerning church and politics. First, public theology entails Christians' engagement with the public either at the institutional level, group level or individual level. Second, it relates to how ordinary people practice theology within their public spaces. This second aspect implies that Christians, as individual people, act on their own convictions within public spaces to participate in and influence what is happening. The manner, dimensions, convictions and expressions that theology directs at the public depends on what an individual appropriates from it. Dreyer (2011, 3) and Dreyer and Pieterse (2010, 6) contend that because theology in the public space manifests itself in multifarious ways, it is important to assist it with language. De Gruchy (2007, 39) advises that public theology needs to use a common language that is understandable by people outside the Christian tradition. De Villiers (2005, 530) calls this "translation of the Christian vision to a wider society". Important to this discussion is the fact that public theology is beyond just theological reflection, as it relates to living out theological beliefs and values. It is about life. It entails a Christianity that emerges from the closet to be visibly engaged with the public, which Van Aarde called *agora* (2008).

The implication of the two dimensions of public theology, namely theological reflection and taking practical action on public issues, suggest the need for a proper translation of Christian tasks to the public. Koopman (2012, 1), drawing lessons from Etienne de Villiers' theology, maintains that prophetic public theology should include a vision of a redeemed and new society (*habitat*) of people, with new habits (*habitus*), who engage in challenging the

4 The discussion on church and state as well as religion and politics is extensive. However, the position of de Aquino (2013) usefully connects with the argument of this paper.

public issues of their time. However, due to the plurality and contradictions surrounding public space, theology should strengthen its technical discourse (Koopman 2012, 16). Technical discourse is about translating the Christian task at the level of the public square. Technical discourse relates to the notion of a translation language that Dreyer (2011) draws from Ricoeur's principles. This implies that Christians should engage in public issues with a clear understanding that the public includes complex and multiple dimensions.

In view of the church–politics discussion in this article, churches are expected to engage in politics and governance discussions from a clear theological position. Unfortunately, as Swart and De Beer (2014, 4) observe, public theology has been lacking in a distinguishable scholarly manner in South Africa. This indicates an underdeveloped technical discourse to meaningfully guide church and political engagement. This immaturity weakens the Church's ability to translate its task to the public. Le Bruyns (2012, 3–4) argues that *Kairos* theology contributed to the common good during the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, but that it has fallen conspicuously short in providing the theological resources for meeting the public tasks of reconstructing and transforming societal struggles in post-apartheid South Africa. Le Bruyns's (2012, 3–4) concern with the inadequacy and lack of a public theology to address current African challenges has been pointed out by many other scholars. Bowers (2009, 96–100), who has almost 40 years of theological education and church engagement in Africa and who was among the people who established the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA), notes that there is a critical deficiency in African theological reflection on contemporary challenges, which is increasingly being acknowledged by African theological scholars. Gifford (2008, 31–33) observes that African theological reflection has been too immersed and entangled in contextualization, national liberation and nationalism issues, as evident in *Kairos* theology. However, African theological engagement has failed to reconfigure itself to be relevant in post-colonial Africa. This has caused a deficiency in African theological engagement with respect to such pressing critical issues as politics.

Berinyuu (2005, 153–154) states that the current theologies in Africa are inadequate for addressing African challenges, such as dictators, political and ethnic conflicts or violence. The limitations of Afri-

can public theology in engaging contemporary challenges resulted in the birth of African reconstruction theology. African reconstruction theology refers to the theological exercise of holistically engaging with such life issues as politics, tribalism, oppression, HIV, gender and global warming (Gathogo 2007, 119). Bowers (2009, 94–100) adds that theology's intellectual preoccupations in Africa diverge significantly from what is practically occurring in the lives of people on the ground. African intellectual projects do not reflect the people's needs and the practicalities of church and society. Therefore, Swart and De Beer (2014, 11), referring to the South African context, are right that public theology requires a new, dedicated and robust theological focus that intentionally engages with the contextual challenges and issues faced by the country.

The above discussion highlights the reality of the Church as a public social structure. In view of the governance challenges in some African countries, churches are expected to intervene using the resources available to them. The churches' participation in political issues is a public theological task wherein they should be publicly engaged in the social issues affecting people's lives. However, the challenge is that churches lack a clear language and approach to engaging with political issues. This challenge relates to developing a language that is accessible to people outside the Christian tradition (De Gruchy 2007, 39; Dreyer 2011, 3). The importance of having a language is a technical responsibility for public theology (Koopman 2012, 1). Within this matrix, practical theology plays a critical role. Miller McLemore (2012, 20) advises that practical theology points to different locations, i.e. from daily life to the library, from fieldwork to the classroom, from congregation to community and from academic guild to global context. Miller McLemore (2005, 20) states that practical theology, among other things, is, "an activity of believers seeking to sustain a life of reflective faith in the everyday life".

Juma (2015, 2) usefully links practical and public theologies by saying practical theology finds expression, not replacement, in public theology. Osmer and Schweitzer (2003, 215) clarify that the tasks of practical theology include public dimensions. Dreyer (2004, 919) adds that not all practical theology is public theology. Dreyer's argument is that not all practical theology is aimed at a non-ecclesial general audience, i.e. the general public. Practical theology is a theology for church and non-church people alike. Therefore, the call for a public practical theol-



ogy has to do with strengthening the practical theological focus on non-church, public issues. Within the discussion of church and politics engagement, practical theology provides a method and a way for how Christians may sustain a reflective life amidst an everyday life of political despair and indifference. Practical theology advocates using the resources available to it, such as popular mobilization, social pressure, speaking for the oppressed and sensitizing people to participate in governance structures as citizens (de Aquino 2013).

Churches' engagement in democratic structures as a public practical theology of transforming leadership

Practical theology, among other things, entails imagination (Cahalan and Mikoski 2014, 3). Louw (2014, 11) adds that practical theology and Christian spirituality both include anticipatory *imagination* (*fides quaerens imaginem*: faith-seeking imaginative deciphering). Therefore, it is the task of practical theology to imagine new ways of transforming political leadership via the resources it has available to it (de Aquino 2013, 484). Agbiji and Swart (2015, 9) observe that advocacy is the most prominent form of social engagement of Christian religious leadership. However, in situations where church leaders are suppressed and ignored, there is a need to develop new strategies to transform the situation and change the existing leadership. For instance, in South Africa vibrant church leaders challenged the apartheid system, which contributed to the advent of democracy in 1994. Thus, practical theology should provide innovative strategic tasks to assist churches in imagining and exploring new approaches to transforming political leadership.

Message and motivation: The Church requires a clear message and motivation for engaging in politics. Spencer (2008, 41) advises that doing public theology is doing what Jesus intended—Christians demonstrating his kingdom. De Aquino (2013, 484) explains that the fundamental criterion of the church's political activity is a realization of God's reign in the structures of society. Since the reign of God is about justice for the poor and oppressed in a country, this should constitute a criterion and measure of political activities. Church leaders must ask searching questions of themselves regarding their motives as church leaders and also analyze the motives of politicians. The ethical proof and eschato-

logical measure of the effectiveness of individual leaders and politicians is their commitment to the poor. Whatever the actions of churches and church leaders, those actions should be motivated by the obligation to uphold the rights and interests of the poor and all other people. The way in which this defining principle is communicated and employed to shape political discourse and practical actions then requires technical competence by churches. Thus, the Church as an institution, church leaders and individual Christians should be motivated and persuaded by this principle to intervene when bad governance is evident.

Leveraging the civic power of citizens: Leaders and members of churches may denounce politicians and confront them, but in many instances leaders do not change their actions. In such cases, churches need to employ alternatives for the good of citizens. There is a need to move beyond ineffective ideas and mere verbal denouncement as a way of putting pressure on government. One such alternative is for churches to utilize their positions to unleash democratic power. Churches can awaken the civil capacities of their members to participate in civic activities that intensify pressure as well as mobilize members to vote against an oppressive government. Church members should be encouraged both as citizens and as responsible Christians to act against oppressive structures. In so doing, church members would then be acting on behalf of their private faith, which would be communicated to the public through the use of power and the spaces available to them.

The action may be taken at four levels. First, church leaders, through theological persuasion based on God's mission for humanity, may encourage members to consider voting against an oppressive government or actively participate in activities to put pressure on such governments (sensitization of *demos* power—individual power). Second, churches may facilitate the formation of civil society pressure groups via their members to pressure oppressive governments to correct their actions (local membership networks). Third, the use of church spaces as venues for anti-oppressive government social mobilization and meeting spaces (church infrastructure as spaces for civic activities meetings—churches as civic action pressure groups) is an option. Fourth, churches could form congregational networks and bodies to campaign against oppressive actions and initiate mass mobilization to vote against a government (churches networks and coalition mobilization).

Churches in many African countries have large membership figures, numbers that can change political power. For instance, about 80 % of South Africans, 85 % of Zimbabweans, 90 % of Namibians, 80 % Malawians, 75 % Zambians and 70 % of Botswanans identify themselves as Christian. The point being made is not that churches and church members should be manipulated to choose certain political parties, but rather that church members should be made aware of their Christian responsibility based on God's mission of justice in order to look after the poor and oppressed in a nation. This entails creating awareness and strengthening Christian awareness of church members' duties and responsibilities (technical discourse). This church effort will result in a collision with bad government and in churches being labelled as meddling in politics. However, what certainly cannot be denied is that government leaders and politicians would take churches seriously.

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Reforming preaching: refugees in European sermons from the perspectives of space, body and politics

Theo Pleizier and Tone Stangeland Kaufman

Preaching has been a means of moral and political communication. In this article we address the question how preaching addresses societal issues, focusing upon the case of what has been called the 'European refugee crisis'. Relating to the conference theme, the perspectives of *space*, *body*, and *politics* are used as a structuring framework. Material was collected from six different European countries within a collaborative research framework. We conclude that most sermons (1) advocate an open and hospitable attitude towards refugees in a contested European space, (2) refer to refugees as abstract metaphors for general religious or political truths, and (3) are largely religiously motivated and move between public and religious discourses and relate to both of them. However, the article also points out exceptions to these general patterns and discusses whether the refugee is primarily portrayed as victim or agent. We close by offering a tentative typology of how refugees are referred to in our material.

Introduction

Over the centuries, Christian preaching has been a means of moral and political communication. According to sociologist Thomas Luckmann, "church sermons [with varying effectiveness at different times] helped to shape the worldview of all social strata". Sermons, "were instrumental in creating a basically unified moral order across all variations of mentality and of discourse that were characteristic of different social strata and regions of the Western world" (Luckmann 2003, 388–389). This public function of preaching has been evident in the Protestant branch of Christianity since the time of the Reformation, when Martin Luther preached in Wittenberg during the violent spring of 1522. Luther returned from the Wartburg, where he had been in hiding, to preach his famous *Invocavit sermons* against violence, in an attempt to unite Christians and provide moral and religious guidance (Leroux 1998).

Periods of violence and conflict have often motivated preachers to speak out publicly. Lamentably, examples abound of preachers who have been silent about violence, thus implicitly accepting it, or who

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have even used the pulpit to call for violent action: the call for the First Crusade in 1095, the acceptance of antisemitism in the German Church during the Second World War and the defense of racism in South African and American churches. Against these voices, however, we are reminded of the politically charged preaching of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King and Desmond Tutu (Pieterse 1995; Lischer 1995; Van Ekris 2018). Despite the fact that churchgoers have become a minority in many





European countries, preaching has not lost its moral and political functions (Keller 2017). In recent years, especially since September 2015, European sermons have addressed attitudes towards refugees and migration. This period has often been referred to as the “European refugee crisis”, although this terminology is contested. It can suggest that it is primarily a crisis for Europe, while we must first and foremost see this as a crisis for the refugees themselves, which does, however, have implications for European countries. When speaking of a “refugee crisis”, it should be noted that terms such as “refugees”, “asylum seekers” and “migrants” are sometimes used interchangeably. We use the term “refugees” to refer to “persons who leave their country of origin on account of persecution and seek for international protection” (Moldovan 2016, 682).¹

The practical-theological background for this article concerns the question of how societal issues are dealt with in religious communication. Sermons preached during the “European refugee crisis” provide a valuable source for reflecting upon this broader question. Consequently, the research question for this article is as follows: How does preaching reflect public discourse and interact with societal issues, as exemplified by the “European refugee crisis”? We approach this research question from the three perspectives provided at the IAPT conference: “space”, “body” and “politics”. These concepts provide us with three specific sub-questions that guide our analysis of the empirical material (see below).

Space, body, politics: theoretical perspectives and analytical questions

Preaching can be seen as “local discourse” since preachers become part of a local community with its own troubles and opportunities (Tubbs Tisdale 1997). At the same time, preaching has the potential to make the local community aware of all kinds of boundaries, locating the listeners between the haves and the have-nots, between the elite and the mar-

ginalized, and between natives and migrants. Furthermore, preaching takes place in a public setting. According to Albrecht Grözinger, this aspect of Öffentlichkeit entails that “in a plural society this space is a shared space” (Grözinger 2008, 324). Preaching is just one instance of public speech among other forms of discourse, such as politics or the media. Consequently, in homiletical theory the pulpit is placed at the crossroads of the local, the global and the plural. The preacher both shares everyday space with the local congregation and participates as a European citizen in discourse on the contested European space. The concept of “space”, therefore, provides our first analytical question for studying sermons in order to understand how the refugee crisis is referred to and how refugees are portrayed in European sermons: How is the encounter between refugee and European citizen constructed in preaching that takes place within a contested European space?

Next, the concept of “body” emphasizes that practical theology is about real, concrete people. Current homiletics takes an interest in everyday life (Klessmann 1996), in the human body in the face of evil (Smith 1992) and in the language that is used to refer to gender, race and social status (McClure 1997). Nevertheless, concreteness in preaching may be paradoxically balanced by the use of imaginative and metaphorical language. According to empirical studies in homiletics, metaphors open up different meanings for listeners (McClure et al. 2004; Pleizier 2010; Gaarden and Lorensen 2013). However, metaphors can also turn concreteness into abstractness. As Clader points out, “the power of metaphor lies in the very ambiguity that can open hearts—and also confuse or wound them” (Clader 2008, 195). Consequently, the concrete body can also disappear behind imaginative language and the use of metaphors. The concept of “body” thus adds another analytical question for specifying how preachers speak about the refugee crisis in their sermons: How do sermons portray refugees as embodied human beings?

Finally, the concept of “politics” provides a third analytical lens for investigating how sermons reflect public discourse and how they interact with societal issues. In a recent collection of essays on preaching and politics, Reiner Anselm makes the case that the political dimension in preaching is not only necessary from the perspective of Christian religion, but also indispensable from the perspective of democracy. Preaching, he argues, should not only be direct-

¹ Here, we follow Article 1 A (2) of the 1951 Geneva Convention. “Migrants”, on the other hand, is a broader category, including “persons who leave their country voluntarily in search of a better life, but without a well-founded fear of persecution” (Moldovan 2016, 682). Hence, in this article the term “refugees” is a subset of “migrants”, while we do not further distinguish between “refugees” and “asylum-seekers”.

ed towards the individual, but must also attempt to articulate a political position in order to create connections between individual expressions (Anselm 2017, 16–17). In the same volume, Jan Hermelink claims that Protestant preaching is political due to its very form: the sermon itself is a reflection of the use of power. He adds that this is not only a formal homiletical insight; it should also be illustrated in the material content of sermons (Hermelink 2017). Hermelink's statement helps frame our analysis of the political in preaching both for "formal" and "material" homiletics. While the use of arguments in the sermon (rhetoric) is an example of the former (the form of the sermon and the power of discourse), the "refugee crisis" itself is an example of the latter. The presence of refugees at European borders and in European societies after September 2015 became a "societal issue" in many European countries. The third analytical question therefore asks how preachers interact with public discourse on the "refugee crisis": What kinds of arguments are used in sermons when public values are encouraged or contested from the pulpit?

Method: a cross-case analysis

The empirical material for this article is part of a larger collaborative research project on "Preaching in Times of the European Refugee Crisis" (see Deeg 2017; Ringgaard Lorensen et al. 2017). Researchers in six European countries collected sermon manuscripts and provided the initial analyses.² The results of these studies were presented at the IAPT conference in Oslo, in April 2017. Panelists focused on the relationship between preaching and issues such as migration, political tensions and the presence of refugees and migrants. The individual contributions differed with respect to the research design, partly because of the national contexts and cultural em-

phases. Nevertheless, the common methodological denominator in the project was the commitment to studying sermon manuscripts using qualitative research methods. The material was collected in the period between September 2015 and Easter Sunday 2016. In this article, we analyze the case descriptions generously provided by our colleagues. We bring their insights into conversation through a cross-case analysis using the three lenses of "space", "body" and "politics". The three sub-questions discussed above guide the analysis, following an abductive methodology (Kaufman 2017, 82–84). The final section presents a tentative homiletical grid that provides an initial answer to the question of how preachers in Europe have portrayed refugees in their sermons.

Space: the refugee and European citizen in a contested European space

How is the encounter between refugee and European citizen constructed in preaching that takes place within a contested European space? While the former has left his or her place of origin, and finds him or herself in a *liminal non-space* (see Settler's chapter in this volume), the latter might have different attitudes towards the possible sharing of his or her space.

An invitation to hospitality is the most salient pattern that can be identified in the sermons ranging across national borders. From the analysis of the Norwegian sermons, it appears that all sermons that related, whether explicitly or implicitly, to the refugee issue were clearly in favor of a more liberal refugee politics, and that all preachers call for an open and hospitable attitude towards refugees. In a Dutch sermon, one preacher posed the dilemma of what we have to fear most: a different culture that supposedly invaded our culture or a lack of hospitality? In this example, preaching can be understood as "local politics" since it engages with the local challenge to create a safe space for refugees in so-called "asylum-seeker-centers".

The perception of refugees as an intrusion ("fear of the stranger" in the Danish material, "illegal immigrant" in the Hungarian context or "overt and vociferous hostility towards strangers" in the German case) was found in public discourses in the various European contexts. Yet, while the preachers related to such a position, almost all of them clearly dismissed it in their sermons, calling for alternative

2 We are greatly indebted to the colleagues who presented their data at the IAPT panel "Reforming preaching" for providing us with brief case descriptions from the research they carried out in their own contexts. Contributions came from Germany (Jula Well), Hungary (Zoltan Literáty), the Netherlands (Theo Pleizier), Sweden (Pernilla Myrelid, Carina Sundberg), Denmark (Marlene Ringgaard Lorensen, Pia Nordin Christensen) and Norway (Sivert Angel, Elisabeth Tveito Johnsen, Linn Sæbø Rystad, Tron Fagermoen, and Tone Stangeland Kaufman).



attitudes and actions. However, one clear exception was a preacher in the Hungarian material, who expressed the opinion that immigration is a threat to society and who saw himself as a prophet transmitting the judgment of God. Furthermore, some of the Danish sermons also pointed out the challenges of welcoming large numbers of refugees and expressed a more hesitant attitude towards a liberal refugee politics. Yet, these are exceptions from the general pattern, such as the German case, in which a sharp contrast was drawn between Christians and racists: Christians are “helpers”, who are clearly opposed to “non-helpers”. The German sermons, then, conjured up a space extending between three poles: helpers, non-helpers and shelter-seekers. Within that space, a red line separates Christians from xenophobes, with Christians and shelter-seekers placed together on one side.

The Swedish sermons were collected from a network called “The Future Resides with Us”. The network consists of congregations with a low membership rate in the Church of Sweden and a high percentage of migrants. These sermons used the metaphor of walls to embody the issue of the European space that is being negotiated between non-European refugees and residents of European countries. The preachers emphasized the danger of excluding people with all sorts of walls, whether physical walls (fence, passports, borders), emotional walls (fear), social walls (barriers between people) or politically constructed walls (coalition, party, faction). All such walls were considered problematic.

In conclusion, the sermons can be placed on a continuum *between hospitality and hostility*. While relating to various attitudes towards the encounters between refugees and European residents in a contested European space, including positions that expressed some degree of hostility, most of the sermons unanimously advocated an open and hospitable attitude towards refugees. Yet, there are a few examples that can be situated closer to the hostility end of the continuum, especially in the Hungarian case and partly in the Danish case, in which the preacher engaged with the feelings of anxiety and perplexity called forth by the presence of refugees in society.

Body: the portrayal of refugees as embodied human beings

In this section we ask the following: How do sermons portray refugees as embodied human beings? One salient finding is that the refugee is turned into a general metaphor rather than a specific person. For instance, one preacher drew a detailed parallel between the sinner who is estranged from God and the refugee who has lost his home and is welcomed as a guest at the table. In doing so, he used the “refugee crisis” metaphorically to explain the Eucharistic celebration. The refugee is turned into a general metaphor that also includes the European worshiper, rather than a specific embodied person with real physical, emotional and material needs. Here, *the otherness of the refugees is reduced*, as the preacher emphasized what helper and helped have in common: they are both sinners in need of the Eucharist.

A further example of portraying the refugees and the refugee crisis in a metaphorical way can be seen in what could be termed *the sentimental mode of preaching*. In the Norwegian case, for instance, sermons linked refugees with other phenomena in a way meant to awaken religious emotion, and this emotion is what the sermons targeted. The pain of others was employed in order to shed light on one’s own situation and come to grips with one’s own pain. Some of the Danish sermons also mentioned or discussed the refugee situation as an illustration or an example of what was at stake for the listener in the Danish context. For instance, refugees were used as an illustration or eye opener for recognizing “our” blessings and privileges as Danes. Hence, in such sermons the refugees were primarily portrayed as metaphors and even instrumentalized to address ethical and religious concerns for the listener.

Some of the Hungarian sermons engaged in a similar homiletic strategy, despite using the “refugee crisis” to make a different point and preserve the otherness of the refugees. One preacher, for example, induced empathy by recalling Isaiah’s image of “people wandering on a road to pursue their vision.” Other sermons in this case made use of specific religious imagery when portraying the refugees as in need of being integrated into the people of God (a missiological approach) or as calling forth the judgment of God. The preacher used the refugees metaphorically in order to make a theological or spiritual point.

However, in our material there are also examples of refugees being portrayed as real people with real

bodies. These sermons told specific, realistic stories of refugees. In one of the Dutch sermons, the preacher shared the story of an Iraqi medical doctor who left his country due to the war and because his Christian faith put him in a difficult position. The preacher made it clear that stories like this one should help the congregation identify with refugees. More importantly, these examples demonstrate how the preacher gave voice to resilient people, who, despite their suffering, stand out as icons of humanity and Christian character.

Narrativity in the German sermons attempted to bridge the apathy gap separating asylum critics from shelter-seekers by recounting flight narratives. The voice of the sermon was entrusted to figures offering profound insights into concrete predicaments. Moreover, the German case foregrounded the Alan Kurdi image, which is a recurring picture in this sermon material and well known from media across the European continent. The photo of the little boy dead on the shore became a universal symbol for the seriousness of the situation, a resonating, self-evident argument for refugee relief. Yet, another picture was also prominent. Alan Kurdi came to embody the crisis of humanity. He lent a name, a face, a body, an identity, a family and a story to the otherwise anonymous shelter-seeker, thus permitting us to feel affinity via identification: that could be my boy. Hence, in this case the refugees were also embodied as specific persons at the realistic and specific end of that particular spectrum.

In sum, the sub-question addressed in this section can be answered by drawing a continuum running from rendering the refugees and “refugee crisis” in a *general*, abstract way to telling *specific*, realistic stories of refugees. The tendency in the sermons was to portray the refugee in an abstract rather than a concrete way, even if there were exceptions to this pattern. Hence, the refugee was often rendered as a general metaphor without body, gender or agency. Moreover, at this general end of the continuum the sermons tended to instrumentalize the refugees and “refugee crisis” for spiritual means, such as evoking religious emotions and actions. Nevertheless, in contrast to this abstract way of preaching, there are examples of preachers telling specific and realistic stories of refugees. In these cases, refugees were portrayed as specific persons with real bodies, and hence with physical, emotional and material needs. This homiletical strategy tended to revive the otherness of the refugee.

Politics: when public values are encouraged or contested in the pulpit

The third lens for analyzing the empirical material poses the following question: What kinds of arguments are used in sermons when public values are encouraged or contested in the pulpit? We thus focus on the rationale of the preacher when stories of refugees are told or when their situation in Europe is referred to in sermons.

One obvious pattern in our material is that the sermons took the public discourse as a point of departure for their sermons and related to it, yet their message was largely justified according to a religious rationale. In the Swedish case, preachers advocated the politics of hospitality by using two different theological strategies. First, creation theology was invoked to create equality between refugees and the Swedes: “We are created by God in all our diversity and multiplicity (...) and therefore should stand by each other.” Secondly, Christology was used for empowerment just as Jesus stands in support of those who suffer. In contrast to the Swedish sermons, as well as the vast majority of the other cases, a few Hungarian sermons expressed the opinion that immigration is a threat to society. In doing so, they joined the political rhetoric that systematically uses the term “illegal immigrant” when referring to refugees, while at the same time drawing on Old Testament prophetic texts that deal with God’s judgement of the nations. Although the Swedish and Hungarian sermons conveyed opposing values, the relationship between politics and religion was constructed similarly: sermons provide theological rationale for societal values.

Moreover, some of the sermons in the Norwegian case addressed the upcoming election and emphasized the refugee situation as a significant issue to consider when voting for a political party. However, despite voicing this concern, the preachers did not explicitly offer concrete advice about which party to vote for. Moreover, the message was still motivated by Christian anthropology and ethics, thus emphasizing the endless and equal value of each human being. However, some sermons used religious language and arguments even more explicitly to opt for a certain political position, attitude or type of action. They pointed out what it entails to “be a Christian in times like these”, as one of the German preachers put it, and attempted to offer moral guidance. In offering an outspoken critique



of what was expressed as a “blatant lack of empathy, leading to an inhuman distance towards those seeking shelter”, the German preachers primarily construed “the refugee crisis as a humanitarian crisis”. Homiletically, then, the lack of empathy was handled in two ways: in discourses on *moral principles* or *as narration* (for the latter, see the example in the previous section). Discourses on moral principles raise fundamental questions about Christian identity: What did it mean to be a Christian during the “refugee crisis”? The answer given takes recourse to religious law and draws a sharp contrast between Christians and racists. Thus, again the religious arguments serve as moral guidance on how to relate to the political issues raised by the agitators or racists.

