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**Formation,
Transformative Learning,
& Theological Education**

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
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Abstract

This research applied Mezirow's transformative learning theory to theological education, in particular in situations where theological education is concerned with the purpose of formation. A field study among minority Christian women attending a Bible school in Pakistan found that the transformative pedagogy contributed to the formational aspects of the theological education programme and helped to integrate the fragmented curriculum, and the separation of theology and spirituality.

Students' epistemological, theological, and personal assumptions were identified at the beginning of the course and changes in these assumptions tracked over the year of study. Five areas of formation, namely relationship with God, thinking theologically, communicating the gospel, relationships with others, and self-understanding, were identified as a way of assessing how changes in assumptions impacted on formational change.

Transformation occurred over the range of assumptions and areas of formation. Students' assumption change was found to be idiosyncratic, responding to the transformative environment created by the teachers, according to particular developmental and formational needs students had. Fostering reflective ability, and the inclusion of reflection activities, as well as mentoring, contributed to students' formation in the use of transformative learning pedagogy. Transformative learning proved effective even among students with less developed cognitive ability.

The South Asian earthquake of 2005 was a significant trigger event which impacted on student formation in developing care and concern, understanding ministry, theodicy, and in developing epistemological complexity. Implications for further research on the use of transformative learning in different theological education settings, and to compare changes over a longer term are also considered.

Acknowledgements

This thesis has only been completed due to the support of many people and I wish to acknowledge them here.

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Introduction

I thank God; God did it (Razia FI)

[Change occurs] when people themselves try to change (Hamida II)

So I am so thankful to [UBTC teachers] that they worked hard so that change would happen in me - otherwise I would not have changed. (Mumtaz MI)¹

Razia, Hamida, and Mumtaz, three students of the United Bible Training Centre, Gujranwala, Pakistan, attribute their transformation during the course of theological education to three different possibilities. Razia ascribes the change in her life solely to the action of God. In theological terms change does occur by the grace of God working in individual lives, but Razia does not think through this change to try to understand how and why it happened. Hamida's comment reflects her effort in responding to the impulses for change that she encountered during her course of study. Hamida draws attention to formation as an outcome of students' motivation and readiness to change, and their own effort and perseverance. Mumtaz assigns the credit for the change in her life to the work of the teachers in helping her to work through formation issues. She is pointing to the formational influence on students of the theological education environment.

The current discussion about formation in theological education makes clear that there is an underlying assumption in educators' minds that there is something that happens, or that should happen, in theological education itself that engenders formation in students. Formation is a complex issue and encompasses the work of God in individual lives, the individual's own efforts to change, and faculty providing an environment conducive to change. Even when a theological training centre provides an optimum environment for growth, students still respond differently. The student's own prior formation, experience, and psychological preferences mediate the kind of influences that come to bear on her in a change process.² Students bring specific backgrounds, skills and abilities to their experience of theological education, along with their own assumptions,

¹ References to student responses from the field research study use pseudonyms. See chapter four page 124 - 129 for a full explanation of referencing of field research data.

² As my work is among women I will use feminine pronouns for theological students, although this can be understood as gender inclusive in general discussion about theological education.

Introduction

limitations, and concerns, with varying formational needs. The particular developmental pathway that a student is currently traversing, her social development and relationship issues, her cognitive development and readiness to reflect on her growth and change, and her relationship with God and faith development, are other aspects that make discussion of formation multi-faceted and complex.

My own interest and experience regarding formation arise from my involvement in theological education, chiefly at the United Bible Training Centre (UBTC) in Gujranwala, Pakistan, as a teacher from 1987 until 1990 and as Principal from 1990 until 2003. UBTC is an interdenominational centre established in 1939 to teach young women of the minority Christian community in Pakistan about their faith, and train them for a variety of ministries. The most fulfilling part of my work in the centre was to see young women, trainee staff and students, develop and become more confident as they understood their faith, and how that faith impacted on their lives and the larger contexts of their existence. This thesis about formation, transformative learning, and theological education arises out of those years of working in theological education, of seeing young women mature in life, faith, and ministry, and of wanting to do all I could as a theological educator to provide an environment that would enhance their growth.

My thinking about theological education is influenced by my experience in theological colleges in New Zealand, North America, and Pakistan, as student, teacher, mentor, administrator, and Board member, and additionally through extensive reading and discussion. My involvement in local church ministry also affects my understanding of theological education.

I approach the concern regarding formation in theological education from adult educational theory, and in particular transformative learning theory. Transformative learning is an adult education theory which explains how adults make meaning of their lives, especially where differences in systems of understanding conflict with new experiences or knowledge. Jack Mezirow, the founding researcher in transformative learning, describes the theory in this way:

[Transformative learning is] the process of learning through critical self-reflection, which results in the reformulation of a meaning perspective to allow a more inclusive,

*discriminating, and integrative understanding of one's experience. Learning includes acting on these insights.*³

Transformative learning theory explains resistance to formation in terms of the deeply held and unarticulated assumptions that make up the way people look at the world and respond to it. Change is addressed by the articulation and evaluation of these previously unexamined assumptions, leading to reframed assumptions which result in changed behaviour.