Some Dutch preachers offered an alternative discourse that transcends the polarisation in political discourse, such as the xenophobic right versus the liberal left. In this case, there was a difference between public discourse on fear of migrants and a Christian attitude towards fear: true love drives out fear. In the Danish context, most sermons described the fear of the stranger and an uncertain future as characteristic of contemporary Danish society. While some preachers claimed that the situation forces us to “wake up”, to take the fear seriously and acknowledge that there are evil forces at work in the world, others dismiss “the fear of the stranger” voiced in contemporary society based on the biblical exhortations to “fear not!” Both of these perspectives resemble the contemporary public and political discourses—although they used biblical texts as part of their arguments. However, a third position can also be identified, which differs significantly from the contemporary public discourses. One preacher simultaneously challenged both the optimistic and the more pessimistic positions by problematizing the tendency to associate peace with silence, wellness and the right to be “left at peace”. In contrast, he claimed that peace consists of committing our lives into God’s hands. This sermon is an example of how preachers derive new religious meanings from the presence of refugees in society when dealing with political and religious values. In doing so, they not only copy public values or back them up with theological arguments, but also subvert political values with religious insights: public security and biblical peace are not the same. Hence, the sermon offered an alternative discourse that transcended the positions expressed at the time in the public discourse.

A pattern in our material is that the sermons moved *between public and religious discourses* and related to both of them. Despite differing from political speeches, the sermons we have studied engaged with public discourse, yet they were largely religiously motivated and justified by biblical texts, Christian ethics or theology.

Refugees between victims and agents

In his IAPT keynote lecture, Frederico Settler addressed the issue of victimization in migration discourse by drawing on the work of Sarah Ahmed. Is the figure of the victim a fantasy product of benevolence? The sermons in the project partly confirm this hypothesis. Did the sermons render refugees in a way that moved beyond an understanding of the refugee as victim? Did they construe them as real persons with real bodies and, thus, as agents? Although most of the sermons expressed an attitude of hospitality and thus framed the refugees as victims, the language of the sermons was more complex than that. There was a tendency in the material to make concrete references to refugee stories, which strengthened the agency of the refugee, for example when sermons narrated stories of resilience and hope and told about refugees as concrete examples of faith. The latter reference seems to be more connected with sermons that focused on religious discourse, while the figure of the victim dominated in sermons that explicitly interacted with values in public discourse. In the next section, we take this analysis to the next level and attempt to bring the various perspectives together into one tentative model.

A tentative model of the portrayal of refugees in European preaching

How does preaching reflect public discourse and interact with societal issues, as exemplified by the “European refugee crisis”? In the analysis, the three perspectives of “space”, “body” and “politics” led to three insights: (1) in terms of space, sermons placed the refugees in the contested European space between hostility (outside space) and hospitality (inside space), with the majority of the sermons conveying a hospitable attitude, but a few sermons entertaining a more hostile attitude towards refugees; (2) in terms of body, sermons to a large degree

referred to refugees as abstract metaphors for general religious or political truths, yet there were also exceptions, where refugees were portrayed as concrete human beings who need help or who exemplify certain virtues; (3) in terms of politics, sermons strongly engaged with political positions, for instance by backing up political positions with religious arguments, or they constructed religious meanings without explicitly mentioning political discourse.

These findings can be brought together in a tentative model that offers four different homiletic modes in which refugees appear in European sermons. The model consists of two dimensions related to our two-fold research question: “reflecting public discourse” and “interacting with the ‘European refugee crisis’”. Accordingly, the four squares that make up the model provide different homiletic modes that suggest how societal issues appear in sermons and how preachers interact with public discourse. In *politicized preaching*, refugees are primarily used for political means. In such sermons, refugees are characterized in a more general way and are dealt with within the framework of the political discussion on migration. In *spiritualized preaching*, refugees are used for spiritual means. They are also in this mode portrayed in an abstract way and used to illuminate certain religious or spiritual truths. *Empathetic preaching* evokes empathy for refugees. Their stories are told in concrete ways aiming at evoking empathy for their situations of distress. In *iconic preaching*, the agency of refugees is foregrounded and the preacher portrays the refugees as icons, as examples to be followed by the listeners. While the first two modes instrumentalize the refugees for political or spiritual means, the third and fourth mode illuminate the distinction between victimization and agency, as discussed above.

	“Refugee crisis” in general language	Refugees in concrete stories
Preaching as public discourse	1. Politicized preaching	3. Empathetic preaching
Preaching as religious dis- course	2. Spiritualized preaching	4. Iconic preaching

When preachers interact with real-life stories that appear in the news and that have become part of public discourse, preaching becomes messier and more real. Preachers not only understand the “refu-

gee crisis” and the stories of refugees within a religious framework, they also engage with public discourse by creating a Christian understanding of hospitality based on a theological or religious rationale. Hence, the “refugee crisis” is approached from different angles in sermons than in the media or in public discourse. While attending to societal issues such as the “refugee crisis” affects preaching, sermons also affect refugees: they are instrumentalized for political or spiritual means, they are portrayed as victims or they serve as icons, as examples of Christian virtues as if they were saints. Changes in society are reflected in preaching, and preaching, in turn, contributes specific perspectives to public discourse. Preaching reforms and is reformed in times that are felt as urgent and intense. The 2015 European “refugee crisis” exemplifies this pattern.

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Challenging ecclesiological traditions

Hans-Günter Heimbrock and Trygve Wyller

Given the classical theological distinction between the Christian Church as a matter of faith and the visible church as an empirical phenomenon, the article develops an ecclesiology fitting to current global social challenges in times of pronounced global waves of migration. Inspired by the “spatial turn” in contemporary sociology, and guided by a phenomenological methodology, the authors reconstruct a caring praxis in two different cases. The theological interpretation of these cases gives way to a refreshed ecclesiology, leaving behind a static approach and focusing on the church as “Ereignis”.

Ecclesiology—theological and empirical aspects

For centuries, the Christian church has been defined either externally or internally, that is, either as a geographically defined area or in terms of its members and their religious qualifications. However, in both cases it remains a static entity. This article presents some perspectives on ecclesiology inspired by the “spatial turn” in cultural theory (Sander 2014; Sander, Villadsen and Wyller 2016). “Space” here is seen as that which configures us and where our practices are shaped.

The French sociologist and philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1901–1991) is one of the most influential scholars in spatial theory today. Like Michel Foucault, he was preoccupied with “the other spaces”. But Lefebvre focuses more on the “production” of spaces than did Foucault. It was Lefebvre who coined the key concept of “espace vécu”, the lived space, as the most significant aspect of how spaces are developed. One cannot study only a given space itself; rather, one also has to study what happens in and around such spaces—and the most significant part of the “production” is the practice itself, the lived space.

Melding that into ecclesiology means leaving behind a static approach and addressing the question of how spaces configure us and which spaces do so better and which not so well. There is an interesting

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and very fruitful connection here between the lived space, on the one hand, and the Protestant ecclesiology underlining the Church as an event (German “Ereignis”¹) or as a transforming experience. Following the Augsburg Confession (CA) VII (CA 1530/2018), the Church is something that *happens*, that *takes place*. The challenging and significant question is how to research such a practice when God manifests as “word”.

There is currently increasing interest in researching the empirical aspects of ecclesiology. We sympathize with these efforts, but still we believe that the empirical nature of the ecclesiological needs to be further reflected on. The invisible nature of the Church (according to CAVII, the main text for the ecclesiology of the CA) challenges Protestant eccle-

1 The German word “Ereignis” is here translated into English as “event”, which does not cover all aspects of transformation and change implied in the German word.





siology precisely because even this invisibility is embodied. In our view, some practices might perform the invisible in more ecclesologically significant ways than others. This is what we want to discuss in the following sections.

Subsequently, we present some ethnographic research relevant to the “event” part of ecclesiology. The intention here is to discuss how ethnography can contribute to ecclesiology within the context of the Church as a surprising (other) space.

Our overall theological model can best be explained with reference to Paul Tillich’s concept of an “apologetic theology” (Tillich 1953), which is an academic theological endeavor to meet the overall challenges of a certain cultural situation using reflexive intellectual language comprehensive to those outside the Christian church and referring to a common ground. It is our conviction that such an academic theology is best suited to serve the needs of the Christian church.

The visible and the invisible church

The general empirical-critical task of theology is obviously significant when it comes to reflecting on the nature and reality of the Christian church. Traditionally, ecclesiology reflects the notion of a church of faith versus the visible church, crucial to any Protestant understanding of the matter. The relationship between the *ecclesia invisibilis* and the *ecclesia visibilis* has been a classical dogmatic theme since the time of Augustine.

Traditionally, the *ecclesia invisibilis* has been seen as the “true” church, contrary to the visible church, the institution, the empirical part. Whereas the institution includes all those baptized as members, the true and invisible church knows that not all visible members are truly Christian, despite their baptism or church office. On the other hand, part of the concept of the *ecclesia invisibilis* is that no one knows the persons participating in that realm. The discussion of *ecclesia visibilis/invisibilis* has been quite influential, one that still, in our view, greatly influences some of the discussions on the relations between ecclesiology and ethnography (see below).

Nevertheless, in Lutheran dogma the *visibilis/invisibilis* distinction has never really been the most important one. The rupture with Catholic ecclesiology is one of the core elements of the Reformation. Further, the basis for the distinction between *ecclesia visibilis* and *invisibilis* is misleading. The Church

cannot be perceived and understood simply by continuing the Augustinian paradigm. The Church is not about what we see or what we do not see; rather, the Church is about God transforming lives, and that transformation (“Ereignis”) can take place anywhere, given two conditions: the proclamation of the Gospel and the pouring of the sacraments. This event character in Lutheran ecclesiology is what we consider to have been empirically deepened as a result of the spatial turn and its focus on the transformative nature of the lived space.

This is the perspective adopted in answering the following question:

Can one research these other spaces “*ubi et quando Deo visum est*” (where and when it pleases God)? What is certain is that such research must be empirical, even if the project needs an interpretive component. If one empirically researches spaces other than the classical ones when looking for spaces where the proclamation of the Gospel and a possible pouring of the sacraments occur, then one needs to evaluate different kinds of practices and develop certain criteria. Where and how are the practices *ubi et quando Deo visum est* manifest, i. e. according to God’s pleasure?

This question has, by all accounts, been raised by many theological thinkers in the last few decades. By taking up 20th century empirical research on theological ecclesiology, we gain fresh and concrete insights into the general relationship between faith and experience. Jürgen Moltmann was on the right track when he wrote “Keine theologische Ekklesiologie kann davon absehen, dass das Glaubensbekenntnis nicht nur von einer himmlischen Kirche, sondern auch von der Kirche an der nächsten Straßenecke spricht. Und keine empirische Ekklesiologie kann davon absehen, dass die Kirche an der nächsten Straßenecke als Ort des Glaubens zugleich Gegenstand des Glaubens ist” (Moltmann 1975).

Ethnography and ecclesiology

The Norwegian theologian Harald Hegstad (2013) represents one classical tradition in the discussion of ecclesiology and empirical studies. Hegstad’s position is that the Lutheran Church is the visible church because this is the space where God is proclaimed. Given this position, one should and must research this institutional church empirically. What are the given sociological aspects besides the institution itself that transforms?

The challenge with such a position is, of course, that Hegstad's notion of *ubi et quando Deo visum est* invokes an obviously strong position, but what he does not discuss is whether there can be other spaces where the transforming of God can be experienced.

Recently a group of US, English and Scottish practical theologians (Ward 2017, Scharen 2012 and others) pleaded for a different direction, that is, to develop ecclesiologies especially by means of ethnographic methods and research strategies. These researchers strive to move beyond the rather strict notions of the visible church found in Hegstad's work. But the question is how far this takes us. Titles like *Liquid Ecclesiology* (2017) are interesting, but they also challenging based on the perspective introduced above. Many research initiatives have been carried out within the Action Research Church and Society (ARCS) network. In order to provide a distinguished profile, the book series "Studies in Ecclesiology and Ethnography" was established.

Ward and colleagues claim that more ethnography is needed to develop an appropriate ecclesiology:

At the heart of our project lies a proposal. Put simply, the proposal is that to understand the church, we should view it as being simultaneously theological and social/cultural. Added to this is the insight that this 'understanding' is itself ecclesial. So the very practice of understanding is both theological and social/cultural (2012, 2).

Ward and Scharen expand on the notion of the visible church presented by Hegstad. They differ from him by (for good reasons) insisting that the church is more than the institution. It exists *extra muros* (outside the walls/physical community) as well. This helps explain concepts like "liquid church". By way of ethnography, Ward and others have introduced a more open approach to understanding religious reality. However, this approach, too, does not relate to the event character of ecclesiology. For this reason, the ethnographical approach is promising and important, though the empirical approach cannot initiate the event discussions contained within CAVII. This is obviously the result of confessional differences, which means that the issue of ecclesiology and ethnography is not only a question of methodology; it is dogmatic and theological as well.

The two authors behind this article have, for their part, also contributed to the issue of developing an empirical approach to ecclesiology. But, different from both Hegstad and Ward, we are interested in a

more phenomenologically inspired empirical-theological approach, which we described in detail in a previous research project (Wyller/Heimbrock 2010).

Characteristic of this approach is an enlarged reconstruction of the Christian praxis linked to everyday ethnography and set in a diverse cultural setting. Thus, our scope goes beyond a narrowly determined "religious" praxis. Crucial to this way of reconstructing empirical reality is the involvement of the human subject, especially the researcher subject, who participates as a human subject in practice. The researcher has two roles: being engaged in praxis as a professional person and being a praxis researcher, assuming a distanced position with respect to this praxis. Thus, it is inevitable in each case that the researcher is an "I".

The two cases we present below are methodologically guided by using basic elements of this kind of a phenomenologically inspired empirical approach to the field. Both cases represent social crises and the related efforts of groups giving aid, all of which is reconstructed from a basic theological standpoint, i.e. the interests of researchers reflecting on their personal and religious involvement in the cases. We are theologically interested in the "lived spaces" in the tradition of Henri Lefebvre (1991). The intention of presenting these two cases is to prompt an important discussion on where and how the event character of the church can be bodily experienced in spaces other than the one focused on by Hegstad and (in part) Ward/Scharen.

This observation leads us to a crucial question: Does taking the event character of the church as a point of departure and including ethnography into the discussions of ecclesiology really lead to the necessary and needed destabilization of classical ecclesiology? In our view, the challenge for ecclesiology in responding to contemporary changes in social reality is that it is rather further leading to and reaching a point where the question of the center and periphery itself is challenged.

Language training

The first case, presented by Hans-Günter Heimbrock, is about language training with refugees at the University of Frankfurt, done by volunteer students during the winter of 2015/2016. He participated with a group of five students, working in the capacity of supervisor. Even if this case does not directly relate to the institutional church, it is still a



case that is instructively useful in searching for elements of the event character that needs to be part of an empirically founded ecclesiology.

The students in the group were highly motivated, though during the counseling hours they showed growing frustration with how the entire project had been organized, especially with the willingness, or lack thereof, of the refugees to engage with the language training.

The case can be explored more deeply by focusing on one particular student, Linda, and the way the supervising groups responded to her. We followed her thoughts on choosing alternative ways of teaching.

In the beginning, she recounted her utter frustration that, time and again, despite her time-consuming preparation, only 3 of the 15 trainees (mostly of Arabic-speaking ethnic background) gathered in a room adjacent to the large hall really followed the steps she laid out on the blackboard or used the prepared sheet with words and simple pictures. Some were busy playing with their mobile phones, looking up translations of German words into Arabic or Farsi, while others looked as if they did not understand a single word she said; some, obviously analphabets, were trying hard to write the letters on the blackboard. Still others simply looked bored. Linda felt uneasy with her role as a teacher in this situation. She realized that the learning steps presented in the textbook did not function as expected because of the divergent educational backgrounds of the adult pupils.

Uneasy with what she felt to be her obligation to teach them German, in the following lesson she decided just to skip the prescribed path and spontaneously proposed to her companion that they take the whole group of 15 students to visit the famous Senckenberg Natural History Museum in Frankfurt. It seemed to be a good alternative activity. According to her report, most members of the group appreciated this excursion. At the end, one male member of the group even shook hands with her as a way of saying “thank you” and “good-bye”, an unexpected gesture that particularly impressed Linda. Nevertheless, she experienced strong feelings of guilt and was unhappy to have switched to providing mere entertainment. She was at the point of leaving the project.

It took the supervisory group almost an hour to help Linda become aware of her basic inner conflict, between feeling obliged to fulfill her role as language teacher and taking the initiative and abandon this

role for an hour and do other, more acceptable, activities with the refugees that afternoon.

Finally, the group conversation reached a heated point. Tentatively, we asked Linda about her contacts with the group members. One of us supervisors asked: “What do you know about your group members’ experiences in everyday life, sleeping in a gym hall for instance? What do they do when you they go back to the hall?” Linda’s reaction at being criticized was not that of anger, but rather one of complete perplexity. In fact, the whole group of five teachers shared this same perplexity. During a subsequent conversation, the students were invited to think about the refugees’ backgrounds, perhaps their war experiences at home, their escape under the most difficult of circumstances, waiting for months at the border before being allowed into Germany, and now their experiences of daily routines in collective housing, without any privacy, with very little time structure, waiting all day long to obtain the desired documents and a job and better housing, just waiting, waiting, waiting.

The students took up this topic with growing engagement, offered bits of knowledge and fantasies of what they were hoping for, talked about what they had experienced outside the classroom and shared their observations of dealing with privacy in the gym hall, e.g. who came into contact with whom and by what means. In addition, all the students agreed rather quickly that it would be highly desirable for them to know at least a little bit more about their new life circumstances, but they confessed that, so far, they did not. It was the first time within the whole project that we shared experiences about encountering others, both the successful and the less successful experiences.

This case may initially seem to have little or no ecclesiological relevance, because the whole event did not take place in a Christian church nor was it explicitly connected to an activity offered by any congregation or church institution. The question, therefore, is how this praxis might become meaningful from an ecclesiological perspective.

To answer that question, we draw on two points:

First, it is necessary to reflect in more detail on the author (HGH)/researcher’s own involvement in this university group. Even without using any religious vocabulary when participating in the group communication or ever attempting to give a theological interpretation of the students’ experiences, this does not mean that the whole event is not theologically interesting. Any group process going on

within a set of meetings held for supervisory purposes includes much more than a particular semantic, much more than this or that interpretive framework. This is where a supervisor connects his or her verbal messages, including habits, modes of perceiving the other group members, evoking (or stopping) a certain atmosphere, particular ways of posing questions, making interjections or giving silent gazes. The task is to reconstruct the quality of interactions and interventions taking place in such a counseling group from a theological perspective.

To identify the event character in a given situation, to describe or evaluate a helping praxis from a theological perspective, it is not sufficient to merely check the “Christian” verbal content of dialogues held during the counseling sessions. Nor is it sufficient to check whether this praxis is institutionally connected to a church or congregation, whether the actors are acting upon an explicit Christian order or ministerial praxis. What is necessary is to focus on the praxis of the human subjects involved and to also reflect on the distance or relationship to the institutional church in the area. Is the praxis within the context of the institutional church, or is it absolutely disconnected? In the latter situation, the event character can still be convincing, but one needs to judge carefully *how* the event character can be perceived as an event of God’s transformation or an event of all other kinds of transformations.

Despite these reflections, further reflection on the case of Linda and the discussions that followed during the supervisory meeting should contemplate a basic hermeneutical task on a theoretical level: to read or translate the (interactive) praxis of a human subject in light of theological and ecclesiological ideals, norms and values.

The South African theologian D. Louw recently gave this description: “the academic and theological endeavor is to develop appropriate constructs and conceptual designs that are adequate to interpret the reality of existential and cultural contexts, but at the same time, to be fit and appropriate to link the human quest for meaning to the spiritual realm of life and the content of the Christian faith” (Louw 2010, 69). We share this approach to the case of Linda. The role of the researcher subject should therefore also be involved in the further interpretation of such an endeavor. This means that the event character cannot be convincingly narrated without the exposure of the subject narrating the transformation.

As stated above, the case of Linda shows a situation where the institutional church is totally decen-

tered from the situation. Instead of church activities, practices are put into place that aim to improve the quality of life for people who are lack aspects of it. In a traditional sense, there seems to be no “proclamation of the Gospel or distribution of the sacraments” here. What we find instead is a praxis of life enacting certain core values of the church as event: sharing, connecting, encouraging, and so forth. This is done by establishing a new space, a space of sharing during the museum visit, a space of less discipline and more human recognition. Guided by Lefebvre’s concept of “lived space”, one could say: In the case of Linda, a practice takes place when the institutional church becomes decentered to the extent that new and other subjects can enter in. The case suggests that leaving room for and giving room to others appeals to the *notae ecclesiae* of a decentering church.

In summary, the case of Linda, with all its obvious challenges, displays important criteria that need to be part of the church as event: the necessary involvement of the researcher subject, the more detailed and embodied presence of how participants interact and the decentering of the institutional church. These criteria are confirmed and developed in the second case.

Cavern/studio at Lampedusa

The second case, presented by Trygve Wyller, is from the Italian island of Lampedusa. Compared with the previous case, this brief ethnography is not quite as disconnected from an ecclesial context. Still, it has many of the same characteristics of the first case: the involvement of the researcher, the embodied practice, and the decentering—but not absent—institutional church. The case was compiled during a week’s stay on the island and facilitated by the church-driven group mentioned in the case presentation.

It is a very moving experience to walk and drive along the iconic island of Lampedusa, where so many people have drowned just beyond the shoreline and beaches, especially on a day so bright and innocent. The island belongs to Italy and is in this sense part of Europe, but it is in one of the most remote parts of Europe. The distance south to Libya is shorter than to mainland Italy. For many years, Lampedusa has been one of the main landing sites for migrants from North Africa. They come in small boats, and many of them drown while trying to cross the Mediterranean. When the present Pope



Francis was elected, he made his first, very symbolic, visit to Lampedusa.

I visited the island for a short period of time last year, invited by a religious organization called Mediterranean Hope. This organization is run by Catholics and Protestants together, with the goal being to facilitate, improve and assist as well as to inform and do advocacy.

At the very top of the island, there is a deep narrow valley among the rocks. If you walk up to the top and look down, you see the reception center at the bottom. It is closed off by fences, police and highly visible military guards. It is a long way down from the top to the houses below, so you can sit there watching small people walking, children playing and cars moving close to the reception center. The sight is akin to a policed space.

The local Catholic church is present and visible in the small city center. Inside the church building, one finds very symbolic artifacts connected to migration. There is a sculpture of a small boat with people hanging on to it from the outside, a gift to the church from the Pope when he visited. Inside the church building, there are all kinds of refugee symbols. This is a preoccupied, but still very traditionally centered, church.

Then, on the other side of town, we find another kind of church. One of the organizations present is Mediterranean Hope, an organization co-chaired by the Protestant Chiesa Valdese and the Catholic Sant'Egidio. They do advocacy and information work and assist when the boats come into the harbor at night full of exhausted people. One of the project workers invited the second researcher one afternoon to a music-recording event in a dark basement space near Lampedusa's eastern harbor. One of the goals of the organization is to empower those migrants who can leave the reception center for a few hours during the daytime. One opportunity available to them is music recording. Three musicians from the island and musicians from other European countries as well constructed a real, professional recording studio in a basement room and then invited interested migrants to sing and tape their singing, with two goals in mind: to provide a moment of experiencing another life, an outside life, an alternative home life, and the possibility to sing as an individual, not just as a fenced-in migrant.

This very day two young migrants from two different North African countries came to the basement room. One of them especially was quite good; he could rap, and so he rapped some songs in his

native language, taking advice and critiques from the musicians in the project. The lyrics were not very impressive, but the tune and the embodied presence were all the more impressive. Being in this basement room means participating in all the moments of sensing, hearing, smelling and seeing a lifeworld of shared sensibilities. One cannot think of the basement without this embodied sensibility becoming the central part of the narrative.

Interpreting the second case in line with our methodological approach demands further reflection on the subjects' involvement as well as developing an understanding of the Church as a particular space.

When I climbed the rocks to better see the reception center below, I saw a place, but I observed it from the outside, unable to enter it at all. Moreover, this is the goal and the intention of the center: it is there to fence them out and not to let me in. It is colonial "untouchable" space, fencing others away from all sensibility, from the noises, from the smells and from the sights. I can hardly see anything, hardly hear anything, and I smell nothing. In sum, the embodied touching is out of reach. This is Lampedusa's reception center, and it has intentionally been designed in such a way. Colonialism persists: the other (the refugee) is a fetish, because you are not supposed to touch him/her. It is a center, but it looks like a camp, and it is a camp—the state of exception—in the Agambian sense (Agamben 2007).

To discover the practice at Lampedusa as a practice of a church requires competence and context. Like everywhere in Italy, there is also much visible religion around, but the question is whether this visibility is the only face of religion on this island.

The long trip into the cavern was made possible because of the Valdensian Church, travelling to Lampedusa on invitation from Mediterranean Hope and including a long chain of church-related events and persons. In this way, the context seems quite similar to the one in the first case. It involved persons very much connected to churches, people trained and experienced in developing an atmosphere of "in the image of God", sharing the joy and seriousness and—even more significantly—the senses: tasting, listening, seeing (barely), touching, both being present and participating in the few minutes of melancholic Eritrean rapping. Above all, the narrative developed through the sense of the participant me. To call the researcher an observer, even a participating observer, would not completely describe what happened.

These cases are not just randomly chosen bits of reality. We think they provoke us to re-read ecclesiology and its basic constituents. The famous “*notae ecclesiae*” (unity, holiness, catholicity) deserve a new interpretation, one more fitting to an enlarged reconstruction of Christian praxis linked methodically to everyday ethnography and including diverse cultural settings.

In other words, in both cases there are church-related (or relevant) experiences or churches themselves that facilitate solidarity work among the locals, who have contributed to competence building. The dilemma then still remains: while it is one thing to facilitate, it is another thing entirely to actually do it, to practice it, to be a church.

Crucial to this way of reconstructing empirical reality is the involvement of the human subject, especially the researcher subject participating as a human subject in practice. Taking up this point has a major theological and ecclesiological impact. In a Lutheran context, the church is a praxis formatted by connectivity. Church means being connected, lifted into a God-connection and sharing other people’s lives, you with them, they with you. Since connectedness is such a fundamental part of what the church is about, visible and invisible, the researcher subject’s own experiences of being connected and disconnected belong to the research itself and cannot be set aside. On the contrary, connectivity can represent what the church as event is all about.

One might say that the latter case shows a stronger presence of the criteria mentioned in the Frankfurt case. The church that facilitates is at the same time a church that decenters in order to let the rapping refugee perform, much as it initiates language training to improve itself by taking its mission and ministry in a fruitful direction. It includes voice, sound, eyes, sweating skin, coping and practicing spaces different from the cathedral churches, yet still spaces of the lived, embodied and decentered church. The same criteria were also present in Frankfurt, but less visible than in Lampedusa. Though none of the cases may seem ecclesologically irrelevant, in both cases we are tracing the church as “Ereignis” on different levels.

The decentered church

We started our paper by addressing the problem of how ecclesiology might be connected with the theological and the empirical.

Based on the cases and the discussions above, we are convinced that new ecclesiological interpretations force us to discuss and interpret what spatial perspectives mean for ecclesiology. However, taking up the “spatial turn” from the humanities is done not only to look at a particular space as a secondary object “out there” for theological reflection. It requires following a theoretical shift, taking up spatiality not as a pure fact to be found outside in reality, but as a qualitative description done by theoretical operation, or as a socially and culturally rooted category.

Spatial ecclesiology includes an understanding of space as lived space, experienced by embodied human subjects, involved in meaning making and connected by power relations. The spatial approach recognizes that the embodied relationship between the language teacher, the instructor and the group is just one spatial presence. Persons are related to each other through their bodies, their senses and their togetherness. The same goes for the cavern/studio, which is an evident space in the sense of a room/place. However, it is more than a place; it is a space because of the relations of all kinds of awareness presented above ground and all the relations developing inside the specific room/place. In spatial theory (Lefebvre, Foucault), there can be no doubt that both spaces are lived spaces (Lefebvre), or heterotopic spaces (Foucault). Still, despite its significance, this lived space is not converted into ecclesiologies all by itself.

What one can say is that decentering—in the way we apply it here—is not something *done* to the Church by non-Christian society. Perceived from a Lutheran ecclesiological point of view, decentering is an inherent and organic activity of the Church itself. Paradoxically, the concept of a “decentered church” means a church where what we could call the embodied life of everyday people the subject and where the church hierarchy only has one responsibility: to facilitate the embodied everyday life of the people, much as in the two cases presented above. We learn from the two cases that decentering and ecclesiogenesis are two parallel movements. From this standpoint, we should once again take up Moltmann’s interpretation of the “Strassenkirche” (street church) as the believed church.

Linking the Christian Church as “Ereignis” to the embodied lives of people and human praxis might cause the Church to finally be perceived as a human effort. For Protestant theology, it has always been essential to perceive the Church as “*creatura verbi*”, based not upon human activity, but on



God's ongoing initiative. The church of faith means that God in Christ decenters in order to put humans at the center. Therefore, there is neither a single center nor a single periphery. Dissolving this binary situation and reconstructing it with spatial theory and putting its focus on the "Ereignis" of the lived space are decisive for the further discussion of ecclesiology and ethnography. There is also not one (church) space that dissolves in order to spatialize the life world of the others. The church as event is the dissolving and embodied entity at the same time. Further research on this within the context of ethnography and ecclesiology is an important future task.

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Trust and successful integration—historical and psychoanalytical perspectives on French Protestant migration in the 18th century

Constanze Thierfelder

In the context of the migration processes now impacting Europe, it is helpful to look back into history to similar events when integration was successful and the people being forced to leave their home country found not only new spaces in which to stay, but also a new home where they felt they belonged. In the following article, I will use the example of the Huguenots and Waldensians in the 18th century to show the historical context and the political structures that helped the newcomers integrate. Using the theories of the psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion, I will also look at the inner spaces that the refugees needed in order to regain a sense of trust and belonging after the centuries of persecution and degradation they had suffered before.

Introduction

The dramatic wave of migration that Europe has experienced in the last few years is neither unique to Europe nor special to our times. Migration has been pronounced in Europe many other times in the past, for example after WWII, when many people of German descent left Poland, Czechoslovakia and other regions to come to the BRD and the DDR or when many people of Jewish faith and descent went to Palestine to find a new place and new space to live.

Later, in the 1960s, the BRD invited Italian and Turkish people as migrant workers with the idea that they would quietly leave when no longer needed. Even today, many Germans still do not think of Germany as being a place of immigrants. A part of German society still dreams of being a homogenous society sharing the same language and history and the same norms and beliefs. The situation of today and also a deeper historical perspective proves this belief to be an illusion. Neither spaces nor languages in Europe, including Germany, were ever homogenous, nor were the people immobile.

In the following paragraphs, I will draw attention to the 18th century when Protestants from

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northern Italy and the south of France traveled to northern Europe looking for new space to call home because their lives and their religious identity were being threatened in the places where they had lived previously. I will look at this historical example to identify the beliefs that helped them to survive and the political instruments that gave the newcomers the chance to settle and develop a sense of belonging.¹ I will take a closer look at a specific group of Huguenot and Waldensian families that settled in

1 In November 2015, when the German Chancellor Angela Merkel opened the borders for refugees stranded in Budapest, the journalist Ariane Benner compared the task of integrating these refugees to the situation 330 years ago when Huguenot and Waldensian refugees were welcomed into Germany. Benner does not see this history as a good example to follow (Benner 2015).





the Hessian village of Todenhausen. What were the political and economic instruments that helped these families to settle down and reform the space in which they chose to live?

For the second step of my interpretation of the migrants' situation, I want to use the concept first proposed by the psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion, who is often called "the Mystic of Psychoanalysis" (Wiedemann 2007). Having himself suffered from displacement and war, he tried in his psychoanalytic research to reach an understanding of the ways in which groups and individuals react to such situations by also developing special religious beliefs.

Historical overview of the situation of the French Protestants

In the 18th century, about 500,000 Protestants fled from the south of France and the north of Italy because their Protestant faith was no longer tolerated. They were threatened with death, imprisonment or working on galleys. To survive, they fled north to Switzerland, to Germany, to the Netherlands, to Britain and to the Nordic countries. In Germany, the German dukes, the so-called landgrave or landed nobility, gave them land to build houses and churches. They were given fiscal privileges as well as other privileges to help them earn a living and become integrated. They contributed in many ways to the wealth and welfare of their new home territory. They brought with them the potato; they were skilled craftsman and industrious workers. A number of them became important scientists and statesmen. This is a story of successful migration, of finding new spaces and places to belong.

The French Protestants were not of one origin, but consisted of two quite different groups: the Huguenots and the Waldensians. The Protestants, called the Huguenots, were from the south of France, where the Reformation came first via the scriptures of Martin Luther and later the French-Swiss reformer Jean Calvin (Gresch 2015, 27 f.). In the 16th century, the Catholic Church in France was strongly linked to the political structures. The Protestants were threatening the unity of the state and of the church. They diminished the fiscal income and the absolute power of the Catholic Church and the King of France. In the south of France, in a civil war that lasted from 1562 to 1598, the dragoons of the king fought the Protestant Huguenots and tried to destroy them. In Paris in the year 1572, 20,000

Huguenots were killed in what is known as the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre. In 1598, an edict of tolerance was signed. The Edict of Nantes brought some peace to the Protestants and assigned them safe places, for example La Rochelle. But in the coming years, the agreements were broken more and more often. In 1685, the Edict of Nantes was abolished altogether and the Huguenots had to flee from France. The Huguenots resorted to the Bible to describe their situation. They called these times of persecution "the times in the desert" (*temps du désert*).

The other group of Protestants were the Waldensians (Lovisa 1994). Their history of being suppressed because of their faith was even longer. In the 12th century, the merchant Peter Waldo, who lived in Lyon in the south of France, became the founder of this early Protestant group. Peter Waldo wanted Christians to be poor. The Waldensians wanted to follow the Sermon on the Mount literally, so they did not support a hierarchical church structure or Latin as the language for church services. They did not believe in purgatory or in indulgences. In the eyes of the Catholic Church they were heretics, and from early on they were persecuted by the Catholic inquisition. They took refuge in the rural areas of the Italian Alps in the north of Italy, but were persecuted nevertheless. In April 1655, the Duke of Savoy demanded that the Waldensians open up their homes for his troops to stay in. On the 24th of April 1655, having easy access to the Waldensians' homes, the signal was given for a general massacre. The Waldensians were not simply killed, but tortured in every possible way. The massacre became known as the "Piedmont Easter". About 1,700 Waldensians were slaughtered. The brutality of this massacre aroused indignation throughout Europe, and many Protestant rulers in northern Europe offered refuge to the remaining Waldensians.

In 1695, when Louis XIV revoked the edict of tolerance, the Duke of Savoy, ruler of the Italian Alps, followed his uncle Louis in Paris by removing the protection given to the Protestants and beginning once again to persecute them. He destroyed the Waldensian churches and published a decree that within fifteen days, all inhabitants of the Waldensian valleys should publicly renounce their Protestant faith and return to Catholicism. If not, they were threatened with death or banishment from the country. Many Waldensian families tried to escape to the north, to Switzerland and Germany. Today, it is safe to say that both the Huguenots and the

Waldensians suffered from a long-standing trauma of continual persecution through massacres and civil wars and from efforts of the rulers to destroy their faith and their identity.

In the following section, I will trace the journey of a group of Waldensians and Huguenots who settled in the small village of Todenhausen in Hessen-Cassel. I will show the conditions of settlement there, the concessions made by the duke and the difficulties that the settlers faced.

The arrival of the Huguenots and Waldensians in Germany—separation and integration

Many of the Huguenots from France and the Waldensians from the Italian Alps passed through Geneva in Switzerland and crossed the border into Germany, ultimately arriving in Baden, where many of them settled near the towns of Karlsruhe and Pforzheim. Some went further north to the land of Hessen-Darmstadt, where they were welcomed. Other families continued on to the land of Hessen-Kassel. In 1604, Moritz von Hessen, duke of Hessen-Kassel from 1592 to 1627, had already invited Protestant refugees to settle in his territory. Karl of Hessen, duke of Hessen-Kassel from 1670 to 1730, confirmed this invitation to the French Protestants when the tolerance of Protestantism in France was revoked in 1685. On the 18th of April 1685, Karl of Hessen published the German version of the “Freyheits-Concession”. On the 12th of December, he again repeated his invitation to members of the Reformed churches in France to settle in his territory in “Concession à privilègue” (Gresch 2015, 72 ff.).

The invitation extended by Karl of Hessen specified **three requirements** for the refugees to settle in his territory (Boerma 2005, 21):

- The settlers had to be of Reformed confession;
- They had to render an oath of allegiance to the landgrave;
- They had to commit themselves to the laws of the landgrave.

For their part, the landgrave guaranteed protection to the refugees and promised to provide them with land to settle on and everything they would need to build a life. They were exempted from paying taxes for ten years. They were freed from services and from bondage. In 1685, the landgrave even asked his people in Hessen to contribute to a voluntary fund

to help the settlers in the spirit of Christian love. The landgrave Karl of Hessen-Kassel had vital interests in inviting and integrating the French Protestants into his territory. He wanted to strengthen the Reformed (Calvinist) confession in his county. At the time, the Thirty Years’ War and plague had diminished the population of Hessen significantly. Many parts of the Hessian lands were almost empty. The intention of the landgrave was to find well-to-do merchants and craftsmen to increase the prosperity of his county. Three thousand eight hundred French Protestants accepted his invitation to live in the northern part of Hessen (Gresch 2015, 106). Most of them were poor peasants, and the local farmers considered them a threat to their own existence.

The settlement and integration of French Protestants in the village of Todenhausen, north of Marburg, serves as an example of the difficulties, but also the ultimate success, of this story of migration and integration (Schäfer 1978). In Todenhausen, the Thirty Years’ War and plague had reduced the population to four families gathered around one mill. In accordance with the families in residence, the landgrave gave permission to the French supplicants to build ten houses. The landgrave reserved a piece of the least fertile land for the newcomers, maybe so as not to arouse envy or provoke resistance by the locals. But the effort was in vain. In 1720, when 40 Waldensian and Huguenot families arrived in Todenhausen, people from the villages nearby came with axes, forks and hatchets, hurling abuses, threats and curses at the refugees and trying to chase them away from the ground they had been using to feed their cattle. The refugees withdrew into the most secluded area, but they did not leave (Boerma 1995, 40 f.).

In the following years, the French families struggled to grow enough fruit to live on. In 1723, a French-speaking pastor and a teacher were installed at the expense of the landgrave—according to the promises he made in “Concession à privilègue”. The pastor established a Reformed parish according to the regulations for French Reformed communities. These regulations required 12 elders to guide the parish and see that they obeyed the Reformed Church’s rules. After first holding services in family homes and barns, in 1755 the landgrave ordered another collection to help the French colony to build their own church, called a “temple” (Boerma 1995, 53).

For almost 100 years, the French refugees lived a rather separate life. They spoke French at home, in school and in church. They enjoyed special privileg-



es and were exempted from paying taxes, from compulsory labor and from paying for the services of the pastor. They hardly ever accepted Germans into their midst and there were few mixed marriages. On the other hand, the French newcomers were in close contact with their next-door neighbors in the village of Todenhausen. The French migrants used the mill there and they brewed their beer together. In 1818, almost 100 years after their arrival, some people of the French colony spoke German, but few were able to read German. Then, the pastor of the colony decided to teach the children in French in the morning and in German in the afternoon. Only after 1820 was the language of the services changed to German (Boerma 1995, 72). The communal unity took even longer. The French “Colonie”, as the settlement was called, and German village of Todenhausen had the same mayor from 1880 onwards, but officially the two communities only united in 1931.

Looking back on this story of migration and integration, it is easy to note the economic, social and psychological needs arising from the situation of persecution and flight. The economic demands might be easier to answer than the psychological and social demands. In terms of economic needs, it helped that they were provided with the resources needed to earn a living. In the rural area of Hessen in the 18th century, the newcomers needed land to live on, they needed houses and they needed the possibility to get started without the heavy burdens of taxes and other payments.

Prerequisites for a successful socio-psychological integration

Integration is a goal that is difficult to describe and even more difficult to make happen (Söhn et al. 2017). Socio-psychological integration depends on being able to participate in social life as well as generate a feeling of belonging (Hopf 2017, 62f.). It is inextricably linked to economic welfare and to being able to earn one’s own living. Integration is a task for both parties, for newcomers searching for a new place to live as well as for the receiving country and its local population trying to adapt to and accept their new neighbours.²

2 Söhn et al. favor the term “teilhabe” (participation) instead of the term “integration”, because “teilhabe” describes a process rather than a final goal. It also points to

In the case of the French Protestants, it was Landgrave Karl of Hessen who invited them to his county, whereas the local population did not have a say in this decision. The invitation from the landgrave was of great importance for the integration of the Huguenots and Waldensians not only economically but also in terms of their socio-psychological integration. The head of state invited them to come and guaranteed them protection and shelter, trusting that they had something important to contribute to his county.

This was new for the refugees. Years of persecution had taught them not to trust any political leader. For hundreds of years they had received no protection, being threatened, betrayed, tortured, imprisoned and killed. One of the most vivid sayings that had helped the French Protestants to survive was the slogan: “Resistez!” Resisting, not giving in, not obeying orders helped the Waldensians and the Huguenots to survive and to preserve their identity through the times of persecution, “through the times of the desert”, as the Huguenots called it, referring to the Israelites’ time in the desert.

With a heritage of resistance, trust does not come easily. But it was trust, loyalty and respecting the given laws that the landgrave required of the refugees in his 1685 invitation, “Concession à privilège”.

How do you generate trust among people who have learnt not to trust others after many years of bitter experiences of persecution?

At this point, I want to introduce the theories of the psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion. These might contribute to understanding what enabled the French Protestants to find a new space and for the migration process to become a story of success, one including as well the German people from the surrounding villages and the Hessian landgrave.

The group concept of Wilfred Bion

Wilfred Bion was born in India in 1897 to a British family. He had to leave his home to attend a British boarding school in 1906. During WWI, he became a soldier in the British army and fought in a tank crew in France. He barely survived the battles, with many of his friends dying right next to him. At the end of

the fact that refugees and long-standing residents both have to take an active part in this process (2017, 14–16).

the war, he was 21 years old. Returning to London, he entered medical school and became a psychiatrist. During WWII, he worked with groups of traumatized soldiers. After the war, he trained as a psychoanalyst with Melanie Klein and worked with psychotic and schizophrenic patients³ in the Tavistock Clinic in London. He also developed theories and concepts that challenged those of his fellow psychoanalysts. He served several years as the President of the British Psychoanalytic Society. In 1968, he was invited to speak to a psychoanalytic group in Los Angeles, USA. The group invited him to stay in the United States, and so he did. In 1979, he returned to Oxford and died there in the same year (Bion 1982, blurb).

To arrive at a better understanding of this migration process, I want to introduce Bion's concept of groups.⁴ Bion's concept of groups and their dynamics was shaped by his experiences of group therapy during the war and as a group therapist at the Tavistock Clinic in London from 1945 onwards. Bion discovered that groups as a whole have a group mentality that differs from the mentalities of individual group members. Bion also observed two different mentalities at work in groups (Bion 1961, 59).

The first he called the **basic assumption group**. The group mentality here is shaped by basic needs in order to survive and keep the group together. These basic needs include:

- the need for dependence, of being guided and cared for;
- the need for either fight or flight;
- the need to create a myth or a figure of salvation (Bion calls this the need for a Messiah).

In this mode, the group is unstructured, irrational and dominated by magical thinking. In this mode, the group is not able to cope with frustrations, but instead longs for the instant gratification of its

needs. The group has no inner space to deal with frustration (Bion 1961, 54f).

To be able to function well and work effectively, a group needs to have a **working group mentality**. It needs to be well structured and rational. The main difference from the group mentality of basic assumptions is its capacity to tolerate frustration. The group is able to postpone its needs and longings. In a way, this tolerance of frustration creates an inner space, which is a prerequisite for the development of trust. In contrast to the basic assumption group, this group has an understanding of time and space. Working groups are always in danger of falling back into the mode of basic assumptions. The less structured a group is the more likely it will regress to a state where only basic needs come into the foreground and a kind of survival mode surfaces (Bion 1961, 99f.).

In the following section, I will use this theory to analyse the situation when the French Protestants tried to settle in the place and space offered by the landgrave.

Group mentalities at work during the arrival of the French Protestants

When the French Protestant families arrived at the place in Todenhausen that the landgrave had promised them, they were confronted by a group of people from the village of Amönau, a village not far from Todenhausen. This group came forward with axes, forks and hatchets (see above) to defend the space they used for their cattle. This group was obviously in the mode of basic assumptions, trying to fight for their needs regardless of the reasons the landgrave had stated when giving land and space to the French refugees. They acted as if this space was of utter importance for their survival, even though such was not the case. They acted out of an irrational feeling of being robbed and threatened. No member of the group was able to invoke a more rational perspective or a more structured way to communicate with the other group.

For the French Protestant families, the temptation to fight back must have been strong. However, they decided to neither fight back nor take flight, but instead to withdraw without giving up their claims. The group was able to deal with the severe frustration of the moment and did not fall back into the mode of basic assumptions. One reason might have been the strong structures that the French Protestants had built in times of persecution. During such times, the

3 The description of the psychotic and schizophrenic patients of Bion does not fit the clinical definition of "psychotic" or "schizophrenic" found in today's manuals because these patients were able to function in everyday life and to integrate into the necessities of working life.

4 Another interesting theme is Bion's critical view on many forms of religion and his idea that the fundamental conception of reality needs an act of faith. According to Bion, this perception, which he also calls "at-onement", is easier to grasp for a mystic than for a scientist. This idea cannot be pursued further due to the limited space here.



French Reformed community had become a stronghold against external enemies. The community was clearly organized and had strong disciplinary and controlling elements. The God they believed in had many harsh and unforgiving qualities. These clear structures helped them to deal with difficult situations like the one in Todenhausen when their neighbors tried to chase them away. The French Protestants were able to deal with this frustration and keep an inner space where they could hold on to the trust they had placed in the landgrave and his promises.

For his part, the landgrave responded by trusting the French community and by respecting the structures that had kept the group in the mode of a well-structured working group that had survived many persecutions. The landgrave tolerated their difference and even enhanced their special structures by installing French Reformed pastors, and—most importantly—helping them build “a temple”, a church of their own. For the refugees, it was the first time that they had opportunity to worship in public, no longer having to worship in secret while hiding their Bibles and pulpits due to the threat of violence, imprisonment and death.

But the landgrave also had to deal with the local population, which did not agree with the invitation that the landgrave had extended to the French Protestants. They viewed the French Protestants as rivals to the limited resources that the land of Hessen offered. It was the task of the landgrave to guarantee to the refugees that they could find a place to live, earn a living and worship according to their confession. It was also the task of the landgrave to deal with the anger and envy of the local population by guaranteeing the structures that a working group mentality needs.

At this point, I want to introduce another of Bion's concepts, which derives from the mother-child relationship. Though it may at first seem rather far-fetched to compare the relationship between a mother and child to the relationship between the landgrave as a representative of the state and the inhabitants or migrants, but in fact the idiom “motherland” and the identification of the state or the nation with a mother figure shows that this identification is quite commonplace.⁵

5 In some countries, like Poland, this identification is religiously charged as well. There, the nation is identified with Maria, the idealized mother and the mother of God. John II Casimir, king of Poland from 1648 to 1668, declared Maria his queen. Even today, Polish people say

Bion's model of containment and its relevance for the development of trust

Bion's ideas were based on the theories of the child psychoanalyst Melanie Klein. She saw the infant as being psychologically torn by destructive forces, feeling threatened and persecuted when the caring environment (i. e. mother) neglected the child or did not tend to the needs of the infant. For Bion, the most important contribution of the mother is to hold at bay the fears and feelings of persecution of the infant. Bion refers to the mother figure as a “container” (Bion 1967, chapter 27, 5–7). According to Bion, the mother serves as an external digestive organ for the child.⁶ The child externalizes unbearable emotions. The mother takes them in, digests them and gives them back to the child in a digested, bearable form. Now, the child is able to deal with formerly unbearable feelings like fear, anxiety or other forms of emotional stress. Through these processes and operations, the child becomes more and more able to deal with emotions on his/her own. At the same time, the mother grows in her competence to deal with the child and the connection between them grows. The mother loosens the grip of emotions for the infant and makes, for example, fear less overwhelming for the child. It means taking the child and his or her emotions seriously instead of treating the child as if, for example, his or her fears make no sense. It is also important for the mother not to react with anger and defensiveness, and not to feel offended when aggressive feelings arise in the infant. “Containment” means more than the storing of emotions. It also embraces the digestion of these formerly unbearable feelings. Being transformed and “detoxicated”, the infant can now deal with the

that the Fourth Commandment, “honor thy father and mother”, means also that you should honor and love your motherland, Poland (Schuller 2018, 3).

6 Bion's ideas of containment follow Melanie Klein's ideas on the child's use of the mother's breast. He took the idea further by reflecting on the process of making the milk that the child needs to digest. Bion had the picture of the breast-feeding mother in intimate relation with the child on his mind when he developed the idea of the mother as a container and a digestive organ for the child. But I think it is important to bear in mind that mothers are not the only ones who have the task of taking in and digesting the negative feelings of the child and helping them to deal with them (Bion 1967, chapter 27, 5–7, in Bion, *Lernen durch Erfahrung*, 146.).

feelings and learn to survive them (Krejci 1990, 31). For Bion, the externalization of unbearable emotions and re-internalization of digested emotions is necessary to generate processes of thinking (Bion 1962, chapter 27).

For the Protestant refugees, the destructive and persecuting forces were not only internal, but also external, realities. The King of France, the Duke of Savoy and the Catholic Church threatened and persecuted them, their existence and their Protestant identity. For hundreds of years, they had no one to trust but the people of their own community and their God. When crossing the border from France to Switzerland and into Germany, the refugees did not have to fear persecution any longer, but they still had to deal with their prior experiences of being threatened and not tolerated. The memory traces of what had happened to them over several hundred years remained with them. The strong impulses not to trust, but to resist, continued. The landgrave and all the people around him had to deal with this mistrust. This mistrust took the form of negative expectations as well as exaggerated expectations, which led to other experiences of disappointment.

It was the task of the landgrave to set clear boundaries and structures that the migrants and also the local population had to accept. He and the state which he represented had to remain caring and trustworthy, even if the migrants bestowed on him negative expectations or idealized wishes. At the same time, the landgrave had to trust the French Protestants and the structures they brought with them. The landgrave gave them time to integrate and adjust to the foreign structures and to develop a sense of belonging.

Conclusion: Migration—managing external and internal spaces

The example of the French Protestants immigrating in the 17th century shows that a successful migration process means coming to terms with tensions surrounding external space as well as internal space, which is the prerequisite for trust. The analysis of this historical example cannot replace a thorough analysis of today's situation. For example, the actual economic situation of today does not allow refugees 200 years to learn the language of the new homeland. But the historical analysis points out some interrelationships that may be helpful for the situation today.

The historical example indicates that it was important that the landgrave clarified that the French had to submit themselves to the laws of the country they wanted to live in. As long as they stayed within these structures and boundaries, they received his full support in finding a place to live, the means to earn a living and a place to worship in the way they were used to. At the same time, the landgrave represented “the good enough mother”⁷ who guaranteed the migrants what they needed: not only external space, but also inner space to find a sense of trust and belonging in their new homeland.

This historical example also shows that for the process of integration to be success and give rise to a certain level of participation, it is important not only for the migrant group but also for the local people to resist the temptation of falling back on a more primitive structure that tends to single out enemies and exclude strangers. Only if the newcomers and the already settled groups stay in the sophisticated mode will they are able to develop an inner space and trust. Only then can they deal with frustrations and negative feelings that are part of every migration process. The state and its representatives must play a crucial role in generating trust and holding at bay the fears that can arise in different groups.

Integration needs more than tending to the external needs and managing the given space for all. For integration and participation to succeed, the state has to offer clear structures. At the same time, the state and society need to accept and foster such structures, for example the families that had kept the newcomer groups alive, so long as they do not collide with the given structures of the adopted state.

The state and its representatives have to turn a caring and benevolent eye to the newcomers and the local residents alike, while at the same time providing clear and firm structures. This is a task that even experienced parents in a less complex setting do not easily fulfil.

7 The term “good enough mother” was coined by Donald W. Winnicott to describe the function of the parent to adapt to the needs of the child, thereby giving her or him the freedom to feel in control and to dream. The more the child is able to deal with the failure of the parent, the less completely she or he needs to adapt (Winnicott 1953).



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Making space for the religious other in practical theology: The need for broadening the discipline beyond traditional paradigms

Friedrich Schweitzer

Religious spaces are changing, recently most visibly through migration. This implies that migration does not only have consequences on a material level, but also in terms of the religious traditions and self-understandings of countries or societies as well as religious bodies and individuals. Religious change is not always welcome, but often connected to prejudice, rejection and aggression. What should be the role of practical theology in this context? This article argues for a dual focus. First, it discusses new analytical tasks referring to religious change and reactions to it. Second, it identifies and evaluates strategies for accompanying the processes of religious change. In the past, this task was mainly connected to religious education. In the meantime, it has also become a topic in diaconal and liturgical contexts as well as of pastoral care. More far-reaching questions concerning the presuppositions of practical theology still need to be posed.

Introduction

Religious spaces are changing, like other spaces in Europe, recently most visibly through migration from Muslim countries. This implies that migration does not only have consequences on the level of providing physical space and material resources to people new to a country, but also with respect to the religious traditions and self-understandings of countries or societies as well as of religious bodies and individuals.

Religious change is not always welcome. Often it is connected with prejudice, rejection and aggression. What should be the role of practical theology in this interreligious context? It seems that this question has not received adequate attention, certainly not in the past and only in part at present. At the same time, the question of how practical theology should react to interreligious issues seems to be more and more inescapable, not only from the standpoint of the contemporary situation in society but also the self-understanding of this discipline,

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i.e. the question of how best to keep theology in close relationship with the changing social, cultural and religious realities of the times.

The aim of this article is to point out new tasks as well as a broader understanding of practical theology with respect to its religious presuppositions. After analyzing the neglect of interreligious issues in practical theology, this article suggests three kinds of tasks—*analytical tasks* for describing and deciphering the contemporary situation, *practical tasks* in terms of developing strategies for practice, and finally, *evaluative tasks* that critically accompany respective forms of practice. While these tasks are considered of core importance for broadening the





scope of practical theology vis-à-vis today's challenges, arising as they do from situations of migration and interreligiosity, an even more far-reaching need is identified for changing the *discipline of practical theology* itself. The now traditional shape of a practical theology premised on overcoming the limitations of the "pastoral paradigm" and also of the "clerical paradigm", as it has been called in practical theology discussions since the 1980s, must again change in order to accommodate the changing situation of increasingly multi-religious societies.

The author of this article is working in Central Europe or, more specifically, in Germany. Unavoidably, this background makes itself felt throughout the chapter. Yet, it is also obvious that the basic issues of migration and interreligiosity, or religious pluralism, are global phenomena encountered by practical theologians in most countries of the world (for one recent example from South Africa, see Renkin 2017). This is why the suggested changes concerning practical theology can be important beyond a European context.

The challenge: the neglect of interreligious issues in practical theology

As one can see from, for example, textbooks on practical theology from the past and present, interreligious issues have traditionally not been part of the scope of this discipline. While there have actually been vivid and controversial debates about the scope of practical theology—if it should primarily inform the individual pastor or if it should refer to the church or to society—the increasingly multi-religious situation characteristic of many countries today has not been addressed in such debates. Historically, this lack of interreligious awareness, especially in contributions concerning the foundations of the discipline, is probably due, first of all, to the presuppositions prevailing at the time that practical theology first emerged in Central Europe, i.e. the first half of the 19th century (cf. Schleiermacher 1850; Nitzsch 1847). Yet even with the re-emergence of this discipline at an international level during the 1980s, there was no subsequent re-evaluation of practical theology's relationship to interreligious questions (see Browning 1983a). It seems that interreligious perspectives have largely been absent from the foundational discourses concerning practical theology as a discipline, which has long been preoccupied with different matters.

The picture changes, at least to some degree, when one also considers the different sub-disciplines of practical theology. Yet again, the process of not only addressing, but of also fully integrating, interreligious perspectives has been rather slow. In order to demonstrate this point, some brief remarks must suffice:

- First of all, it was *religious education*, especially in the United Kingdom, which started making multi-faith situations in the school classroom a core subject of discussion in the 1960s and early 1970s (cf. Hull 1984; Jackson 1997). This was due, among other things, to the post-Commonwealth immigration to the United Kingdom, which, in comparison, to other European countries, witnessed the relatively early immigration of non-Christians in the late 1940s—Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. Moreover, the context of the state school led to more immediate encounters between teachers of religious education and members of other religious traditions than was the case for pastors in the local parishes. Since then, interreligious education has become one of the core topics in many countries (cf. Engebretson et al. 2010; Schweitzer 2014).
- Similar presuppositions are characteristic of many settings in which *diaconal work* takes place today. In retirement homes, hospitals, soup kitchens, charity shops, refugee shelters, and so forth, clients often have no Christian background but rather belong to non-Christian traditions. Moreover, the personnel, especially in care-giving institutions in Europe, come from many different countries and also from different religious backgrounds. This is why interreligiosity has also been a topic in diaconics (Schneider-Harpprecht 2004). For example, the acquisition of interreligious competence is now viewed as an important task in training future care-givers (Merkt et al. 2014).
- At least in some cases, *pastoral care* is directly connected to diaconal work and takes place in respective institutional contexts. Pastoral care-givers therefore also have been faced with the task of working with people from non-Western cultural and non-Christian religious backgrounds and adherences as opposed to more traditional settings of pastoral care within parishes. During the last two decades, the pastoral care discussion has become more and more aware of the need to include intercultural and interreligious issues (cf. as early examples Lartey 1987,

1997; overviews by Federschmidt and Louw 2015; Elsdörfer 2013; Liefbroer et al. 2017).

The same is not true, for example, for *homiletics*, although from my point of view it would make sense to also do research on preaching from the perspective of how a multi-religious world is—and can or should be—addressed in sermons. Taking into consideration, for example, the fact that sermons refer to the Trinity in situations where one's Muslim neighbors tend to take offense with exactly this type of Christian teaching could be a starting point for a kind of preaching consciously situated in a multi-religious world. Christological topics would be another core example. At least according to my own personal experience, however, such preaching rarely takes place. Moreover, more systematic bibliographic searches for models of preaching and interreligious at an international level did not show many results.

We are also now witnessing the beginning steps of integrating an interreligious dimension in *liturgics*. The interreligious peace prayers in Assisi organized by Pope John Paul II have become a symbol in this respect, but there are many more examples and developments in this direction (for a recent overview, see Moyaert and Geldhof 2016).

More examples could be added, for example from missiology (which sometimes is considered part of practical theology) or from research connected with the traditional sub-disciplines of practical theology. Yet, the point I want to argue here seems clear. The awareness of the need for addressing interreligious issues is growing in a number of practical respects. Yet, it seems fair to say that the process of integrating respective tasks with the structures and with the disciplinary presuppositions has only just started.

Tasks of practical theology concerning interreligiousity

How can the tasks of practical theology vis-à-vis multi-religious situations be specified? What makes these tasks part of practical theological research? In the following section, I want to suggest three groups of tasks that should be pursued more clearly in the future. Especially the third task, which relates to evaluation, appears to have been widely neglected.

Analytical tasks: analyzing the situation

For many European countries, the year 2015 marked a time when the number of refugees coming into the country was much higher than in previous years. In Germany, the number was well over one million (the equivalent of between 1 and 2 % of the total population). This experience led to many controversies and, among other things, to strong and hostile reactions from rightist movements. The religious background of the refugees often played a role in such reactions, although it was hard to say what people really meant when they referred to “Arab immigrants” or to “Muslim immigrants”. In the 2017 election of the German Parliament, a right-wing party was elected into this parliament for the first time since 1945.

In such a situation, a clear analytic interpretation of the situation is of special importance. Providing such an analysis is, therefore, a primary task of practical theology—a task which it shares with other non-theological disciplines, but to which it brings a special religious expertise.

Key questions for this first task are as follows:

- What religious changes are taking place?
- What are the reactions to such changes? In what sense are they related to religion?
- How is the situation in churches? In society at large?

Generally speaking, churches and church-related volunteers in Germany were—and still are—very committed to helping refugees in finding access to support, for example housing, food, clothing, medical aid and language programs. This corresponds to the official stance taken by the church leadership in the country. Yet as social science studies have shown, the challenge of combatting prejudice against “foreigners” or the religious other even within Christian churches is often neglected (see Decker et al. 2016, 42). It is one of the tasks of practical theology to uncover such negative developments, no less than to study and reinforce the positive and welcoming reactions to be found among members of the Church. Without clear analysis of the problematic factors (which do not fit with the official image of the Church and which therefore are not highlighted by the Church leadership or by empirical studies commissioned by different churches; as an example from Germany, see EKD 2014), it will not be possible to effectively address them.



Practice-oriented tasks: developing strategies

The understanding that practical theology should take on the task of developing practical strategies is not shared by all understandings of the discipline. Friedrich Schleiermacher's well-known definition of practical theology as "theory of practice" (i.e. it is not practice itself, Schleiermacher 1850, 12) is then understood to mean that practical theology should presuppose the practice it means to analyze rather than produce it. There is certainly some wisdom in this understanding. It is not always the case that an academic discipline is really prepared for practical tasks. Its main expertise is in research rather than practical action.

In a field like education, with which I am most familiar, the division of labour is nonetheless not always so clear-cut. Theory and practice can go hand in hand, for example, with the development of strategies for interreligious education. Key questions for this task are as follows:

- How can people be supported in really getting to know the religious other?
- How can the ability or competence of perspective-taking—taking the perspective of the religious other as a core presupposition of understanding and respecting the other—be fostered?
- How can attitudes that allow for openness towards the religious other be supported, while attitudes like xenophobia and ethnocentrism be kept at bay?

These questions were at the center of one of our recent research projects, which dealt with religious education in vocational schools (schools that serve pupils being trained for types of employment that do not require an academic education—a group which often is viewed as especially prone to stereotypes) (see Schweitzer, Bräuer and Boschki 2017). The project addressed general topics regarding the relationship between "Religions and Violence", but it also took up the recent focus on "Islamic Banking" (banking based on the Quran, which does not allow for the taking or paying of interest and, therefore, no financial speculation)—a topic which seemed to be of special interest to the future bank clerks who were part of the project. In both cases, the development of teaching units was carried out together by researchers and experienced practitioners, i.e. between theory and practice.

With both teaching units, the aims were in line with the questions or aims mentioned above. What made this project especially interesting, however, was that it also included what I want to describe as a third task for practical theology.

Evaluation-oriented tasks: testing the effects of practical strategies

Generally speaking, there has often been a lack of realism in the field of practical theology. Even more than 100 years ago, practical theologians like Friedrich Niebergall complained about this lack, which they considered detrimental to the whole discipline (see Niebergall 1916). Yet until today, efforts to critically evaluate the possible effects of certain strategies have remained rare. In part, this is due to the often quite complex settings in which such strategies are employed and which make it difficult to do research in a valid manner. In most parishes, attempts at evaluation may appear misplaced from the beginning, to the ministers no less than to the parishioners. Moreover, such research is especially demanding when carried out according to the rules of social scientific research, for example with several measuring points and with control groups—criteria which are difficult to meet under any circumstance. Last but not least, there always is the tendency to be content with the good theological or ethical reasons that speak for certain actions as well as with the certainly best intentions of those involved, for example as church workers or volunteers.

In our own work, especially with the research on interreligious education mentioned above, we had the chance to also look into the actual effects of the teaching units developed as part of the project (see Schweitzer, Bräuer and Boschki 2017; for a detailed description, see Losert 2017). We were able to design special questionnaires as instruments for measuring these effects. Moreover, we were able to administer the questionnaires three times to the same groups of pupils, at the beginning of the respective teaching unit, after its completion and approximately six months later. In part, the results were encouraging, but in part they were also disappointing or at least sobering.

Three main results can be described briefly in the following manner:

- The clearest results could be stated as part of the *knowledge component*. The pupils in both experimental groups showed a greater increase in reli-

gion-related knowledge than those in the control group.

- Results for religious *perspective-taking* were mixed. While some of the pupils showed an increase in this component, others showed no increase. More detailed statistical analysis makes it likely that a teaching strategy directly related to the life-world or professional context of the pupils was, contrary to educational expectations, less effective than a more traditional teaching strategy based on a general topic like “religions and violence”. It was also noted, however, that insofar as increases in the competence of perspective-taking were achieved, some of these increases also showed up several months after the experiment had concluded, while others did not. In other words, at least some of the learning effects achieved at the end of the intervention had disappeared some months later.
- The pupils’ *attitudes* did not change more in the experimental groups than in the control group. In other words, the treatment had no measurable effects on religion-related attitudes—which was considered quite disappointing because such changes appear to be most desirable, for example in overcoming xenophobia.

This is not the place to go into more detail about this research project. I am mentioning it here only for the purpose of demonstrating the need for critical evaluative research. While the intentions of the teaching intervention certainly were quite in line with the idea of making space for the religious other, the results were much more limited than expected. Good intentions obviously are not enough—not with teaching and also not in other fields of practical theology.

Interreligiosity and the shape of the discipline

Based on the different tasks described above, it is obvious that interreligious questions need to be included in the work of practical theology much more than has been the case thus far. There is a need not only for practical initiatives, but also for redesigning practical theology itself. A lack of interreligious awareness would cause the discipline fall short of one of its main aims—the reference to the contemporary world, especially in terms of religion. The understanding that I want to recommend in this fi-

nal section goes much further than only having a broader thematic scope in practical theology. Instead, the suggestion is that the foundations of the discipline themselves have to be aligned in a new manner. Such a realignment is needed for the discipline in order to gain a new perspective, one which then can also make itself felt in the various fields of practical theology’s work. In other words, my suggestion is not only of interest in terms of theory building, but it entails palpable practical consequences as well.

As pointed out in section 1, practical theology emerged as an academic discipline at a time when, at least in Central Europe, there was no multi-religious presence. Next to the overwhelming Christian majority, there was only a small Jewish population, but Judaism at the time was deplorably not considered worthy of equal respect. Moreover, most people could not even imagine that worldviews based on atheism could ever be accepted—a limitation which can be seen most clearly, for example, even in John Locke’s famous “Letter Concerning Toleration” (see Locke 1983, 51). The classics of practical theology who have been quoted as the founders of the discipline until today, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1850) and Carl Immanuel Nitzsch (1847) in the first place, did not think of how to relate to non-Christian views in their understanding of the discipline. They obviously saw no reason to do so—and if they had tried to do so, they would probably not have been understood. Interestingly, in his speeches about religion Schleiermacher addressed questions that could be seen as part of a theology of religions (see Schleiermacher 1967). Yet in his practical theology, he made no such references to this issue.

When an interest in practical theology re-emerged in the 1980s, in Central Europe as well as in the United States, again interreligious issues did not play a role. The idea then was to broaden the scope of practical theology, but not in order to include a multi-religious perspective. Since the discussions of the 1980s and 1990s can still be considered, at least to some degree, foundational in relationship to today’s understanding of practical theology (among other things, they led to the founding of the International Academy of Practical Theology), it seems worthwhile to consider the respective arguments more closely.

When looking back at the discussions from the standpoint of two important books, *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church, and the World* (Browning 1983a) and *Practical Theology—*



International Perspectives (Schweitzer and van der Ven 1999), it seems obvious that many of the contributions moved in two directions, broadening the understanding of practical theology beyond the Church and developing a methodology suitable to this context.

- On the one hand, the emerging views of the 1980s in the United States were trying to overcome what Edward Farley had influentially described as the “pastoral paradigm” and the “clerical paradigm” of practical theology in order to broaden the discipline to account for more of a “societal paradigm” (see Farley 1983). In a similar vein, the German practical theologian Dietrich Rössler developed an understanding of practical theology in relationship to what he called the three forms of Modern Christianity—individual Christianity, ecclesial Christianity and societal Christianity (Rössler 1986, 1999). These attempts were also meant to allow for establishing practical theology as an academic research discipline, alongside the social sciences, instead of a discipline merely providing practical advice to individual pastors (the traditional “pastoral paradigm”).
- On the other hand, especially in the case of Browning, this implied developing a clear methodology for practical theology, one which included analytical as well as strategic procedures but was always based on principles that could be publicly accounted for (Browning 1991).

In this understanding, public accountability also had to do with the pluralism that was considered characteristic of the time (Browning 1983b). Arguments had to be based on reasons that would not only make sense to pastors or other church members but to a much wider audience as well. This audience was not to be limited to Christianity, but should likewise be open to secular worldviews. Non-Christian religions, however, were not addressed at that time. It was only more than 20 years later that Browning showed remarkable interest in, for example, understanding family structures and childrearing in non-Christian religions (see Browning and Bunge 2009). Yet the understanding of “pluralism” in the 1980s clearly did not include such interests.

In sum, one can say that the new practical theology of the 1980s, which still exerts considerable influence today, developed along an axis ranging from the individual pastor towards society at large (theo-

logically speaking, towards the “world”). This was an important step in terms of broadening the understanding of practical theology, but it is no longer sufficient today. There needs to be a different axis of development that expands our understanding of practical theology along the parameters of the relationship between Christianity and non-Christian religions. This also includes the need for a more inclusive understanding of pluralism, for example one that goes beyond the traditional polarity between the religious and the secular.

If this is true, the now traditional critique of the pastoral and clerical paradigm of practical theology is no longer sufficient. Practical theology needs to include interreligious issues not just as an addition that can be grafted upon its existing structures. Just like the classic figures of the discipline, be they from the first half of the 19th century or the time towards the end of the 20th century, made their changing situations the starting point for developing the discipline by opening it up beyond pastors and beyond the church, so practical theology today needs to be brought in line anew with a changing situation. In other words, practical theology as a discipline must now be developed within the parameters of a religiously plural society and global world.

What would this imply for practical theology? To my understanding, it would mean that the core concepts upon which practical theology has been premised from its very beginnings have to be reexamined and reconsidered. At this point, only some preliminary directions in which this reconsideration could lead will be mentioned:

- First of all, it is the very understanding of religion informing the discipline that now has to be expanded in order to explicitly include non-Christian religious traditions and convictions. It makes a difference if one only takes the varieties of Christian religion into consideration or if space is made for non-Christian varieties as well.
- Second, the understanding of practice to which practical theology refers has to be broadened in such a way that the encounter between different religious bodies as well as that of individuals belonging to different religious traditions can become a core topic of practical theology. More and more often, such encounters are characteristic of the situations addressed by practical theology. Does this imply that there are new forms of practice to be studied in terms of practical theology?
- Third, there is a need for some kind of theology of religions that can help practical theology in

working with conflicting religious truth claims. In the meantime, many different kinds of theologies of religion have become available, mostly in the field of systematic theology. What do they mean for practical theology? Does practical theology have to make a contribution to this theology?

Admittedly, these are only some of the questions that need to be addressed. It would take more than a single article to explore them. Most likely, it will also require joint efforts by groups of practical theologians to develop convincing answers.

Conclusion

As has become obvious in this article, the increasingly multi-religious situation of the present poses a number of challenging tasks for practical theology. There are good reasons that practical theology should not bypass these challenges, not only in terms of the needs of individuals and groups, which should be addressed in their religious dimension, but also because of the possible religious conflicts involved. Instead, it is the very identity of practical theology itself which is at stake here—an identity that is premised on doing theology in close relationship with the contemporary world.

At the same time, the identity of the discipline will not remain the same if practical theology is really willing—as it should be—to make interreligious issues part of its work, including its own self-understanding. The interreligious dimension was not included in the foundations of practical theology, not in the beginning when the discipline first developed nor when it was re-established in the late 20th century. The 21st century could be the time to make up for what, from today's point of view, must be considered a serious shortcoming of practical theology. Making space for the religious other means changing religious spaces and also changing practical theology.

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The Ooze of God's Spirit: Liquid Sacramentality for a Liquid Age

Edward Foley

This essay explores the concept of sacramentality, so central to Roman Catholicism and other strands of Christianity, in a liquid age. Historical reflections on the elastic nature of this concept, lead to reflection about the contemporary trend towards increased ritual invention and the phenomenon of "liquid ritualization." Two brief case studies of ritual invention are presented to illustrate how such invention is filling in the gaps for theists and others where established rituals do not exist. These examples raise the question of theologizing about such liquid ritualization. In the end, the author turns to the concept of *sensus fidelium* to suggest that contemporary sacramental practices are too stolid and inflexible, and that an adequate sacramental theology in this liquid moment must recognize the fluidity of God's own self-communication and the need for more ambidextrous reception of that self-communication.

Introduction

The religious tradition, too often homogenized under the label of "Christian," is anything but homogenous. As a Catholic-Christian, baby-boomer cleric with an admitted inclination to be a provocateur, I find the label of "Christian" as problematic as it is useful.

The celebrated biblical scholar Raymond Brown shattered the univocal nature of emerging Christianity in a book that impertinently touted the multiple "churches" that the apostles left behind (Brown 1984). Patristics scholar Robert Wilken dissuades us from thinking about Christianity as born in uniformity and evolving into pluriformity. The opposite was true: Christianity was born in diversity and in many ways became more uniform (Wilken 1971). As a colleague once reminded me, Jesus' name was posted in three languages on the cross. Christianity was anything but univocal in its origins.

While pluriform to its roots, emerging Christianity from its backwater origins to the present day has also been marked by certain key, reoccurring practices; from such practices beliefs and doctrines

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evolved. Rather than falling into unhelpful binaries when interpreting Christian origins and development,¹ it is possible to recognize reoccurring dynamics in Christian "traditions" without homogenizing them. In the language of Paul Gilroy, there are detectable "flows" (Gilroy 1993, 16 *et passim*) in Christian practices and beliefs that mark this religious tapestry across time and territory. One of those flows concerns the centrality of the body to this religion.

1 E.g., in the field of liturgical history scholars are sometimes classified as "splitters" and "lumpers." In that vein Robert Taft has criticized liturgical historian Paul Bradshaw as being too much of a "splitter," an approach Taft believes makes it difficult to generalize about past liturgical practices (Taft 1994).





The Body and Sacramentality

The lynchpin that flows across Christianity's often bifurcated approach to the body is the early belief in what came to be called the incarnation, i.e., that God in Jesus took on a human body. This "Word became flesh" (John 1:14) assertion theologically implicates the bodies of all other human beings, and even the very material nature of the cosmos. This integrating teaching recognizes not only that God took on a specific human form in the Palestinian peasant history known as Jesus, but that in the birth of Jesus divinity wed with all of humanity as well as with the created cosmos. Thus, incarnation is not only defined by the embodiment of God in Jesus, but by a Christian belief in the embodiment of God in humanity (Kelly 2010) and even in all of creation (Francis 2015). In the Catholic-Christian tradition this is sometimes called the "sacramental principle," i.e., a belief that everything in the created world has the potential for revealing God (Himes 2014).

Intimately related to this belief in incarnation is a persistent yet diverse engagement in sacramental practices. While the language of sacramentality does not exist in the early community, practices later identified as sacramental were present from the beginning.² Two cardinal practices, reported in the New Testament and recognized as "sacraments" by virtually all Christians today, were baptism and Eucharist. Besides these pivotal practices literally hundreds of other practices in emerging Christianity were considered "sacraments." Defined by Augustine (d. 430) as a visible sign of an invisible grace or as a "visible word" (*Tractatus in Evangelium Johanni* 5.6 and 80.3) the bishop from Hippo himself designates over 300 visible actions as sacraments (Couturier 1953). This sacramental elasticity continued through the early middle ages. Thus, Ambrose (d. 397) could consider the washing of the feet as a sacrament (*De Mysteriis* 6:31–33), Pseudo-Dionysius (fl. ca. 500) acknowledged the consecration of an altar as a sacrament (*De ecclesiastica hierarchia* 4:12), and Peter Damian (d. 1072) listed the anointing of a monarch among the sacraments (*Sermo* 69). Such sacramental plasticity wanes in the 12th century in

the west, however. Especially influential is the formulation of Peter Lombard (d. 1160) who, in the 4th book of his famous *Libri Quattuor Sententiarum*, restricts the number of official sacraments to seven (Finn 2008). The 16th century reformation becomes even more restrictive reducing them to two.

While Lombard's restricted definition of sacrament continues as the official position of the Roman Catholic Church today, and the 16th century reformation has confined most Protestants to only a doublet of sacraments, the late 20th and early 21st century has witnessed a creeping sacramental plasticity within our ecclesial bodies and an explosion of such plasticity in other belief systems and faith arenas. A key crack in the seven-fold sacramental system for Roman Catholics appeared in the documents of the Second Vatican Council that, not without some controversy, multiple times employed that language of "sacrament" to reference the church itself (cf. Doyle 2015). The Belgian Roman Catholic theologian Edward Schillebeeckx (d. 2009) was an important voice in pushing sacramental boundaries. His influential *Christus, sacrament van de Godsontmoeting* (1959, in English appearing as *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God* in 1963) was already anticipated in his 1952 work *De sacramentele heileconomie*. Another prominent voice of the era was the German theologian Karl Rahner (d. 1984), whose emphasis on the primacy of the "liturgy of the world" over "the liturgy of the Church" (cf. Skelley 1991) provided an implicit critique of the official sacramental system of the Roman Catholic Church, and gave fresh impetus for reclaiming the foundational nature of the previously mentioned "sacramental principle." More recently, Pope Francis' lyrical encyclical on the integrity of creation (Francis 2015), points to a broader sacramental vision when he speaks of the entire world as "a caress of God" (no. 84), considers the world a "divine manifestation" (no. 85) and hymns the "sacredness of the world" (no. 85) that not only manifests God but is actually a "locus of [God's] presence" (no. 88).

From Elasticity to Liquidity

While there has been some theoretical movement in the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church regarding a more elastic understanding of sacramentality, our official sacramental repertoire remains quite stilted. Such stolidity is symbolic of my Church's official teachings (or lack thereof) about

² The New Testament speaks of *mysterion*, sometimes defined as a divine secret in the process of being revealed. It does not have a strong connection to cultic actions in the New Testament. When Jerome (d. 420) translated the Greek New Testament into Latin, 8 times the language of *mysterion* was replaced by *sacramentum*.

marriage, sexual orientation and gender identification. However, as is often the case, ritual practice outpaces sacramental theology; the former has something to teach the latter, another case of praxis informing and challenging theory.

In his celebrated 2000 publication, the Polish sociologist and philosopher Zygmunt Bauman deemed the current era one of “liquid modernity” (Bauman 2000). While previous periods in history had certainly witnessed a cycle of sometimes radical disintegration and renewal, Bauman argues that the current modernity is different. Whereas the “solids” of a previous era (e.g., monarchy) were deconstructed but replaced by new solids (e.g., communism in Russia), in this modernity melting solids are not being displaced by new and improved solids. Rather, the state of commerce, relationships, education, society and even self-identity are characterized by liquidity, deregulation, liberalization and what Bauman calls “flexibilization”: constantly poised for change. This state has come about through the “radical melting of the fetters and manacles rightly or wrongly suspected of limiting the individual freedom to choose or to act” (Bauman 2000, 3).

While Bauman does not believe that liquid modernity generates a demand for religion and—according to the insightful analysis of Kees de Groot—does not leave room for religion except for fundamentalism (de Groot 2008, 281), there are yet those who champion forms of liquid religion and even liquid church. Well known to practical theologians is the work of Pete Ward, who believes this liquid moment is an opportunity to promote a new way of being church within contemporary culture (Ward 2002). His vision of a more diffuse, less institutionalized form of Christianity—conjoined with his concern about youth ministry—emphasizes the importance of existing networks already present within contemporary society (Ward 2002, 41–42). These might include Christian support groups, bible study, music festivals, or other youth activities. De Groot has a different image of what liquid church could be: one that he asserts takes the work of Bauman more seriously. His approach to “liquid *koinonia*,” which he believes is worthy of empirical study, attempts to value momentary types of community in which people take part in various degrees (de Groot 2007, 189).

A parallel reality to the rethinking about liquid church is the phenomenon that some have deemed “liquid ritualizing.” As presented by William Arf-

man, liquid ritualizing is characterized by an openness to ritual transfer (Arfman 2014, 23). In the current moment, in which the role of tradition has been radically altered to the point that sociologist Anthony Giddens claims that we all live in post-traditional societies (Giddens 1994, 56), the boundaries between rituals have become increasingly permeable. According to Arfman, ideas freely seep, ooze and flow from one tradition to another. While not new, Arfman contends that there is an overabundance of ritual transfer today (Arfman 2014, 4). The ritual dynamics research group at Heidelberg University elucidates by suggesting that “ritual transfer is what happens when the context of a rite changes. To deal with such contextual changes, elements of rites from other traditions will be adapted” (Arfman 2014, 21).

What Arfman considers ritual transfer Catherine Bell labels “ritual invention” (Bell 1997, 223ff). While it might seem counterintuitive to some, rituals cannot only be invented, they can also be conceived for a single use and never repeated (cf. Grimes 1992, 24). Bell agrees with Arfman that while ritual invention is not a new phenomenon, the freedom people now feel “to eschew any claims for ritual antiquity may be relatively unprecedented” (Bell 1997, 225).

Ritual Invention, Transfer and Liquidity

For almost four decades I have had the opportunity to teach presiding to ordination candidates in the Roman Catholic Church. Such courses are designed to nurture embodied skills, dynamic spiritualities, contextual awareness and theological/liturgical competence in seminarians as they assume responsibilities for leading faith communities in the celebrations of the sacraments and other official rituals of the Roman Catholic Church. Because these candidates have come from multiple contexts and countries, and preside in a myriad of languages, there is clearly a level of improvisation and adaptation, e.g., a student from Peru, whose overseas training experience was in Taiwan, presides at Eucharist in a classroom in Chicago, preparing for ministry in Nepal: an actual case. At the same time, because there is an expectation that ordination candidates will acquire competency in leading the official liturgies of the Roman Catholic Church, there is little explicit ritual invention occurring in such presiding courses at Catholic Theological Union.



Over the past few years, however, I have also had the opportunity to team teach a somewhat parallel course to M.Div. students at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. This much more religiously (though not culturally) diverse population—Muslim, Buddhist, Agnostic, Disciples of Christ, Baptist, Hindu, etc.—has moved us to retitle the course from “preaching and presiding” to include “ritual leadership and speaking.” The culminating requirement for this course is that each student is required to design and enact a 30 minute ritual around what is broadly defined as some “life-cycle event.” In these summative performances, ritual invention, transfer and liquidity abounds. We have experienced, for example, a Confucian wedding between two women, a Buddhist post-abortion healing ritual, the dissolving of a congregation, a (re) naming ceremony for a transgendered person and a death with dignity ritual. The two M.Div. candidates who created and led the renaming ceremony and death with dignity ritual have given me permission to reference their work here, and I am very grateful to A. Tonks Lynch and Luke Allgeyer for allowing me both to witness the enactment of these rituals and for their generosity in supplying me with complete texts of their work.

A (re)naming ceremony:

The (re)naming ceremony created by A. Tonks Lynch is situated in the Methodist tradition, contextualized in a local congregation—Wesley UMC—that has “a larger than average number of participants that are gender, romantic, and/or sexual minorities.” The main ritual actor is Evelyn Wade (a pseudonym), who has volunteered in the church’s program for homeless youth and regularly participates in community worship. Over time Evelyn questioned her assigned male at birth (AMAB) identity, and began to identify as trans. It is this evolution that has led Evelyn to request a (re)naming ceremony. An outline of the ceremony follows:

Welcome

Scripture (Luke 21: 7–20) read by Evelyn Wade

Reflection by A. Tonks Lynch, that focuses on the Jesus of the gospels who spoke and laughed and prayer with every kind of person, who invites us into a relationship with

him, and empowers us to see the sacred in everyone we meet

Litany of Affirmation

Evelyn: We are ...

All: our bodies, our minds our hearts.

Evelyn: We are ...

All: one and many, dissimilar and unique, all of us made in the sacred image of God.

Evelyn: We are ...

All: connected, community, covenanted to each other.

Evelyn: Loved and loving, we are most sacred when we are living as our fullest selves.

All: Amen.

Prayer Circle: The community is invited forward in body or in spirit into a circle. Now is the time to raise our hearts, offer our joys and concerns as a community, and welcome Evelyn Wade into her new name among old friends. If you are unable or unwilling to participate, please remain seated and cross your arms across your chest in an “X.”

Sharing the Elements of Communion: If you do not wish to receive the bread and cup, simply cross your arms across your chest in an “X.” In the United Methodist Church, we practice an open table. Anyone who wishes to receive may do so, no matter creed or affiliation. We practice communion by intinction, in which we are given a piece of bread, dip it in the cup, and eat.

Invitation to Share Signs of Peace.

Death with Dignity Ritual:

Luke Allgeyer explains that the genesis of this ritual is the recent development in six states (including his home state of Montana) to legalize assisted suicide. Allgeyer, who identifies with the Lutheran tradition, chooses to reference this ritual around a last meal as “medically-informed self-elected exit of life.” Recognizing a ritual gap here, as did Lynch and so many of their other classmates, Allgeyer constructed this ritual employing the framework of a Lutheran service of Word and Sacrament. It requires “a presider, a sufferer, and at least one attendant.... This construction, however, uses six different attendants.”



Gathering

Lighting of candle as prayer is read:

Presider: Let us pray (prayer adapted from official Lutheran pastoral source)

All: Amen.

Word

Sufferer: A reading from Matthew 11:28–30

Presider: We will now begin mixing the bread to be eaten together.

[A bowl is passed from attendant to attendant as ingredients are added, but not mixed.]

Attendant 1: *Water* to represent the waters from which we were created; let it symbolize our thanksgiving for the gift of the spirit as we remember our baptism, and the life-giving waters that flow in the desert.

Attendant 2: *Honey* to represent the sweetness and goodness of life, the smiles we share and the people we love; let it symbolize the moments of health and happiness, and the feeling of God's grace.

Attendant 3: *Salt* to represent the sweat and tears of suffering, the helplessness felt by family and friends; let it symbolize the connection between the joy and pain, for we would not taste the sweet if it were not for the salt.

Attendant 4: *Baking soda* to represent all the things that lift us up; let it symbolize the promise of life to come and the end of suffering for all.

Attendant 5: *Oil* to represent those things that were never accomplished, promises unkept, and goals unachieved; let it symbolize those things that will always remain apart from us, just as the oil and the water will never mix.

Attendant 6: *Flour* to represent the substance of life: the memories that make up who we are, give us shape and fortify our spirits. Let it symbolize the connections between us all, between us and God, between us and death. As the grains of wheat are gathered from the scattered stalks of the field and formed into one loaf, so are we gathered together into one through the love of God.

Presider: These ingredients, though different, are each necessary in order to create a loaf of

bread. So to, in life, are the many and various aspects of our lives—the painful and the joyous, the gifts and the suffering, the times of certainty and the times of uncertainty—all come together to create this life that we experience.

[Sufferer mixes the ingredients together as Presider reads from Ecclesiastes 3:1–8]

Presider: Let us pray (prayer adapted from official Lutheran pastoral source)

All: Amen.

[Bread is placed in oven to bake.]

Presider: As we wait for the bread to bake, a reading from First Samuel [7:7–12]

[Sufferer proclaims the reading]

Presider: In Hebrew, the name Ebenezer means “stone of help.” Thus far has the Lord helped you through your suffering (name). Let this rock of help offered here be the finally act of assistance necessary for you to finally strike down your suffering.

[Sufferer mixes the powder and the water. The bread is retrieved from the oven. If more time for baking is required, there can be the sharing of memories, recitation of more Bible verses, etc.]

Presider: Ecclesiastes reminds us that for everything there is a season, a time to live and a time to die. The gospel gives us hope that death is not the end.

[Presider takes the glass containing the cocktail and holds it up to Sufferer.]

Presider: (Name), do you know what this will do when you drink it?

Sufferer: I do. It will kill me.

Presider: (Name), are you sure that you want to drink this?

Sufferer: I am

Meal

Presider: Let us share a final meal together.

[The bread is distributed as each person tears off a piece and passes it to the next person. All eat in silence. When everyone has finished, the candle is blown out by Sufferer.]

Presider: As you drink this, go in peace, and go with God.



[Sufferer drinks.]

Presider: Let us pray (prayer adapted from official Lutheran pastoral source)

Sending

[All Gathered sing the hymn “Come Though Fount” as Sufferer begins to lose consciousness.]

Liquid Theologizing and the *Sensus Fidelium*

These two examples of ritual inventiveness and transfer underscore a perceived gap in the ritual repertoire of key segments of Christian traditions. Rituals serve many needs and purposes. As strategies for meaning making, they have a particular role in confronting danger and the impending chaos such danger intimates. As noted above, this era of liquid ritualizing is not the first time in human history that believers or even Christians are reimagining and inventing rituals. At the same time, there is an overabundance of ritual transfer and ritual invention in the current period, exposing what could be considered a growing ritual and meaning-making vacuum in the face of the impending chaos of this liquid age.

What is not here in overabundance, however, is theologizing about this demonstrably felt ritual void—especially as a flow across established religions such as those that comprise the Christian family. For Roman Catholics, as with some other Christian Churches, it seems not only appropriate but necessary to theologize in view of this ritual blossoming that acknowledges this phenomenon as a fresh breathing of the Spirit, and at the same time positively links it to central practices and beliefs. Doing so is essential if such practices are not to be dismissed as shallow fads, but instead recognized as fervent expressions of faith. This requires engagement with the incarnational nature of the church, the “sacramental principle,” and our richly polyphonic tradition of sacramental practices andologies in varied, even liquid ways.

One valuable key for establishing this linkage for Roman Catholics is our dogmatic teaching around the concept of *sensus fidelium* (Lat., “sense of the faithful”). This ancient and largely unexplored belief received particular affirmation for Roman Catholics at Vatican II (1962–65). It is specifically *Lumen Gentium* that addresses the topic of the *sensus fidelium*

when it teaches that “the universal body of the faithful, who have received the anointing of the holy one, cannot be mistaken in belief” (no. 12). *Lumen Gentium* offers this teaching in light of its previous yet infrequently invoked assertion that the “holy people of God has a share . . . in the prophetic role of Christ” (no. 12). From this prophetic perspective one can define the *sensus fidelium* as “a basic means of understanding the faith and as such exercises a truth-finding and truth-attesting function that has as its special characteristic that it takes into account the faithful’s experience in the world” (Rush 2009, 2).

While not something apart from the Church’s magisterium, this gift of the faithful does not spring from the magisterium but is rooted in the divine invitation through Christ to be “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” (1 Peter 2:9). This invitation is sacramentally inscribed on the bodies of the newly baptized as the minister announces their welcome into God’s holy people, and chrismates each, recalling Christ’s anointing by the Holy Spirit as priest, prophet and king.

The Canadian theologian Jean-Marie Tillard (d. 2000), developed an understanding of the mutual interplay between the teaching magisterium of the church, the people of God and theologians: not as one of opposing forces but rather as an exercise of communion, in which each has something to contribute (Tillard 1992, 113). Noting that the role of the faithful is not simply one of blind obedience, and that the faithful have a responsibility to discern what is best for the church from their unique perspective and given their particular “talent,” Tillard remarks “that a magisterial declaration in which the *sensus fidelium* does not recognize what is good for it is *a priori* very awkward or even suspect” (Tillard 1992, 112).

A burgeoning *sensus fidelium* of Christians—including Catholic Christians—is that our current sacramental practices and theologies are too stolid, inert, and inflexible. On their own volition, Christians are engaging in liquid ritualizing and theologizing that is undoubtedly shocking to many ecclesial leaders. For example, de Groot describes one Roman Catholic who, during televised Eucharist has her own private ritual:

I always put a piece of bread ready and hold the bowl with the bread in it during the consecration. So during communion at least I take part “symbolically.” It does not bother me whether or not this is legitimate in the eyes of the official church. It is to me, and, after all, that is what counts (de Groot 2008, 287).

"What counts" goes to the heart of the question. Too often "what counts" for ordinary believers does not count in official teaching or practice. It is certainly one of the factors contributing to the mass exodus of folk—especially the young—from mainline churches, without their abandoning of spirituality, belief, ritualizing, or even God. Without eschewing official sacraments—be they enumerated as two or seven—the Christian tradition is polyphonic in embracing a wide ranges of sacramental practices and beliefs: case in point, the most famous Western doctor of the Church, Augustine. This is not pandering, this is pondering what is real in people's lives. Christians in general, and Roman Catholics in particular, need to liquidize our sacramentality in practice and teaching to demonstrate an acute understanding that God's spirit cannot be boxed in a tabernacle or shelved until some duly deputed minister summons that Spirit through an officially sanctioned ritual. To paraphrase Arfman, it is God's Spirit that freely seeps, oozes and flows in and between our lives, in and between our rituals. Christians do not create sacramentality, we recognize it. Hopefully with more liquefied lenses, we will be better prepared to acknowledge both the fluidity of God's own self-communication, and to encourage the ambidextrous reception of that self-communication by all who are created in the image of such divine fluidity.

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Shifting, reforming, transforming spaces for a postcolonial, interreligious pedagogy

Pamela Couture, Pamela McCarroll and Nevin Reda

The complex history of immigration to the land we now call Canada has made Toronto one of the most multicultural cities in the world. The ongoing migration to Toronto has precipitated a vast reforming of spaces at the educational institution where we serve. From a monoreligious Christian theological College it is becoming a centre for multireligious and interreligious education, community and practices. We are continually challenged by pedagogical and methodological questions that both confound and excite us: colonized spaces of well-honed theological methodologies and practices are called into question; hybrid, hyphenated religious identities disrupt and reform the spaces we inhabit and the expectations we carry. In this paper we examine the shifting realities that contribute to an emerging pedagogy as we are being reformed into a multi/interreligious educational community.

Introduction

Emmanuel College (EC), a graduate theological school rooted in the United Church of Canada, is engaged in an interreligious institutional experiment that responds to the demographic changes in Ontario, Canada and to the creation of a legally recognized regulating body for those who practice “psychotherapy”. Many classes have been transformed into laboratories for intercultural, interreligious community that highlight social cohesion, interaction between groups, and the generation of shared religious expression. It is a step beyond multiculturalism, which emphasizes equal access to education and the integration of cultural and religious minorities (Maudarbux 2016, 461–2).

In this paper, we examine these shifting realities that contribute to Emmanuel’s emerging pedagogy. The paper is composed of three parts. In **Shifting Spiritual-religious Spaces in Canada**, we describe the Canadian and professional context of this experiment, including Canadian-style *deinstitutionalization* and *pluralization*, as well as *indigenization* and *contextualization*. In **Shifting Spaces of Spirit**

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tual Care, we discuss the changing *contexts and credentialing*. In **Shifting to Reforming Educational Spaces: EC** we discuss *EC’s context in Toronto, its dilemma, its potential for contributing to global peace, and student experience*.

Some key questions are emerging as we seek to learn together. Do we reproduce the colonization experienced by our indigenous students with experience of our Christian indigenous students with Muslim, Buddhist, and occasional Jewish, Hindu or Sikh students? Can a Christian school “host” other religions without perpetuating colonialism? Or, in the



search for justice and equity, do we need to develop a fully interreligious ethos as our institutional mission, potentially alienating EC's faithful UCC constituency? While the concern for decolonializing the classroom is not stated in our mission, values or vision statements, it weighs deeply on our minds as pedagogues.

We as colleagues encounter boundaries of difference, including scholarly training, culture, religious background, age, years of experience in theological education and years remaining. We seek honesty, trust, vulnerability, and learning with each other and our students. We are Pamela Couture, chair in Church and Community since 2010, whose paternal ancestors lived in Canada from 1650–1890 and then moved to the upper midwestern United States; Pam McCarroll, associate professor of Practical Theology since 2016, CPE Supervisor-Educator, and born in Canada of Irish, Scottish and Norwegian descent; and Nevin Reda, assistant professor of Muslim studies since 2012 and first-generation immigrant to Canada from Egypt. Our reflections below represent our own experience, not necessarily that of other EC colleagues whose classroom spaces have been “reformed” by this experience.

Shifting Spiritual-religious Spaces in Canada

Canadian-style deinstitutionalization and pluralization.

According to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the introduction to the Constitution of Canada, “Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law” (Brown 2017, 6). National leaders increasingly interpret this principle as affirming that all religions have a place in Canada and reflect Canada's divine ordering. Some voices contest the centrality of ‘divine ordering’ if it includes religions not considered ‘historical’ to Canada; others seek the full secularization of the public sphere—the removal of references to God, public symbols and practices of religion, including prayers and religious garb in public (Bouchard and Taylor 2008; Bill 60 2013.).

The shifting spaces of the Canadian context are similar to the processes of *pluralization* and *deinstitutionalization* as described by Ganzevoort et. al. in the Netherlands (Ganzevoort et.al. 2014 178–197). In Canada, these processes reflect the changing realities

of religion and are influential in theological education. In 1971 Canada adopted an official policy of multiculturalism which encourages and promotes Canada's *pluralization*. This policy has a central influence on the dominant narrative of the nation. While some still resist the multicultural policy of Canada, others insist that it doesn't go far enough. Instead, they say, as a nation we must aim for *interculturalism*. The United Church of Canada, for example, prioritizes interculturalism over multiculturalism. “**Multicultural** refers to a society made up of several cultural/ethnic groups. These groups live alongside each another, but do not necessarily interact with each other. **Intercultural** describes communities in which there is a profound understanding, curiosity and respect for each others' cultures. Intercultural communities focus on the mutual exchange of ideas, etc. and the development of deep relationships.” When a society is intercultural, all are changed and grow through their interactions with ‘cultural’ others. (Intercultural Ministries 2017).

According to Clarke and Macdonald, in Canada *deinstitutionalization* of church is happening on a large scale. The baby boomer generation started leaving church in the late 1960's, a trend that accelerated in the 1970s: call them the “de-churched”. Their children had little or no exposure to institutional Christianity: call them the “un-churched”. The ‘spiritual but not religious’ phenomenon is a key feature in the Canadian context, especially among the “un-churched”. (Clarke forthcoming 2017). This population demonstrates a growing interest in spirituality.

Indigenization and Contextualization

Indigenization has a particular meaning in the Canadian context. In 2008 the Canadian Parliament initiated the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada to face the legacy of residential schools. Residential schools were government-sponsored and church-led institutions that often forcibly removed indigenous children from their families in order to assimilate them into the dominant culture, ultimately seeking to eradicate their cultural identity. The final report of the TRC describes this policy as “cultural genocide” (TRC, 2015). Residential schools existed in Canada for over 100 years; the last one closed in 1996.

The TRC took place over 5 years, with several truth-telling events at central sites across the nation. The Report of the TRC includes 94 Calls to Action for changes in public policy, justice, education,



health, *and* churches and theological education. Many churches and theological institutions are taking up the calls to action, recognizing and valuing indigenous spiritualities, practices, traditions and worldviews. A symbol of this shifting space can be seen in the practice of Territorial Acknowledgement (1) that most theological schools and many churches include at the beginning of community worship and in classes and public gatherings. Indeed, through the practice of territorial acknowledgement our sense of space and place is being reformed.

Contextualization occurs through dialogical engagement between religious/spiritual communities, their belief systems and practices, and Canadian public narratives, conversations, and policy. Notably, the process of contextualization is becoming an increasingly prominent theme among 2nd generation Muslim Canadians who are asking such questions as: What does it mean to be Muslim and Canadian? What do Muslim communities bring to Canada? With the coming together of many different Muslim communities into Canada, groups that had previously been divided by denomination or region are now working together to discern what it means to practice Islam in the Canadian context and to engage the Canadian context and public life as Muslim citizens.

Buddhist thought and practice suggests yet another way to consider this process of contextualization. In Canada we see the familiar phenomenon of Euro-Canadians, formerly associated with Christianity, describing themselves as Buddhist practitioners. They are contextualizing Buddhism in all sorts of varied ways. While meditation practices often claim lineage from Buddhism, recent research suggests that such meditation practices are not necessarily as tied to traditional Buddhism as is often assumed. (Scharf 2015, 470–484). How these practices and the associated philosophies relate to Buddhist traditions are complex and ongoing questions.

Shifting Spaces of Spiritual Care

Spiritual and Religious Care.

In Canada healthcare distinguishes between spiritual care and religious care. ‘Spiritual care’ is publicly funded and practitioners are trained through Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) to serve people of all faiths and no faith, including the ‘nones’, or those who choose “none” on surveys of religion, (Lipka

2016), and the ‘spiritual but not religious’. Religious care practitioners generally serve only members of their given religious community and are funded through specific religious communities.

Spiritual care in healthcare is distinct from its manifestations in the military and prison systems that emphasize faith-based ‘chaplaincy.’ ‘Padres’ in the military and chaplains serving in the prison system serve all faith groups but are recognized and formed through institutional religious bodies. In these cases, CPE training is preferred but not mandatory.

Credentialling

An Act of the Provincial Ontario government recently organized the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO), a regulating body for the practice of psychotherapy. The scope of practice for psychotherapy is now defined by law as “the assessment and treatment of cognitive, emotional or behavioural disturbances by psychotherapeutic means, delivered through a therapeutic relationship based primarily on verbal or non-verbal communication (Psychotherapy Act, 2007).” Those spiritual care practitioners who consider that their scope of practice reflects that of psychotherapy (as defined above) *must* become members of the CRPO. In Ontario *most* spiritual care practitioners who serve in healthcare have now been registered as psychotherapists (RP) in the CRPO and therefore by law they are accountable to the public for their practice. While some spiritual care practitioners are concerned that the profession of spiritual care is being shifted ‘from without’ by an act of government and thereby losing its essential connection with religious communities, most see this shift as a welcome opportunity, opening up new possibilities and recognition for the profession.

In response to these shifts in the regulation of spiritual care in healthcare and private practice and to requests from multi-religious partners, Emmanuel College has initiated new Master of Pastoral Studies (MPS) degree with foci in Buddhist, Muslim and Christian studies. These programs are training students in the tenets, ethics and practice of their own belief system and in the practice of spiritual care and psycho-spiritual therapy to serve pluralistic contexts.

Shifting to Reforming to Transforming Educational Spaces: Emmanuel College

EC's context: Toronto, Canada.

EC's distinctive character is shaped by the shifting realities described above and by its immediate context and institutional affiliations. The College is located in metropolitan Toronto, home to large constituencies of its immigrant population. In 2011, of its 5,521,235 inhabitants 1,679,845 are Catholic, 227,925 are Anglican, 205,500 are United Church of Canada, 204,690 are Orthodox Christian, 424,935 are Muslim, and 124,215 are Buddhist (Statistics Canada 2011). Like Canada's Christian majority with its many denominations, Muslims have diverse interpretations of Islam. They come from South and South-East Asia, the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe. Toronto has more than 60 mosques which are served by Imams who are mostly trained overseas.

Reforming EC: Christian or Interreligious

As noted, in 2011, EC introduced a Muslim Studies program after a grassroots, student-led initiative and discussions within the Muslim community, followed by a Buddhist Studies program in 2015. In the Fall of 2008 most of the 110 students who were registered in the College's basic degree programs (Master of Divinity, Master of Pastoral Studies, Master of Theological Studies, and Master of Sacred Music) were from the United Church of Canada (UCC). Eight years later, in the Fall of 2016, of the 105 registered students 42 were from the UCC, 14 were Muslim and 11 were registered in Buddhist studies.

In an effort to attend to the shifting realities of its immediate context, some classes at EC are in the process of being reformed from having Christian, Muslim or Buddhist assumptions as their foundation to embodying a fully interreligious ethos. Whether EC will remain a school rooted in Christian tradition that hosts other religious traditions or will recenter itself within a fully interreligious mission and ethos remains unclear.

Although EC is responding to changing demographics and shifting laws and needs, emeritus Principal Mark Toulouse locates its transformation in the UCC's distinctive history and theology (Toulouse 2012, 235–254; History of the United Church, 2017). The church's commitment to interfaith dia-

logue was evident in the work of some of its leaders and theologians, including Wilfred Cantwell Smith (d. 2000), C. Douglas Jay, Peter Wyatt and Harold Wells. Smith, a UCC minister and graduate of the University of Toronto, became a renowned historian of religion and an expert in Islamic studies. He devoted his career to the advancement of Christian-Muslim relations at McGill and Harvard Universities. As an educator, he sought to develop methods of teaching religions that would do justice to all traditions and thereby combat insipient religious hatred. He was also a strong advocate of critical self-awareness and was one of the first intellectuals to draw attention to the problem of unreflective fundamentalism (Committee on Interchurch and Interfaith Relations 2004). Like Smith, Jay was a leading theologian of the UCC and an educator, serving as principal of EC (1981–1990) and as the founding director of TST. He was the main author of the 1966 UCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism report, in which he affirmed the values of pluralism, love and peace, and pushed boundaries with “an unqualified willingness to live with persons of other faiths as neighbours rather than as potential converts (Hutchinson 2013, 1–3).” Peter Wyatt, emeritus principal of EC and Harold Wells, emeritus professor, contributed to authorship of and consultation on “That We May Know Each Other: United Church-Muslim Relations Today,” the UCC's 2004 report. William Kervin, current associate professor of Worship and Liturgy, points out that interreligious efforts toward diversity continue a trend established in ecumenism and further developed when women were admitted to EC (Milton 2016).

The UCC's 2004 report critiques the three most common approaches to interfaith relations: the exclusivist, inclusivist, and pluralistic approach, and forges new ground with a fourth option: the transformationist approach. The transformationist approach emphasizes its willingness to learn from other faith traditions (Committee 2004, 6). Partnering with Muslims and Buddhists in an educational setting provides opportunities for furthering interreligious understanding and intellectual growth that is reflective of liberal Christian values. This interreligious ethos is becoming increasingly important in light of increasing islamophobia in Canada (Geddes 2013). Emmanuel is expressing solidarity with Muslims and an assertion of social justice and human dignity in the face of rising tensions.



Muslim Interest in EC – Contextualization, Professional Recognition

Muslims have many reasons for wanting to be educated at EC. First, among the most pressing questions Canadian Muslims face is how to reformulate Islamic identity and religious commitment in ways that make sense in the Canadian context, or in other words, how to “contextualize” Islam in Canada (Aziz 2015, see also the description of contextualization above). EC’s academic credentials, specialized programs, and interreligious ethos make it an ideal environment for educating upcoming Muslim leadership who can contribute to this ongoing project. Although the Muslim community has a number of institutions that provide theological education in Toronto, none of them are accredited and are therefore unable to provide their students with recognized degrees at the undergraduate or graduate levels. Some follow the curriculum of Dār al-‘Ulūm Deoband in India, relying on books such as *Uṣūl al-Shāshī* in legal theory, often ascribed to Abū ‘Alī al-Shāshī’s (d. 955) but most likely authored by Nizām al-Dīn al-Shāshī (13th century), Burhān al-Dīn al-Marghinānī’s (d. 1197) *Hidāya* in positive law, and Abū Ja‘far al-Taḥāwī’s (d. 933) *Aqida* in the area of creed. These schools provide their graduates with a thorough grounding in the classical Islamic disciplines with teachers who hold traditional Certificates of Mastery (*ijāza*) but often lack resources that can help them contextualize their learning in the contemporary Canadian context and conduct research to develop these disciplines in ways that meet present-day expectations. To this end, Muslims in Canada are increasingly looking to Imams that have Western academic training, in addition to their knowledge of the tradition (Karim 2009, 6).

Second, as noted, Muslims find Emmanuel attractive for its specialized programs. Its most popular program is the Master of Pastoral Studies (MPS), a professional degree which prepares students to become spiritual care practitioners and psycho-spiritual therapists certified by the CASC and members of the CRPO. These qualifications allow graduates increased job opportunities to serve in private practice, healthcare, mental health and addiction, etc. In addition to the increased job qualifications, education that integrates theory and practice provides Muslim leaders with a skill set in care and counseling that the community needs to heal and thrive. Muslim students are also attracted to Emmanuel’s

research-oriented degree programs which prepare students for engaging in research and contributing to emerging disciplines, in particular Islamic spiritual care and counselling.

Third, EC’s emerging interreligious ethos in some courses also makes it attractive for Muslims. Muslim students have the opportunity to learn about Christianity, Buddhism and social justice-related issues that are relevant in Canada, such as Indigenous Peoples’ rights and the TRC, while at the same time learning to convey something about their own faith tradition in intelligible ways. Yahya Palavacini argues that one of the priorities of the Islamic world today is to rediscover “a language of truth for the times to come” (Qur’an 26:84), especially in conversation with a predominantly secular and diverse society (Pallavicini 2016, 425). He also highlights the necessity of promoting interreligious understanding, enhancing universal values as an integral aspect of Islamic education, and demonstrating how interreligious education can prevent radicalism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and other forms of bigotry (Pallavicini 2016, 432–434). Among current educators there is an increasing focus on interreligious education in contradistinction to multicultural education, as can be noted in the work of Mohammed Abu-Nimer (2001, 685–704; 2015, 14–29), Mohammad Maudarbaux (2016, 459–481), and Saif al-Maamari (2016, 439–457). These shifting concerns are reflected in Emmanuel’s emerging pedagogy.

Interreligious Education and Global Peace

Interreligious education is gaining increasing interest at the global level as a means of promoting peace, understanding and social cohesion. For example, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has published guidelines on intercultural education, in which it recognizes that religions “come into play in an intercultural approach to education, but remain specific as they touch upon what is perceived to be the sacred (UNESCO 2006, 14).” These guidelines specify three principles: respect for cultural identity, active and full participation in society, and respect, understanding and solidarity among individuals, ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups and nations. Nevertheless, the challenges of implementation differ from country to country and context to context. At EC, we are recognizing that interreligious education must take into account disciplines that are intrinsic to each tradition’s identity, such as



those that fall into the categories of sacred texts, history, thought and ethics, as well as the pastoral disciplines which support the helping professions for which Emmanuel prepares its students. While some courses remain rooted in one religious tradition and are mostly populated by students who share similar religious commitments and practices, others are interreligious in character and include students from all faith groups. Together they work toward garnering respect for religious identity and prepare students for successful interaction in an increasingly diverse workplace and social context.

Decolonizing the Classroom

Within the nexus of our academic and religious relationships, the EC faculty is aware that we invariably perpetuate colonialism in the classroom. We have heard from our indigenous students that institutional colonialism imposes foreign pedagogies, standards, and educational styles on students who experience the practice of spirituality and learning as an integrated whole. Institutional colonialism also produces false hierarchies of proficiency between those students who have experience navigating the western educational system and those who have not done so. Granted, the experience of colonialism by indigenous students, whose nations were decimated by settlers, and Muslim and Buddhist students who settled in Canada, differs. Still, our Muslim and Buddhist students represent religious minorities seeking to assert their experience in multicultural Canada and experience discrimination.

In order to explore the experience of interreligious classroom at EC more fully we invited students to attend a focus group to reflect on their experience in the classes where the interreligious experiment is strongest (Taped interview, April 21, 2017). What we were surprised to learn, particularly from students who identified with traditions other than Christianity, was relatively little concern about Christian colonization in the classroom. Rather, our students focused on the value of their interactions with one another. They expressed wonder for the rare opportunity to bond deeply with classmates of other religions. An experience of cognitive dissonance that jarred some students became an opportunity for spiritual growth focused on two primary issues: piety and tradition.

Students reported the shock that occurred when they experienced each other's prayers and spiritual practices. A Korean Christian student was taught in

his church to use prayer as a weapon against the "spiritual enemies" in other religions; in the focus group he described being "transformed" when he discovered that classmates of different religions could pray for peace in a particular trouble spot in the world, each in their own language and prayer form. Another Asian Christian student identified she was spiritually transformed when she was asked by a Muslim colleague to pray for her during a difficult time. Another student described hearing the prayers of her colleagues in different languages and forms and experienced "a deep sense of peace: Something is going on here." A self-identified liberal Christian spoke of the power of a Shabat-Jumaa worship gathering, organized by a Jewish and a Muslim student, held in the chapel "with Lenten banners and the picture of Buddha on the wall." A Muslim student described the comfort she found in the Christian experience of lament. A Christian spoke of the way her Muslim colleagues' ever-present sense of God encouraged her to be more aware of the ongoing presence of Jesus in her life.

Other comments tell a painful experience of transformation through the encounter with religious others in the classroom. Several students spoke of the first "crack" emerging in their assumptions within their own traditions. This "crack" began a spiritual transformation that called into question many their previous understandings. They wondered aloud, what exactly was the role of their own tradition. How might they reclaim it anew as a resource and as an object for reflection? How might their experience of deconstruction and reconstruction continue to serve them as scholars and practitioners in their own communities and in their pluralistic context?

While they spoke of pain and "cracks" and transformation, they largely did not report experiencing Christian colonization. Notably, their experience exemplified the UCC's fourth practice of interreligious education as "transformation." (see above) One Korean doctoral student may have offered the best description of the complexity of this spiritual and pedagogical transformation. She named it the spiritual virtue of *jeong* (love, affection, attachment)—which she described as "a sticky relationship."

Closing thoughts

Our desire as a College to engage the lived realities of our context and to respond to each other as neighbours has precipitated a complete reforming of our



institution as a space for theological education. Indeed, the experience of writing this paper together has been one of “reforming space”—the space of sentences on the page as we coauthor a strand of EC’s micronarrative, as we simultaneously blend three voices and allow their distinctiveness to shine. We bring our own hybridity and that of our students to the work. We email each other with questions as we write—when are we “shifting” and when are we “reforming” space? How can we bring to life in this paper the friendships among students that we are witnessing? Friendship is the ‘outcome’ that we most treasure, reflecting our shared interreligious, intercultural, decolonizing space, and it is the outcome most difficult to capture in our competency-based, outcome-driven curriculum. How do we engage the reality of “decolonizing” the classroom as process, that, itself, reforms the content for our courses, while also nurturing an increasingly close relationship with the University of Toronto and the regulations it imposes? Do we imagine ourselves to be embodying a decolonizing pedagogy on the basis of criteria that we employ or by describing the space in a particular way? How do we more precisely use the words such interfaith, interreligious, intercultural, decolonizing, and postcolonial, when all of them point toward aspects of the process in which we are engaged? All these are questions that remain open.

1. Territorial Acknowledgement: “The sacred land on which EC and the University of Toronto stands has been a site of human activity for 15,000 years. This land is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca and most recently the Mississauga’s of the Credit River. The territory was the subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the great Lakes. Today the meeting place of Toronto is still the home of many indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work and worship on this territory. In recognition of wrongs done, we seek to make right with all our relations.”

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Racism, whiteness and transformation: reforming the space of theological education in South Africa

Marilyn Naidoo

As practical theologians, we are interested in the critical process of action and reflection with respect to how oppressive practices, theories and forms of knowledge are constructed and enacted in an increasingly diverse and uneven world. In South Africa, race, ethnicity and national identity are important discussions that remain unfinished ecclesial business for churches and theological education alike. In considering how to reform space, body and politics, this chapter unpacks a research project on diversity, highlighting the embedded racism found within the sampled institutions enabled by whiteness and power discourses of resistance. Using a post-colonial lens, it underlines the challenge in unequal relationships of dominance, resistance and change in theological education and the need to recognize this complicity and to reflect on and act against embedded racism. Transformative remedies are required with a vision of inclusion that will positively impact students, identity and transformation.

Introduction

When we look at the role of religion, theology and churches in colonial history, the question as to how theological education produces and reproduces a colonial mentality of domination is an extremely significant issue to wrestle with. This chapter discusses the findings of an ethnographic study that attempts to understand the critical role of a theological institution's culture in relation to diversity and suggests that reform is urgently needed to overcome the status quo if theological education is to have credibility. This is in line with the "reforming" theme of this book and the need to confront spaces of oppression and injustice, to decolonize harmful patterns of relating to others and to affirm the equal dignity of persons.

In South Africa, how best to deal with the challenges of race, ethnicity and national identity are important, yet unfinished, discussions for churches. South African society is a long way from reflecting a "normal" society with its deep social divisions, while the diversity of the population remains largely

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untapped as a resource; it is more often seen as a source of difficulty (Booyesen et al. 2007, 1). The "internalization of apartheid stereotypes, structures and beliefs has resulted in degrees of resistance and rigidity and low levels of adaptability of the individual or groups to the changing South African environment and its new value system" (Cross and Naidoo 2012, 228). Johnathan Jansen calls this "bitter knowledge"; it represents "how people remember and enact the past" (2009, 5). Despite major changes in the formal institutions of democracy, these "messages" have not been interrupted over the period of transition. They take place in a context of growing intolerance, with the lack of a "consolidated identity as one of the most worrying South African realities"

(Brunsdon 2017, 1). According to the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection, the pace of progress to attain nation formation and social cohesion will “require further theorisation because of the persistent nature of race-based exclusions and inequalities across several indicators” (2014, 210).

The transition from apartheid to a more democratic society was based on the restoration of a moral human community. Many leaders emphasized that forgiveness and reconciliation “require coming to terms with the past, not attempting to forget or repress it” (Van der Merwe 2003, 282). In playing their part, churches have reconceptualized their role in society (Kuperus 2011, 279) and restructured racially diverse sections of the various denominations. This has resulted in changes to theological education, with growing multicultural student bodies reflecting diversity of all kinds. Theological institutions educate students for service in a democratic and pluralistic society and need to confront the issues of diversity, even though it is a challenging and often divisive task. However, the way diversity has been approached by Christian communities has not been productive in bringing about dialogue on the topic. These issues are theologically complicated and contested, as they are sometimes attached to religious dogma, making it a challenge to implement them. When communities do reflect greater diversity, there is always a risk of embracing an uncritical kind of cohesion without deconstructing dominant constructs that continue to perpetuate inequality.

The aim of exploring diversity within theological education is to look at the ways in which difference was constructed, how it was operationalized in institutions and why difference continues to matter. It involves learning “how diverse constituencies use power to control and shape the agenda of theological education and its mission” (Gilligan 2002, 9). Pierre Bourdieu (1977) refers to “the said, the unsaid, the unsayable” in reflecting on power in discourse. Froehle and colleagues (2015, 21) acknowledge the “unsayable” in theological education as a heretical discourse, which is important to consider since, in providing education within a context of diversity, some have benefited from and others have been harmed by the existing arrangements of power. The lens of colonial difference in institutions has not always been named or given the attention it deserves. Colonial difference is a reference to the spaces—the borders and peripheries of empire that have suffered the negative consequences of modernity (Mignolo 2000, 49–88).

Postcolonial theory has paid special attention to the hurtful memories of those who have been marginalized and oppressed by the despoilment of their cultures. Religion was used to justify oppression, colonialism and apartheid. As a political theology, religion helped shape the social order, making possible certain types of institutional arrangements and not others, in the process producing or redirecting culture (Goldberg 2009, 534). People can construct, justify and disseminate the colonial mentality. Androas reminds us that cultural colonisation, “which involves colonised minds and education systems”, is a deeper and long-lasting form of colonial power (2012, 5). This form of power is more subtle and more difficult to identify, resist and transform.

The lens of postcolonial theory is helpful, as it not only reveals the complicity of the Christian missionary enterprise with the structures of colonialism, but also highlights the need to recognize this complicity for the sake of transformation. It helps one to see how knowledge production and reproduction and “truth claims” are inextricably linked with the hegemonic power that “maintains the present asymmetrical global relations” (Kang 2010, 31). The central questions from a post-colonial perspective are as follows: Who is seen and who is made invisible in these communities? Whose reality counts? (Chambers 1997). Practical theology needs to become involved in these kinds of questions, exposing the grand narratives that glorify inequality and hide colonizing patterns of relating to one another.

Diversity research project (2013–2015)

The study aimed to understand diversity management within the institutional culture, to understand how these interactions formed and prepared future ministers (Naidoo 2016). In addition, it was useful to establish whether theological institutions responded differently and exhibited distinct cultures in dealing with diversity. Diversity management entails a “proactive, inclusive and relatively contemporary approach to dealing with cultural differences in organizations” (Fubara et al. 2011, 114). The point of highlighting difference is to show the hidden values and norms that need to be thoroughly articulated, analyzed, evaluated, deconstructed and reconstituted (Steyn 2011, 4) so as to create equitable institutional cultures. At the same time, it was important to understanding the underlying theological criteria behind these assumptions and conceptualizations.



The theoretical framework of this research project was based on culture (Geertz 1973), which Swindler (1986, 273) extends by emphasizing that culture includes shared practices and ideas, interpreting it as a “tool kit” of symbols, stories, rituals and worldviews that provide the cultural components that people use to construct “strategies of action”. Within institutional culture, students are shaped by diversity and are socialized in how to respond to diversity. In conducting an analysis of culture, theological institutions should provide reasons for its beliefs and actions, its orientating action towards a certain normative goal.

The methodological approach used was critical ethnography, which attempts to expose the hidden agendas and describe the power relations at play (O'Reilly 2009, 55). To understand the role of institutional culture, special focus was placed on a campus climate framework (Hurtado et al. 1998) focused on compositional diversity, behavioural and psychological dimensions, and the historical legacy of inclusion/exclusion within an institution. The sample involved two private residential Protestant training institutions, one from each of the dominant Christian traditions in South Africa, namely the independent tradition made up of Pentecostals, Charismatics and the African Independent/Initiated Churches and the so-called mainline traditions involving Methodists, Anglicans, Lutherans and other established historic mission churches. These selected institutions had very different intellectual, religious and social worlds and served as the official training centers of their respective church traditions. Data were collected through ethnographic fieldwork over a two-year period. An equal amount of time was spent at each institution conducting interviews with student and staff, engaging in participant observation and reviewing institutional documents. The idea was to let the formative process unfold and watch students and staff as they experienced and negotiated their institution's culture. Thematic analysis revealed emergent patterns, which were reflected on using critical discourse theory (Wodak and Chilton 2005).

Research findings

In summary, the two ethnographies revealed very different institutional cultures shaped over time by their mission, history, context and location (Naidoo 2016, 5). In the sampled independent/Charismatic

college, there was a disengaged stance towards diversity initiatives; there was a “sharing of spiritual values” but little sharing of cultural values, with a color-blind theology in place. In this institution, the “biblical worldview” and an individual's relationship with God were given ultimate importance. Cultural differences in how people think and live out their faith were not emphasized, and diversity initiatives were viewed as being part of a ‘liberal political’ agenda. In the sampled mainline college, there was more of an awareness of diversity, as they see themselves “as agents in the transformation of society”. However, this taken-for-granted stance and the rhetoric of diversity within the institution was not interrogated in practice. Diversity initiatives were not structured or aligned throughout the life of the college, with little capacity by staff to facilitate issues. Even though an awareness of diversity was seen as important, the relational dimensions were superficial, with a lack of real community, as the formative structures were not working. This was aggravated by the hierarchical nature of the tradition and the authoritarian style of management, which resulted in a culture of silence amongst staff and students. Interestingly, the findings from both sampled colleges reflected mostly on race and gender (Naidoo 2016, 7), while the absence of discourse on the other dimensions of diversity highlighted how little awareness there is of how entrenched the norms are, resulting in a virtual invisibility of any contestation of identity.

In both sampled institutions, there was no formal policy or interventions in place with respect to diversity. Instead, institutions adhered to the politically correct stance of non-racism, non-sexism and equal treatment of all within their respective constitutions (Naidoo 2016). There were some modules and activities in place on self-awareness, cross-cultural learning and formational interventions. Importantly, diversity issues were not positively linked to ministerial identity formation in a way that would make a significant difference. Even though students were highly committed to racial justice, there were a lack of open spaces within the institutions to dialogue on issues of diversity. Students were afraid to speak because of the fear of being victimized or jeopardizing their chances for ordination. Both sampled institutions were not in possession of a diversity grammar (Booyesen et al. 2007), hence they merely perpetuated surface change. Ultimately, institutions have not done much to prepare students from different cultural and racial backgrounds for

effective ministry in different cultural settings. This study highlighted a lack of consciousness regarding the way in which institutions are organized, which then has direct consequences for students, identity and transformation.

Racism, whiteness and transformation

One significant finding of this study had to do with the race issue; as one student stated, “I think in everyone’s mind there is something about the color of your skin... we think about this, but we cannot speak about it.” In both sampled institutions, the interactions between groups reflected very much a microcosm of South African society, with its suspicion of the other, where students socialized in distinct racial and linguistic groups as a normal part of student life. In interviews in both samples, students spoke of incidents of racism in the residences and racial micro-aggressions in the classroom, the use of harassment and humor in talking about cultural differences and verbalizations of internalized oppression and domination (Naidoo 2016). Typically, when institutions engage in a passive role, negative reactions and misunderstandings are likely to occur (Steele 1995, 176–190). The problem is that there is a failure to see how all sorts of language and behavior practices reinforce what continues to be an uneven playing field.

This research highlights a space in which racism, yet again, has embedded itself and how racial identity informs power relationships within institutions. Soudien (2010, 352) argues that “race” represents the generative mechanism through which other forms of difference are constituted, reconstituted, reinforced or gain expression. He states that racism is often intertwined with other forms of discrimination—based on social class, gender, ethnicity, religion, language, sexual orientation and xenophobia—and uses them to justify and reproduce itself (Soudien 2010, 358). Post-apartheid South Africa hints at “the genuine irrelevance of race, but just beneath the surface lurks the deeper legacy of deeper separations” (Goldberg 2009, 530). In the liberal view, the enemy is apartheid and the solution is non-racialism (Kee 2006, 76). As Goldberg puts it, “non-racialism, like the emperor’s clothes, is what the state wears to represent itself to the world” (2009, 532). However, race continues to exert social effect even though the category has been officially disavowed. Within the sampled independent institu-

tion, for example, there was a tangible awkwardness towards talking about the race issue, and if racism exists at all, it is because of personal attitudes and bias. The uncritical appeal to *sameness* “posits whites as innocent bystanders to racial relations” and sustains a certain evasiveness regarding power by not recognizing “institutional inequality and the differences that race makes” (Frankenberg 1993, 19), either making it an “illegitimate topic for conversation” (Doane 2003, 13) or ignoring its socially constructed nature. Van Wyngaard (2014) reminds us that it would seem that salvation is not found when the privileged are converted towards solidarity with the oppressed, but found in an inclusive space that requires no conversion apart from the acceptance of the “other” (known otherwise as “tolerating”). This gazing on the “other” is done in a way that maintains possession and control over the “other” even in the absence of colonial powers. By denying the effects of racialization, color-blindness becomes a powerful mechanism in building white consensus and enables the reproduction of racism (Steyn and Foster 2008, 127). Racial difference, the ongoing “othering” of people based on pigmentation, the inability to embrace our common humanity as a point of departure, the reality of ongoing racialized and segregated socialization and new emergent forms of re-segregation all deny what we have in common and instead emphasize our differences. Despite the continuing problems related to racism in South Africa, within Christian spaces few people are talking about race. Carrim (2000, 33) contends that this culture of denial is related to at least three kinds of fear: (1) fear of losing privilege; (2) fear of continuing with the ways of the past; and (3) fear of civil strife.

Whiteness takes a postcolonial perspective as there is a relationship between exposing whiteness and decolonizing the imaginations of both the oppressed and oppressors. Steyn suggests that “whiteness in the new South Africa is characterised by a sense of vulnerability, by the belief that the spaces of whiteness are being infiltrated by strangers, by profound feelings of displacement, victimisation, withdrawal, and desire to escape” (2007, 422). Whiteness now has to contend with how to maintain a sense of privilege where black people have power politically, demographically and culturally (Steyn 2007, 423).

Lopez (2005, 89) asks the question, what happens to whiteness when it loses its colonial power, when it is in a structural position that confronts it with the experiential knowledges of the other? To answer Lo-



pez, some churches in South Africa have admitted and denounced racial complicity via confessional narratives and restructuring (after the TRC), but even still dialogue has not taken place sufficiently either through deliberate education that raises consciousness or through anti-racist workshops that entreat whites to depower themselves. In spite of the fact that the Church has played a critical role in the democratic transition of the nation (Kuperus 2011, 280), reconciliation remains contested precisely because social justice or the need for reparations were never adequately defined or discussed (Van der Merwe 2003, 285). The Church for the most part has remained racialized, as can be seen through the continuing ethnic and racial divisions within denominations or the white flight that accompanies the Africanization of worship. This is because healing and reconciliation have not been sufficiently internalized or explicated so as to be sustainable. Where there is a racial mix in local congregations, research has indicated that external factors such as demographic changes were the primary reason (Venter 2002). Unless forced to adapt, congregations do not deliberately change the own composition of their membership. In addition, theological uncertainties contribute to the ongoing racially segregated religious practices. For example, Nico Koopman (2008, 160) reminds us that:

The former racially separated Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa and the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa unified as the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA). Although structurally unified as a multicultural and non-racial church it remains culturally and racially “separated” mostly due to unchanged geographical demographics and systemic and institutional reasons. It is failing to construct a new theology of interracial and multiculturalism despite the fact that it founded the *Confession of Belhar* which witnesses for authentic unity, reconciliation and justice.

In the Dutch Reformed tradition, there is an ongoing struggle concerning the unity of churches (Van Wyngaard 2014, 162). Eddy van der Borgh asserts that “ecclesial structures pose a specific theological question that is an *ecclesiological* challenge” (2009, 15). He states further that, “the theology of the church, guided by its creedal confession as being one and catholic, does not know how to account for human social diversity” (van der Borgh 2009, 4). Alan Boesak asserts that it is difficult for churches to take part in the transformation of society when churches themselves are not transformed (2012, 106). Racism contradicts the basic tenets of the gos-

pel, but it would seem that churches are more interested in improving their membership base and finances than in justice (Van der Merwe 2003, 282). What inevitably happens is that these social spaces, where white hegemony is not challenged, is then reproduced within the congregation (Cobb, Perry and Dougherty 2015, 178). Since churches have not fully dealt with their own apartheid legacy, Green et al. (2007, 398) suggest that white South Africans continue to “think white”, even in these circumstances, believing that whiteness *ought* to be the norm, “manipulating its considerable links to the power of global whiteness” (Steyn 2007, 422). Van Wyngaard, writing from a Reformed perspective, states that within liturgical spaces, “it is a particular personal and communal responsibility to invite ‘people of other colours’ into the space” (2014, 161), which then reinforces the normality of white-only spaces. This is an example of how cultures of whiteness and power discourses of resistance in the Church actively continue. According to Van Wyngaard, theological reflections on diversity fail to encourage white Christians to reflect on their whiteness and privilege, resulting in a failure to critically engage with issues of “race” in post-apartheid South Africa (2014, 158).

Reforming theological education

The above discussion on racism in society and the Church and the reality of whiteness supports the idea that the research findings (Naidoo 2016, 6) revealed on diversity cannot be reduced to a lack of interpersonal empathy in theological education. Instead, it highlights the fact that in religious environments, there are complex relationships of reproduction and unequal relationships of dominance, compliance, resistance and change. The analysis of the findings revealed the unrecognized ways in which the power assumptions embedded in institutional culture disenfranchise certain groups of students and undermine the educational mission.

Namsoon Kang (2010) proposes that theological education, like education in general, has played two roles: as a mere reproducer of existing reality and as a visionary challenger of the status quo. To seriously challenge the issue of power and knowledge is to envision a transformative theological education that seeks to “fundamentally re-imagine theological discourse, curriculum, pedagogy, and institutional systems from a perspective of the geopolitical context of human equality, justice and plurality and moves

beyond a colonial mentality of domination, hierarchy or kyriarchy” (Kang 2010, 31). Even efforts to conceive of diversity within South African higher education point to the need for integrating the “politics of cultural and identity recognition with the politics of social justice and equity” (Cross 2004, 390).

In our context, theological education will need to create human and humane teaching-learning communities with a commitment to social justice. This will entail a crossing of borders towards the “other”, a respect for human dignity and an urgent need for transparency and honesty, reciprocal teachability and inclusion of the marginalized. A transformation of identities is more likely to occur when people from society’s dominant social group are aware of their privileged position and willing to compromise (Christerson, Edwards and Emerson 2005, 161–162). Reddie (2010) speaks of challenging unaware white students to reflect on what privileges and opportunities they have accrued by the simple fact that they are white. The ethical task for those who are privileged, as Hobgood (2009) defines it, is to expose themselves to those who are oppressed as well as to expose themselves to new views about themselves. Pedagogical strategies rooted in anti-racist discourses (Ramsay 2005; Reddie 2010) can challenge students to question the taken-for-granted notion of their rootedness in a culture embedded in legacies of prejudice and alienation. Ministerial formation must also facilitate conversations of identity development within an individual’s social location: reclaiming culture, gender and other aspects of identity as part of moving towards greater authenticity (Palmer 2000, 11). This is possible via a process of conscientization (Freire 1970): from confronting the system to self-awareness (identity construction and social location) to re-articulation (construction of a new world) (Hill et al. 2009, 18). Epistemologically this would involve de-learning the colonial mentality in theological education; the universal notions of knowledge (Kang 2010, 31) and advocating for Africans as “participants and generators of knowledge from the vantage points of their geo-and bio-graphical locus of enunciation” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013, 338).

At the same time, a deeper commitment is needed from South African practical theologians to engage with questions of power: both voicing questions and participating in conversations. Dale Andrews (2012, 9) suggests that the challenges facing practical theology involve “understanding how

the myths of colour-blindness, meritocracy and the refusal to dismantle socially and economically inherited white dominance function to distort strategies of social justice”. In South Africa, we need to seriously engage with issues of race to decolonize harmful patterns of relating to one another so as to affirm the equality and dignity of all people. However, these kinds of discussions will be difficult to initiate considering the fact that practical theology in South Africa typically adopts a white-reformed approach, with the result being that “white perspectives and practices shape the organization and dissemination of knowledge” (King 2005, 403). Goto (2016, 127) writes of how the content and politics within the field of practical theology determine what is written and taught and who are understood as being the major players. All too frequently practical theology “fails to theorise the experiences of raced bodies and therefore perpetuates the invisibility” (Sheppard 2016, 220). Thus, there is a need for greater epistemological inclusion and for white scholars to actively join with black scholars in working against institutional racism (Beaudoin and Turpin 2014, 253). This also means accounting for one’s race in scholarly work; how it affects thinking, research and writing (Goto 2016, 127).

Conclusion

In considering how to reform the space of theological education, this chapter revealed research that showed how theological education can maintain the status quo of racism and whiteness that generates patterns of exclusion and discrimination. Maluleke reminds us that theology in our context has a unique role to play in “acknowledging, interpreting and enhancing agency of African Christians” (2000, 105) in their daily struggles against the cultural, religious and economic forces seeking to marginalize them. As practical theologians, we need to take seriously how issues of justice should reform theology, identity and practices within practical theology. We need to move away from a celebratory approach to diversity, while at the same time ignoring critical questions of power and oppression. Our postcolonial challenge is to envision a “new humanism”, new ways of relating that do not duplicate the dynamics of the colonizer and colonized.



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Reforming bodies under surveillance: an urgent task for theological education

Eric Stoddart

In attending to the relationship between surveillance and human flourishing, this chapter contributes to filling the gap in theological education around recognising that digitized, deconstructed bodies in cyberspace have material implications for people's life chances. It considers theological works on contemporary surveillance and places the issues in relation to van der Ploeg's 'informationized body' and Swinton's proposal for the 'resurrection of the person'. Patel's problematizing of the browning of bodies under surveillance brings engagement with media misrepresentation of marginalized groups. The chapter's core argument is that digitized bodies need reforming as social persons and that subjects of surveillance deserve formation that is not driven by prevailing social prejudices. The core theological claim is that cruciform, rather than hierarchical, surveillance demands Christian solidarity with people who find themselves under diverse forms of unjust surveillance. The chapter concludes with a call to the Church to assess its own participation in cultures of surveillance.

Introduction

Surveillance and human flourishing are interwoven in everyday life. Theological concerns to articulate authentic personhood cannot therefore be adequately developed without taking careful notice of this increasingly important dimension of social experience. Privacy vis-à-vis the state was, arguably, once the most significant issue when regimes in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China developed bureaucratic systems of keeping watch over their own citizens, often by recruiting neighbours and work colleagues. It was important to craft an adequate theology of the (atheist) state; its limitations and the responsibility and scope of civil disobedience. Recently, the widespread collection and re-sale of personal information by global social media corporations has unsettled many individual users, communities, and governments (when democratic elections are perceived to be, if not necessarily proved to be, affected). Robust theologies of privacy are required in the face of rapid developments in the ease, speed, and hiddenness of transferring personal data.

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Vast volumes of data are analyzed for patterns of behaviour (Big Data) using algorithms to categorise people and cross-reference multiple sources of information. It has become apparent that these automated processes are embedded in existing prejudices around race, ethnicity, class, religion, and gender. Surveillance is neither distributed equitably nor fairly across already marginalized groups. When it comes to encountering surveillance it matters that a data-subject is black, Muslim, poor, or female (with categories often over-lapping). Theologies of social

justice and liberation are required to critique new inequities before which notions of privacy fall short.

States and corporations are significant players but in a culture of surveillance (Lyon 2018) the public are often willing contributors of personal information, advocates of intensified monitoring, and users of surveillance technologies themselves. Under the constructed (although not unreal) threat of catastrophic or local terrorist crimes, fear of the stranger is stoked by sections of the mainstream and social media. Theologies of providence, risk, and safety under the Divine gaze are perhaps more important than ever to offer narratives for living in a contingent, watched and watching world. Churches can exacerbate 'stranger danger' through intemperate and prejudiced teaching. On the other hand, faith communities can extend understanding and solidarity through compassionate demonstration of Gospel values. Handling one's own and others' humanity in social media contexts is a task for 21st century theological education.

This chapter focuses on one aspect of surveillance; how digitized, deconstructed bodies in cyberspace have material implications for people's life chances. Security, commercial, and bureaucratic justifications multiply as bodies are turned into information that can be analyzed for patterns in attitudes or behaviour. The core argument is that digitized bodies need re-forming as social persons and that subjects of surveillance deserve formation that is not driven by prevailing social prejudices. To pursue this investigation we briefly review recent theological works on contemporary surveillance. Irma van der Ploeg's notion of the informatized body offers understanding of the need for a theological response that re-forms the body; John Swinton's proposal for resurrecting the person is key here. Such a response is not practiced in the abstract, rather people are presented within complex social structures. Tina Patel's discussion of the browning of bodies under surveillance introduces us to the insidious problem of mis-representation in the media. We turn to Jürgen Moltmann's theology of Easter in order to set wrongful categorization of people against an eschatological horizon of God's merciful apportioning of true identity. By taking notice of Christ's as a body that was under (highly political and unjust) surveillance, we argue for the Church, as the ecclesial body of Christ, to make solidarity with those under surveillance, and to so do as an expression of holiness (in the manner of the unwittingly righteous who are applauded by Christ in his parable of the

sheep and goats). Such cruciform surveillance, we conclude, replaces monarchical, domineering frames of monitoring with distributed, compassionate watching that confronts politically-motivated prejudices that surveillance re-inscribes upon marginalized groups and calls the Church to assess its own participation in cultures of surveillance.

Definitions

It is possible to define surveillance purely negatively, as does Christian Fuchs: 'surveillance is the systematic collection and use of information in order to dominate individuals and groups' (Fuchs 2017, 199). For Fuchs, surveillance is, "a specific form of control that forms one dimension of domination, exploitation, class, capitalism, patriarchy, racism, and similar negative phenomena" (Fuchs 2017, 199). On the other hand, we can think of surveillance as both good and bad, sometimes both at the same time. So, David Lyon suggests that surveillance is, "any systematic and routine attention to personal details, whether specific or aggregate, for a defined purpose. That purpose, the intention of the surveillance practice, may be to protect, understand, care for, ensure entitlement, control, manage or influence individuals or groups" (Lyon 2015, 3). The positive and negative possibilities of Lyon's definition, rather than the purely negative of Fuchs, are more salient because Lyon's captures the potential for surveillance to enhance human flourishing (albeit with careful critical consideration).

The sites of surveillance are numerous; including military intelligence, state administration, work monitoring, policing and crime control, and consumer activity (Lyon 2007, 25). To this list we might add domestic and friendship contexts, as well as civil society (particularly for our concerns here, religion but also education, and trades unions, etc.). Of course, these are not mutually-exclusive sites as, for example, surveillance can be practiced by friends and family over one-another in the context of their religious faith.

Human bodies are both sites and objects of surveillance in the sense that people's actions are monitored and bodies are sources of data in other ways also. Biometric details are collected from the surface of bodies in the form of facial recognition measurement, iris and fingerprint patterns, or DNA samples (if taken from within the mouth there arise questions over the integrity of distinctions between sur-



face and interior). Opinions may also be collected and, in a holistic model of the human person, these cannot be understood as other than integrally related to the body of the opinion-holder. States, corporations, institutions and peers each have interests in bodies as sites and sources of surveillance data.

Surveillance Studies and Theology

The literature in the inter-disciplinary and multi-perspectival field of surveillance studies is extensive (Ball et al. 2012)). Theological considerations are, as yet, thin on the ground.

In the early 1970s a denominational report on credit scoring as a form of surveillance was remarkably prescient in highlighting concerns (United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. 1974). In the subsequent 40 years there has been a dearth of theological work on surveillance per se. A notable exception is David Lyon's 1995 piece that makes overt the theological basis for his concern for human flourishing in his extensive sociological writings (Lyon 1995). Lyon returned to the theme of the eye of God in his contribution to the 2013 conference volume of the Society for the Study of Christian Ethics that focused on surveillance (Gregory 2014; Lyon 2014; Stoddart 2014; Townsend 2014). The eye of God has also been the theological centre point for Swedish systematician and human rights theologian, Susanne Wigorts Yngevesson who has drawn extensively on the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty (Wigorts Yngevesson 2013). Rogério Gomes engages with theologies of the *imago Dei* and human dignity in his 2014 study and Rachel Muers has a small section on surveillance in her treatment of the Christian ethics of communication (Gomes 2014) (Muers 2004: 182–212). My own work has explored the saliency of a Christian, discursive, ethics of care as an overall approach to surveillance (Stoddart 2011). In 2017 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland accepted a report from its Church and Society Council, "Surveillance and Social Justice," that uses theological and biblical themes to focus attention on discrimination at borders and in the benefits systems, and challenges of de-anonymization of personal bio-data previously collected for medical research (Church and Society Council 2017). Privacy concerns have received theological treatment although these are not limited to issues of digital surveillance. This chapter, however, focuses on the body in material, representational and ecclesial modes.

Re-forming Bodies

People's lived experiences are, by means of their digital traces, disassembled and reassembled, resulting in the generation of data-doubles (Haggerty and Ericson 2000). Although in one sense these are virtual (being coded constructions circulating in cyberspace), in another sense data-doubles are acted upon in ways that have material consequences for actual people. This might be in the realm of, for example, credit-scoring, retail offers, or progress at borders. When it is the human body itself that is the direct object of the surveillance gaze bodies are rendered machine readable (van der Ploeg 2006). Such a shift is not merely taking more information from bodies than was previously possible; these are developments in body ontology (van der Ploeg 2003, 67).

Irma van der Ploeg places the informational body as the most recent in a line of ontologies that have profoundly influenced not only perceptions of the bodies, but how bodies are respected. The anatomical-physiological body is the one that is perhaps most familiar to the lay person. In the early 20th century this ontology of the body was amended (although not wholly as a replacement) to encompass scientific discoveries. The endocrinological body "knows the body as a biochemical entity, with an ontology of chemical substances that are characterized in terms of messages, signals, and feedback loops" (van der Ploeg 2003, 64). With an impetus from the HIV-AIDS crisis of the 1980s another ontology of the body was promulgated; the immunological body. This body, within which cells are battling, became understood through a discourse akin to strategic defense and warfare. When sequencing of DNA and mapping of the human genome gathered pace the ontology of the body again changed. Language of "building blocks" and "blueprints" framed genetics in terms of coded information.

It is not difficult to appreciate how the integrity of such an "informatized body" needs to be re-framed under threat from new normative approaches. Van der Ploeg is correct to warn that "the presumed demarcation of where 'the body itself' stops and begins being 'information' will subtly shift, the moral and legal vocabularies available will no longer suffice" (van der Ploeg 2003, 67). Data-doubles constructed from the informationized body (both above and beneath its surfaces) are key elements in contemporary surveillance systems. Whilst it might once have been legitimate to draw a clear distinction between virtual and real worlds this is now any-

thing but obvious. The gaze here is far more than mere watching; entities akin to selves are constructed and acted upon in the “real” world. What is effected in cyberspace or virtual reality may well have consequences that are experienced in vivid material reality by people who are denied entitlement or otherwise marginalized politically, economically, or socially.

One theological response to the informationization of the body might be to simply roll back later ontologies and constructions to give singular significance to the anatomical-physiological body. Here it is the fleshliness of the body that is the only *real* body. In contradistinction, transhumanism respects only a technologized-humanity in favour of an informationized “body” decoupled from its material limitations. Both attempts, as Elaine Graham has demonstrated, are inadequate responses to the hybridity of techno-human life. Graham acknowledges, “the fabricated, technologized worlds of human labour and artifice as equally capable of revealing the sacred as the innocence of ‘nature’” (Graham 2002, 233). Technology and nature are understood as both containing sacramental potential.

How then might the informatized body be reformed to better disclose God’s grace in the face of the scattering of digital traces and the potential loss of someone’s control over their re-configuration? A fruitful theological track lies by way of analogy with a response to dementia. John Swinton has addressed the claim that personhood is lost as dementia takes its grip. Swinton offers a paradigm of a person whose own memory is dissipating being held in the memories of God (Swinton 2012). The analogy here one might draw is between the scattering of memories and of digital traces. Swinton develops a third dimension to the notion of resurrection, alongside that of Christ’s physical body and of the eschatological resurrection of humanity. Resurrecting the person becomes also a pastoral challenge and responsibility to bring those who have been rendered invisible as non-persons (whose personhood is denied through social death) back to life (Swinton 2000).

Such resurrection of the person need not be reduced to a social project but can, in continuity with the other two meanings of resurrection, be taken as acts of Divine grace and power; albeit that in the social sense there is much demanded of human effort and compassionate interaction. In the context of surveillance (its data-doubles and the material body)

resurrecting the person offers a useful perspective. On the one hand, it is indeed within God’s memories that digital traces and the whole gamut of human inner and outer experience is held. Traditional language of the resurrection of the body, taken as a paradigm rather than descriptive of eschatological outcomes, is suggestive of the gathering of the disparate elements of the human body and the making of a body that is both continuous and discontinuous with its earthly material form. So, if taken into the digital context, it is the power and love of God that honours – rather than despises – materiality, demonstrated in the bringing back together of the material and the digital traces of a life. As Rachel Muers so effectively reminds us, God has *knowledge* of us, not information about us and God’s knowledge is relational; within the covenantal relationship (Muers 2004).

On the other hand, there arises a social impetus is towards a *critical* re-formation of the person. It is a *critical* re-formation because we take neither material presentation or data-doubles to be necessarily authentic. Through no fault of a surveillance subject, their data-doubles might carry aspects that are the result of coding biases, perhaps exacerbated by partial or false data. It is incumbent upon us to question data-doubles for, just as in material life, we are read by others who are prejudiced; who have vested interests in normativity against which others are judged and found wanting (Althaus-Reid 2004). Within surveillance systems, risk is distributed neither equally nor fairly. Marginalized groups (such as those suffering mental illnesses or those on welfare benefits) are imputed with identities that are deemed to be disproportionately risky (Rose 2000, 2002).

So, the re-forming of the informationized body means bringing back together both the material and digital in a resurrection of the person in this world. This is, quite crucially, not a re-solidifying nor a restoration. It is not re-solidifying because the hybrid is continually in flux; the data-doubles generated by the surveillance gaze keep changing and the feedback loop results in changes for material bodies. Rather than metaphysics, the concern here is for the grace-inspired socio-political construction of embodied, digital, human experience. This takes place, however, in contexts of many forms of prejudice; racial, ethnic and religious discrimination being particularly prevalent in surveillance cultures where fear of terrorism is rampant. The reformation of the representation of informatized bodies is therefore urgently required.



Reforming Representation

People are presented (both to themselves and their neighbours) within complex social structures; knowledge of oneself and of the Other is always mediated. Identity is fundamentally social. It is important to consider the possible shaping of perceptions of other people when being under surveillance is part of their ascribed identity. Representation of those perceived to be a security threat is more complex still because targeting of surveillance is often directed towards not a specific racial or ethnic group but to a more general category of “brown bodies.” As Tina Patel observes, “within the terror-panic climate, all those marked out as brown are at worst considered to be (potential) terrorists – or at least sympathetic to it; or, at best, they have their citizenship status questioned” (Patel 2012). In their extensive study of structures of representation of Muslims, Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin observe that politicians, the media, and public discussion more generally rely on negative, reductive turns of expression. Such tropes are deployed in discussions of national security, multiculturalism, and integration. Genuine agency is denied to this broad category of people by discourse that obscures “a chronically one-sided dialogue that Muslims are invited to join but not change, or forever remain outside the boundaries of civil debate, doomed to be spoken for and represented, but never to speak themselves” (Morey and Yaqin 2011, 2). Public debate is diminished when “simplistic and politically manageable views” are substituted for “unwieldy and complex realities” (Morey and Yaqin 2011, 19). It is important to note that not all Muslims surrender to their stereotyping but some actively subvert these negative tropes with positive images. Nevertheless, Muslims seem so often to be required to defend themselves “against the always-lurking charge of disloyalty” (Morey and Yaqin 2011, 45).

This is unjust for those so targeted and ought to be challenged by Christians in solidarity, on those grounds alone. However, the mis-representation of groups as deviant more widely degrades the Common Good in which Christians, like everyone else, have a vested interest. (Stoddart 2017). Quite explicitly, traditions of “not bearing false witness” (Exodus 20:16) challenge any political intention to deliberately mis-represent a category of people; whether migrants, Muslims, welfare recipients or other targets. Jesus’ example of reaching over social barriers (whether to a Roman, a Syrophoenician, a

woman, or a tax-collector) is an injunction to counter (and not believe one is immune from practicing) mis-representation of groups in order to distance the Other.

However, within the more specific context of social sorting by surveillance systems, when the existence of categories into which one is placed may or may not be known to exist, a more complex theological challenge is required. I have argued elsewhere that Christians need to develop a suspicion of the mean, the “need to be sceptical of implicit or explicit claims to the innocence of the statistical average” (Stoddart 2014, 9). This sliding of statistical norm into an ideology of normality, I have contended, goes hand in hand with being profoundly wary of the political category of evil. Rowan Williams expresses this succinctly regarding the ready-use of categories of evil. We are, says Williams, “‘writing them in’ in terms that [can] be managed and manipulated’ (Williams 2002, 66).

Jürgen Moltmann’s theology of Easter hope casting a shadow back over the graves of history’s victims is helpful here (Moltmann 1974, 163). Suspicion of categories of people, in effect, tars all with the same brush. People are named in the present in the light of an imagined future in which their designation as “risky” is validated. Theirs is a future imagined by those with the temporal power to name “riskiness”. The imposition of such a future identity is then deployed to justify pre-emptive intervention. Of course, there are some people who turn out to be dangerous to others but the injustice and absence of compassion lies in directing suspicion towards whole (digitally-constructed) categories of people – whether “un-integrated Muslims,” “welfare scroungers,” or “undocumented immigrants.” A Christian theological critique rejects categorization that posits “a future for individuals and groups that obscures the shadow of the cross cast back from the resurrection future” (Stoddart 2014, 15).

Reforming representation of bodies under surveillance requires a theology that is not only critical of deliberate, but also of unconscious, misrepresentation. It requires perspectives that are not saturated with partisan political/media discourse but are viewed through a lens of a radical Gospel. For this reason, we require to reform a theology of the body of Christ as a surveilled and surveilling body.

Reforming the surveilled and surveilling body of Christ

Christ was under surveillance from the Pharisees, the leaders of the Jews, and (we can infer) by the Romans. We read of him being criticised for failing to police the ritual purity of his disciples (Matt. 15:2) and for his inflammatory table fellowship with those considered disreputable (e.g. Luke 5:30). His allusions to a Messianic role (albeit qualified to differentiate him from violent proponents) brought him to the attention of leaders who sought to catch him out in words. In one sense, in seeking his baptism Jesus needed John the Baptist to vouch for him (Matt. 3:13); Jesus was an “undocumented worker.” He is a symbol of those denied valid identification for he is only Joseph’s son (Luke 4:22) for nothing good can come from Nazareth (John 1:46). It is clear that categorical suspicion predates digital surveillance. Yet Jesus has access to the Nazareth synagogue to read the scripture although he is identified as a radical preacher, knowing enough to pass as an insider yet also to pose a threat. He is a symbol too of those wrongly categorized. Jesus attempts to avoid mis-recognition as a military messiah but in a heightened state of alert he is categorized alongside similar rebel movements (cf. the speech by Caiaphas, Matt. 26:57–68). Being deemed too risky led to Jesus almost being thrown over a cliff at the edge of Nazareth (Luke 4:29).

Christ’s own story highlights the importance of solidarity with those subject to unjust surveillance today, particularly with those who bear the burden of public perceptions of risk. There are brown skinned people about whom fellow passengers have raised concerns when hearing them speak Arabic in the airline departure lounge (Araiza 2015). Actor and designer Waris Ahluwalia, a Sikh, was reportedly delayed by AeroMexico in February 2016 because of security measures prompted by his beard and turban (Agrawal 2016).

The ecclesial body of Christ is also a surveilled body. This has been linked with persecution, for example, in the former Soviet Union, in China, and more recently in northern Iraq. However, surveillance is directed at the ecclesial body of Christ not only by the state or quasi-state organizations. The Church engages in self-surveillance. Sacramental confession or pastoral home visitation are familiar, long-standing traditions. Much more recently, surveillance technologies such as facial recognition sys-

tems are available to track attendance at events, CCTV systems are deployed on, and sometimes in, churches (Churchix 2017). Apps for measuring spiritual progress and prompting prayer or bible reading are widely available in what is an extension of self-discipline into digital environments that encourage self-quantification. Social media, through which Christians shape one another’s spirituality, are systems of peer- or lateral-surveillance (Trottier 2015).

The Church is, in these respects, a surveilling body. She watches over her members – with varying degrees of intrusion. Particularly where security fears are high – although the level of threat may be very low – the Church monitors its car parks and entrances to buildings. A small industry has emerged that markets security equipment and training to large, but also small, congregations, particularly in the south of the USA (Lewis 2012).

Christ is one who surveils. The notion of God watching in care and in judgment is familiar to readers of the Psalms (Ps 139). A traditional paradigm is captured in the mosaics or paintings of Christ Pantocrator looking down from the apse of a cathedral, an imperial ruler watching from on high. A better frame is to conceptualise Christ as surveilling *from the Cross* (Stoddart 2011). This is a counter to monarchical models because cruciform surveillance invites reflection on Christ’s solidarity with all who are under unjust surveillance, as was He. Given the complex political/media discourses that permeate contemporary surveillance there is a need to reform a theology of the body of Christ, the Church, in terms of surveillance.

Traditionally, the church is understood as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. It is therefore, a holy surveilled and surveilling body. To talk of holiness in the context of surveillance is problematic if holiness is rendered in the paradigm of clean/unclean sacrificial rites. Such categorization processes were a means of inscribing order into an unpredictable, even chaotic, world. As Mary Douglas argues, ‘in countering that which “offends against order” a community is “reordering [its] environment, making it conform to an idea” (Douglas 1966, 2). When people, with disabilities or non-covenantal ethnic identity, are excluded in the tradition, any contemporary critique of surveillance by social sorting is significantly dulled. If, however, ‘holy’ is more carefully interpreted in the sense of being set apart for God, expressed in barrier-overcoming-compassion, some interesting features can be observed.



If to be holy is to be set apart for God then this draws attention to the place of the Church in salvation-history and, here, the place of surveillance in salvation-history. Surveillance was crucial in maintaining a covenantal community – by policing the boundaries of community membership and consequent responsibilities and entitlements. In the New Testament we find identification and authentication protocols in place (but partially and problematically) in order to ensure apostolic endorsement of travelling leaders in the nascent Church (e.g., 2 Peter 2; 2 Cor. 10). In these respects, covenant and surveillance go together. Monitoring and seeking to influence behaviour is not necessarily a bad thing and, in effect, is a vital dimension of sustaining a community that will convey and perform God's Word of care.

By reflecting on Christ having been under surveillance, the Church needs to take the dangers of surveillance (its own practices and those of corporations and states) seriously. Abuses of surveillance, for political advantage, demand focused critique. To be set apart also carries the sense of not being conformed to the world (Rom. 12:2). As a user of surveillance technologies the Church requires to be alert to justifying surveillance on the basis of spurious, prejudicial, cultural tropes about the dangerous Other. A number of members of the church will, in their professional lives, be amongst those who design or authorize the deployment of surveillance technologies. Their immersion in cultures of surveillance requires them to make considerable efforts to adopt – and be helped to adopt – a critical stance.

Holiness defined in Matthean terms (feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked as in Matt. 25:31-46) rather than Levitical purity, propels the Church into critical consciousness of her own surveillance practices and those of the state and corporations. "The least of these" being under unjust surveillance is tantamount to Christ himself being unjustly surveilled. Where the Church endorses or is silent about state surveillance that neglects humanitarian concerns (often under the guise of "national security") the Church is being unfaithful to her calling to be holy.

As much as there are significant benefits in contemporary surveillance, a paradigm of the surveilled and surveilling body of Christ attunes us to the unequal distribution of surveillance. A theological suspicion of the mean and its association with an ideology of "the normal" requires to be deployed for the benefit of whole persons (their bodies *and* data-doubles). The process of categorization is riddled with

political and social assumptions and biases. Marcela Althaus-Reid warns against 'artificially unified identities' and posits indecent theology that seeks "diversity, possibility and the sense of irreducibility which comes from people at the margin" (Althaus-Reid 2004: 143). A theology of surveillance is required that rejects binary categorization and its associated rhetoric of in/out, good/bad, and safe/risky. Christ destabilizes his own, and therefore others' identities, including both his disciples' and opponents'. A fundamental question for the body of Christ is how it watches with care in surveillance cultures so as not to ape those cultures.

Conclusions

The heritage of intrusive, over-bearing disciplinary mechanisms practiced by the Church, and imperial paradigms of a threatening Divine watching are hurdles over which any constructive criticism of contemporary surveillance cultures must jump. Talking of cruciform, rather than holy, surveillance is more helpful. In the way this chapter suggests, there is scope for re-framing discussions of systems as seemingly diverse as CCTV, customer data management, and social media. Informationized bodies, often represented as deviant, are actual people; a reminder that, although seemingly obvious, demands continual re-iteration in political climates of prejudice and discrimination.

Cruciform surveillance is a helpful construct, that overcomes the tenebrous heritage of oppressive Divine monitoring. A paradigm of resurrecting the digital person, in the light of Christ's solidaristic watching from the Cross, offers considerable scope for appreciating the positive, and challenging the negative, dimensions of ubiquitous 21st century surveillance. Such a message, and its performance, is significant not only for the Church's own practices but in her commission to form disciples and be a light to the world. People of Christian faith are, in their professional vocations, designers, manufacturers, marketers and deployers of surveillance technologies. They engage with the demands of share-holders, politicians, and the public who are, in various ways, invested in the cultures of fear, suspicion that energize surveillance in 21st century life. Reforming the body under surveillance is thus a practical theological concern in terms of Christian education and also a dimension of public, prophetic, critique.



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The space of practical theology at Faculdades EST in Brazil and its contribution to Latin American theological practices

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Since the nineteenth century, the churches of the Reformation have had a prominent place in Latin America. The reflection on and development of a pastoral, and later, of a contextualized practical theology has become a reality. The goal of this chapter is to study how practical theology is constituted from a practical and theoretical standpoint in one theological school, in this case the School of Theology at Faculdades EST in southern Brazil. First, it addresses how, in the beginning, the school's emphasis was on the education of the pastors for the development of parishes. Later, this emphasis shifted to a theological praxis for peace and social justice motivated by Latin American liberation theology in the church as part of a renewed search for its identity. With the implementation of the Graduate School of Theology, the discipline of practical theology, together with its sub-disciplines, has tried to assert its own identity in critical dialogue with the demands of a changing social, cultural and political context, religious diversity and issues of gender, corporeity and research in partnership with other areas of knowledge. The publication of a compendium of practical theology at the end of the 1990s points to this new stage. The present challenge is to understand the perspectives for practical theology in this concrete space, while also considering the current situation of global and local political changes, to effectively respond to the social and ecclesiastical challenges.

Introduction

In this chapter, we want to focus on practical theology and particularly on how the theoretical reflections of this discipline are taught in the School of Theology at Faculdades EST in southern Brazil. We briefly discuss the creation of the School of Theology in an earlier period when the teachers were pastors and only taught part-time until the consolidation of a college with teachers who then began to work full-time. It is important to consider the great transformations that took place in the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB) during the 1950s and 1960s, a time when the church first recognized itself as a Brazilian church, breaking its relationship with the German church

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due to World War II and its consequences. The time of teaching in German came to an end, and teachers and pastors had to be trained in the Portuguese language. The urbanization of Brazil and the political and social system in the country brought significant changes to a theological practice that was no longer European, but Latin American, and under the influence of liberation theology, which changed all reflection on theological practice from that point onwards. The main objective of the text is to present

the development of a space for practical theology at Faculdades EST and its contribution to Latin American theological practices.

The text is divided into three parts: the first part looks at the beginnings of practical theology as a discipline and its development at the theological school, while the second part is about the manual devised for practical theology at a time when it was already consolidated as a discipline with its own sub-disciplines and the third part discusses the current challenges for a discipline continuously updating itself and responding to the personal and social needs within that context. As the first book on practical theology was only written in 1998, it was necessary to look for contributions from previous texts at the School of Theology, in theological journals and in reports of teachers and pastors who had been students and teachers at various periods. This helped us to bring together the pieces of the puzzle on how practical theology was done in prior decades. The contact with the people we interviewed was extremely important because it allowed us to clearly grasp the years of the discipline's formation and the pastoral practice that was developed during those decades, which is information not often found in publications.

Practical theology and the education of pastors for the building of congregations

The creation of a School of Theology for the IECLB in Brazil arose from a great need to train pastors. The IECLB church was largely a rural church and, even in an urban context, continued to have a rural character. When the School of Theology was created in 1946, the objective was "the theological education of pastors for Brazil, taking into account the reality experienced by the members of the congregations" (Fischer 1986, 23). The School of Theology was intended to be a "spiritual center for the whole Church, through retreats, conferences for pastors, teachers and lay people, publications, etc." (Fischer 1986, 22). It is known that most of the first students were experienced practitioners (Weingärtner 1986, 33). This means that they were graduates of the Pre-Theological Institute who had received an introduction into theology and then went to work in congregations that lacked pastors. They were called "substitutes" (Dreher 2008, 58). Those who completed the course at the Institute generally went to Germany to further study theology and then returned as pastors.

The first professors of practical theology were Pastor Warnke, who taught homiletics, Pastor Strohmann, who taught liturgy, and Pastor Müller, who helped in pastoral care. Shortly after Reverend Schlieper taught practical theology, his successor was Dr. Weingärtner. In the first phase, teachers at the School of Theology were parish pastors and only taught part-time. This was an opportunity to confront our theological world, which always threatened to become somewhat esoteric, and to come to terms with the realities of the surrounding world (Weingärtner 1986, 39). The School of Theology was conceived according to the German theological education model, which is understandable since the IECLB is a church that emerged as a result of German immigration.

Studies of the Bible, history and systematic theology occupied a primary place, so to speak, while practical theology had only a secondary place. The classes, as well as the literature, were all in the German language, which undoubtedly contradicted the need to train pastors for the Brazilian context. However, it should be remembered that most teachers were German immigrants and spoke German, despite the prohibition against speaking that language during World War II. There was a handbook in German for Sunday worship services and a manual for occasional services, baptisms, confirmations, marriage blessings and Holy Supper for the sick and those about to be buried.

From the 1960s onwards, the ongoing cultural changes affecting Brazilian and Latin American society were also reflected directly in the Christian churches. Whereas Brazil became an urban country that in many ways came to resemble the countries of the northern hemisphere, social exclusion intensified. The migratory movement and urbanization led the IECLB to expand to other parts of the country and to increasingly present itself as a church with Brazilian traits. Because of this, members of the congregations gradually ceased to speak and understand German, and Portuguese became predominant in worship services and congregational meetings.

At the School of Theology, the number of students increased due to the increased demand for ministry, and there was now a full-time faculty with a unique academic background: few colleges had a collegiate body with doctorates at the time. The increase in the number of professors and the inclusion of Brazilian teachers who had studied abroad began to change the profile of the studies, which were gradually taught in Portuguese. Likewise, new dis-



ciplines were added to complement practical theology. It is interesting to observe that the full-time teachers were still all men, and until 1985 women could only teach on a part-time basis, especially in disciplines such as psychology, sociology, foreign languages or music (Fischer 1986, 30).

Latin American and Brazilian theology, starting with Vatican II, received new impulses, becoming a theology with a focus on the poor. Theology studies as well as a philosophy of liberation triggered changes in the way in which theology was handled not only within the Catholic Church, but also in Protestant institutions (Bonino 2003, 9–96). The student movement and the ecumenical movement in the 1950s and 1960s promoted a new Latin American theology from the perspective of an *ecumenical social ethics* that was also present at the international level. One of those responsible for this movement was theologian Millard Richard Shaull, who, in addition to reinterpreting “the task of Protestant churches on the continent, showed a new way of doing theology, until then despised by continental churches and theologians” (Abreu 2010, 60). It is important to note that Richard Wangen, a professor of practical theology at the School of Theology, worked closely with Shaull and influenced a whole generation of pastors and theologians focusing on social exclusion, justice and peace.

While liberation theology gained space in the institution in the different theological areas of study, evangelical theology also had its space and the debates were often marked by discussions and ruptures. For Walter Altmann, rector of the Higher School of Theology at the time, one “theme deserves special mention: the interrelationship between practice and theoretical activity. The EST courses have some mechanisms that characterize this interrelationship, the practical internships, the clinical pastoral education, the spontaneous groups of interest, the limited and occasional participation of teachers and students in congregational activities” (Altmann 1986, 172).

Practical theology in the context of Latin America: a manual

The book *Practical Theology in the context of Latin America* is divided into two major parts: the first part discusses the fundamental and epistemological aspects of the discipline and the second part briefly introduces the specific disciplines of practical theol-

ogy. The second edition was published in 2005 and maintained the same content (Schneider-Harpprecht 2005). The third edition of the book, published in 2011, had Roberto Zwetsch as co-editor. This is a revised and expanded version. The texts, although essentially the same, were revised (Schneider-Harpprecht and Zwetsch 2011). The manual has been translated into German (Schneider-Harpprecht 2003) and into Spanish (Schneider-Harpprecht and Zwetsch 2011). The latter edition was published by the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI). All of this confirms the positive acceptance of the book in seminaries and schools of theology run by the different denominations.

Basic aspects of practical theology according to the manual

The first part of the manual, called “Fundamental Aspects of Practical Theology,” clearly establishes “the epistemological status of Practical Theology” (Libânio 1998, 8). There are five chapters dealing with the place of practical theology as a discipline, the historical aspects of the discipline, reflections on the method of practical theology and its relationship to the ministry of the church and pastoral practices in Latin America. We briefly provide an overview of the reflections on practical theology in the book by focusing on chapters 1 and 2.

A) “The Place of Practical Theology as a Theological Discipline.” Lothar C. Hoch begins his chapter by talking about the richness and diversity found in pastoral practices on the continent, which, while a lively read, also reveals a confusing reality wherein practical and pastoral theology are often mixed together. In the context of these overlapping theologies, Hoch notices a distance between the pastoral work done in the churches and the education offered in theological centers. In the latter context, in turn, the role of practical theology and its relationship to the various sub-disciplines are not clear. The lack of clarity regarding the nomenclature (practical theology, pastoral theology, applied theology) reflects the labyrinth of confusion and the loss of the link between pastoral and practical theology.

Reacting to this reality, Hoch proposes that “Practical Theology needs to shorten the distance that separates it from the pastoral perspective. Practical Theology is the special interlocutor of pastoral practices developed within the people of God” (Hoch 1998, 22). In addition, practical theologians need to position and articulate themselves against

the background of the knowledge coming from other theological disciplines—history, systematics and biblical scholarship—as well as the knowledge of related fields of study, such as sociology, psychology, communication, pedagogy and religious studies.

Making a historical incursion, the author shows that the controversy surrounding practical theology is not new. Since its beginnings in the 19th century, the locus of practical theology in academia was controversial. Schleiermacher himself, the father of practical theology, was not sure whether there should be a specific chair of practical theology, since all theology is practical by its very nature (Hoch 1998, 24). If it has become necessary today, this only confirms once again that there is a distance between theology and the hierarchical church and practical theology or pastoral practices. Therefore, the first task of practical theology is to find its specific place in order to contribute both to theology and to the Church and society.

Hoch reinforces the need for practical theology to seek dialogue with the other theological disciplines, contributing to the indivisibility of theology. Theology is not self-sufficient and should not be underestimated. It finds its place insofar as it opens itself up to other disciplines (Hoch 1998, 26). On the basis of European Protestantism, he describes three models of doing practical theology, positioning them within other theological disciplines: 1) practical theology as a practice of theology—it provides the technical tools so that knowledge of the other disciplines can be applied effectively in the life of the Church (Tillich 1984); practical theology as a theology of practice—it is the theology of the Church's service and it is a theology of ecclesial practice only (W. Jetter); 3) practical theology as a science of practice—a model in which practical theology, in dialogue with other social sciences, develops theories that are relevant to the praxis of the Church in the present world (Daiber 1977; Hoch 1998, 27ff).

Next, Hoch discusses the contribution of liberation theology (TdL), asking whether it represents a breakthrough for practical theology in its search for identity. In conclusion, he reinforces Schleiermacher's idea that practical theology only finds its specific place as a theological discipline in a dynamic relationship with the other theological disciplines. The specific task of practical theology is to remind the other disciplines of their practical vocation.

According to Hoch, practical theology has a double task: 1) practical theology is a premise for theological reflection, with the task of listening to

the concerns and anxieties of people and society; and 2) practical theology must show critical awareness, asking and checking whether the practice of faith and the Church is consistent and corresponds to the postulates of theology and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Practical Theology is therefore interrelated with the yearnings of people and society, on the one hand, and the practice of the Church, theology and the practice of the gospel on the other.

B) "Historical Aspects and Contemporary Conceptions of Practical Theology." Based on the European models brought by Catholic and Protestant immigrants to Latin America, Schneider-Harpprecht seeks to reflect on a possible conception of practical theology in this context. He points out that the models brought from Europe are diverse, such as that which justifies the slavery of Indians and Blacks, of Anchieta, or the pastoral mission of the Jesuits, the liberal Protestant model, the internal and external mission to save the souls of communism or the need to promote struggles for social and political transformation. These conceptions and models have left their mark on what practical theology means today (Schneider-Harpprecht 1998, 36).

The author begins his study by presenting the historical variants of practical theology. According to Schneider-Harpprecht, "the emergence of Practical Theology in Europe was related to the rise of the bourgeoisie, the beginning of industrialization, the movements of Enlightenment and Romanticism", all of which demanded a more deliberate reflection on the practical dimension of theology. Schleiermacher, starting from the Enlightenment idea of a universal science, intended to construct a system of theology as an organism: "Theology refers to the religious consciousness as a fundamental dimension of human beings that takes historical forms and is concretized in the religious beliefs and practices of certain Churches" (Schneider-Harpprecht 1998, 36). Theology, therefore, is a science whose practical goal is to lead the Church, as we see in his definition of theology: "Christian theology is thus the highest representation (essence) of the scientific knowledge and rules of art which are necessary for a harmonious Church leadership" (Schleiermacher *apud* Schneider-Harpprecht 1998, 38). The basic task of theology is therefore practical, and practical theology is placed at the end of the study of theology as its crown.

Rather than just being technical, practical theology is, for Schleiermacher, an "applied science", a theory of technique. Despite the importance of this



conceptualization of practical theology, Schneider-Harpprecht notes that the great problem here is that practical theology, as a theory of practice, cannot reflect theologically on its own theological foundations, remaining an appendix to the theoretical study of theology (Schneider-Harpprecht 1998, 40).

Schneider-Harpprecht presents the conceptions of practical theology that influenced it after Schleiermacher, reflecting on the thinking of Carl Emanuel Nitzsch, Otto Baumgarten, Friedrich Niebergall, Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann. Nitzsch, understanding the Church as an “acting subject”, sought to overcome Schleiermacher’s thinking by suggesting that practical theology has to move beyond its own theological bases.

Schneider-Harpprecht presents four contemporary models of practical theology:

1) The “liberation of theology” posited by Juan Luis Segundo; 2) the plan for practical theology suggested by Gerd Otto; 3) the fundamentals of practical theology proposed by Don Browning; and 4) the practical theology of Casiano Floristan, which Schneider-Harpprecht considers the most appropriate model for the Latin American context.

Based on this broad historical and epistemological study of practical theology, Schneider-Harpprecht concludes his chapter by presenting fundamental ideas for the construction of practical theology in the context of Latin America as a way of overcoming of dichotomies between theory and practice, responding to the agency of members of religious communities and the people, advocating the fundamental role of hermeneutics and dialectics as a method for the discipline, mainly as a way of reading, analyzing, interpreting and critically planning the acting and the action (Habermas’ communicative action), and making space for the paradigm of social liberation that permeates all theology as practice. Practical theology should be viewed within the Christian tradition as a living tradition of the people who are living out the gospel in their daily lives and as part of the need for inculturation; it should reflect the importance of dialogue with other disciplines of theology and human sciences as well as facilitate mutual criticism, among other things.

The situation of practical theology today: the challenge of being updated in the face of new demands

Walter Altmann, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of Faculdades EST, recalls the times when theological reflection helped the Church to have a confessional identity. The IECLB was and continues to be the main “client” of the School of Theology at Faculdades EST, whose primary task has been, since its inception, to train pastors to build congregations for the church, a mission that we understand has been fulfilled in an exemplary way. The theology that has developed in the institution, and that is still being developed, remains linked to the Church. With this, we can say that practical theology has essentially had an ecclesial bias. With the coming of liberation theology onto the Latin American scene, and with an engagement in a theological practice with a socio-political concern, we can clearly notice a change in the way of doing practical theology. In the same period, the IECLB began to recognize itself as Brazilian and expand within the Brazilian context. Practical theology has changed its profile, with the clear task being to train church workers who have their own critical stance in the way they do theology.

With the required ecumenical openness, with the implementation of a graduate study program, and later, with its recognition by the Ministry of Education, the theological school has shifted its focus to a more ecumenical theology. On the one hand, there is an important opportunity for dialogue with other churches and other theologies. On the other hand, there is a risk of losing the church’s confessional identity, which would result in no longer fulfilling the task of providing a theology that guides and orients the church. A “fuzzy identity” within multiple initiatives can also raise the question of where practical theology is with respect to the institution and who is its audience. As a way of surviving in a competitive world, it seems that theological institutions also need to adapt and recreate themselves internationally. Ganzevoort (2009, 337), looking at the changes of clientele in theological institutions, refers to three audiences of practical theology: 1) an ecclesial audience made up of the Church, which needs the training of ministers and requires of practical theology and its sub-disciplines the clear task of placing an emphasis on ecclesial practical theology as was done in the beginning phase of theological education at the institution; 2) an academic audience

whose demand comes from the academic world, which requires empirical research with a scientific methodology, publications and a discussion with other disciplines; 3) a third audience consisting of society, which demands a theological reflection on themes such as violence, HIV/AIDS, social class and ecology. The discussion of practical theology here takes place through public theology and political diaconia as sub-areas. These three audiences comprise intertwined spaces for doing practical theology.

The book *Practical Theology in the Latin American Context*, published in the late 1990s, staked out a clear position for practical theology as a discipline. In addition, it defined practical theology as a theological discipline, making clearer its relationship with other areas of theology as well as with related areas of knowledge. It is important to observe that the book reflected on the possibilities of a method for doing practical theology and established links with the ministry of the church and with pastoral practices in Latin America. Additionally, it defined practical theology starting from common international historical bases, recovering fundamental references to such luminaries as Friedrich D. Schleiermacher, Carl Emanuel Nitzsch, Otto Baumgarten, Friedrich Niebergall, Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann; it reflected on practical theology in Latin America based on various models, such as Juan Luis Segundo's theology of liberation, Gerd Otto's plan for practical theology, Don Browning's proposed fundamentals of practical theology and the practical theology of Casiano Floristan.

After the publication of the book, we can say there was a certain stagnation—perhaps a setback—in the process of developing and deepening practical theology in a Latin American context. There is no record of the emergence of something new. Of all the authors—the book did not include any female authors—of the three editions of the books, only one of them, Roberto E. Zwetsch, remains at Faculdades EST. The book has been translated into German and Spanish and has been reprinted without changes in the design of the material. Only one of the chapters, the chapter on homiletics, has been replaced. What is the reason for this stagnation of practical theology in the context of Latin America?

Certainly, there are several reasons.

- Major changes that have taken place with respect to liberation theology, its diversification and fragmentation, its identity crises and its relevance in a context where Pentecostalism and, recently, prosperity theology have required new

ways of positioning themselves. The concept of practical theology addressed by the book is heavily influenced by liberation theology. In the conclusion, references are made to the profound changes already under way in the late 1990s, such as the Latin American versions of Charismatic, Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal fundamentalism (Schneider-Harpprecht 1998, 321).

- It could also be said that there was an emphasis on theology becoming more and more academic, especially the theology presented in graduate studies program, leading to a distancing of practical theology from the ministerial practice of the Church, which is precisely what practical theology should be seeking to overcome. This tendency to become too academic may also have to do with the recognition of theology as a field of knowledge by the Brazilian state. Related to this fact, there is also currently an expansion in Brazil of graduate programs in religious studies beyond just theology programs, which may also indicate a greater interest in broader religious themes.
- Changes in the focus of theological research, opening space for research into more generic studies related to other areas of knowledge and society. Whereas the book emphasized the practice of the Church, what happened later was just the opposite: an abandonment of the Church and a greater interest in society, religion and culture and themes of public theology, for example.

Thus, we have great challenges ahead of us. One of them is to recover practical theology as a fundamental sub-discipline of theology and to regain its leading role within theological schools (at the undergraduate and graduate level), in church and in society. Practical theology has continued to advance in the international context, a task we need to re-establish in Brazil as well. Practical theology must deal with three main fronts of action and reflection: 1) it must deal with themes related to ministry and the Church, overcoming mere academicism; 2) it must resume dialogue with existing liberation theologies, among them we can mention specifically decolonial theologies, thus strengthening their commitment to the social and political context; and 3) it must rediscover its role as dialogue partner with the empirical practice of religion, society and culture and other areas of knowledge in studies of the body, genre, lived religion, pop culture, popular religiosity, and so forth.



Conclusions

When considering the narrative about the development of practical theology in the concrete space of Faculdades EST, we notice significant advances and stagnations. Among the plurality of theological approaches is that of decolonial theology, which offers us an opportunity to unveil and investigate the different mechanisms that control the economy, authority, natural resources, gender and sexuality as well as subjectivity and knowledge. Perhaps it is time to go a step beyond with practical theology in our context and look for a practical theology with a Latin American face, reflecting on current theological and religious practices, cultural pluralism, a means to redeem our ways of living out faith and religion, a means to rediscover the so-called frontier thinking and local knowledge, such as *Buen Vivir*, and for example, subjugated knowledge (Walsh 2010), and finally a means to emancipate itself from the European theological roots (Schneider-Harpprecht 1998, 321).

In 2019, IAPT Conference, with its theme (*De*) *coloniality and Religious Practices: Liberating Hope*, will be hosted by Faculdades EST. Surely this is an opportunity and a special challenge to reflect on the developments made at the school regarding research and reflections on Latin America and the international sphere.

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The 2017 IAPT took place in Oslo, which during that year celebrated the 500 years anniversary of the Lutheran reformation. With this Nordic story as a context, and with participants from all over the world, the conference asked how practical theology should be done now, in light of the reforming processes, both spiritual, social and cultural that face us globally and locally. Both in catholic and protestant theological traditions, the relationship between theology and politics has been a central question. Issues like social justice, climate change and citizenships are at the centre of national and international politics. These issues correspondingly confront practical theology with the question of how politics reforms theology and how theology reforms politics. In this book, challenges from the intersections of politics and theology were explicitly tied to questions of body and space. By varied theoretical perspectives and by the range of empirical material presented, the papers included in this volume express the diversity of ways today's practical theology responds to these challenges.



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