Transformative learning responds to a formation related concern in theological education, where students' lives may show a conflict between unexamined assumptions about what they believe and how they live, and the theology they may study. The philosophical background of transformative learning theory and the practical understanding of how change occurs are accessible to theological education practice.

This research is situated within a Christian evangelical theological tradition. The concern with formation is one of the distinctive characteristics of evangelical theological education.⁴ Lawson adds two other features, apart from formation, which characterise evangelical theological education: the authority of the Christian scriptures, and the place given to classic Christian doctrines, especially those related to redemption through Jesus Christ.⁵ These features are consistent with four elements evangelical historian David Bebbington distinguishes as common to the strands of the evangelical movement. The strands he identifies are the individual and personal nature of a salvific relationship with God, the imperative to be involved in mission and ministry, the importance of the Scriptures and the centrality of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.⁶

³ Jack Mezirow, "How Critical Reflection Triggers Transformative Learning," in *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood: A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning.*, ed. Jack Mezirow and Associates (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1990), xvi.

⁴ D.G. Hart and R. Albert Mohler Jr., "Introduction," in *Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition*, ed. D.G. Hart and R. Albert Mohler Jr. (Grand Rapids: Michigan, 1996), 17.

⁵ Kenneth O. Gangel and Christy Sullivan, "Evangelical Theology and Religious Education," in *Theologies of Religious Education*, ed. Randolph Crump Miller (Birmingham Ala: Religious Education Press, 1995), 59-82, Kevin E Lawson, "Marginalization and Renewal: Evangelical Christian Education in the Twentieth Century," *Religious Education* 98, no. 4 (2003): 438.

⁶ Or conversionism, activism, Biblicism, and cruci-centrism David William Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 2-17.

Introduction

When I was first introduced to transformative learning theory I thought intuitively that this theory offered a possible approach to formation within a theological education setting. The first section of this thesis is an articulation of the assumptions that lay behind my initial intuition. In chapter one I investigate my own understanding of theological education and formation, outlining major constraints on formation in theological education and how they are currently being addressed. In chapter two I consider transformative learning theory and explore how it could engage with evangelical theological education. In chapter three I briefly survey theories of development and the overlap between the ideas relating to formation and the structures that are in focus when developmental change is occurring.

The second section of the thesis focuses on my field research. I investigated what kinds of assumptions theological students brought to their studies and whether a transformative learning pedagogy would foster change in these assumptions. I also investigated the effect of student epistemology on the effectiveness of transformative learning. In chapter four I outline my research methodology to explore these questions. In chapter five I describe the kinds of change that students from the UBTC Gujranwala made in their assumptions over a range of personal and theological issues, and I discuss how that can be understood as formation. In chapter six I identify and discuss the elements that contributed to these assumption changes. In particular I evaluate how the use of a transformative learning pedagogy has contributed to student formation. Finally I draw some conclusions from the research study regarding the effectiveness of transformative learning and discuss how transformative learning could be used in other situations in theological education.

One ~ Theological Education

Miss I am sure that when we are close to God then we definitely change. But when we accept him our habits don't change all at once but we change slowly. And that happens if we are trained.
(Tahira II)

Tahira's comment conveys her idea that transformation comes from being close to God, happens slowly, and requires training. Tahira's desire and expectation that she would change during her course is not often part of the explicit curriculum in theological education. In fact the lack of formation in theological education has led to an extended debate in literature discussing the purpose of contemporary theological education. Within a larger debate on the purposes of theological education are questions that centre on the place of formation in theological education, reasons for the lack of formation, and ways to respond to explicit formational needs and expectations. The reasons for poor formation are seen to come from entry-level students' formational needs, modernist philosophical assumptions, and the shape of the theological education curriculum. The desire to enhance formation has resulted in wide ranging changes of curricula and pedagogy. In this chapter I set out an argument about constraints on formation, leading to the proposal that transformative learning may bring clarity to formative aspects of pedagogy within theological education. I argue further that transformative learning is a means for bringing unity to the discussion of multiple purposes in theological education, introducing formational awareness into cognitive-content oriented and professional development -oriented theological education.

Theological education: some parameters to the discussion

Theological education is not a monolithic enterprise but rather is undertaken in different contexts with different preferred outcomes. Formation stands as a purpose in theological education along with the need for professional competence in ministry, and an academic theological understanding.¹ Students in theological education may be undertaking full-time or part-time study, at graduate or undergraduate level and be residential or commuter students. The student

¹ Wood distinguishes between these three for the purposes of the debate in Charles M. Wood, "Theological Inquiry and Theological Education," *Theological Education* 21, no. Spr (1985): 78-9.

body itself reflects a range of age, race, and ethnicity, and approaches some measure of gender balance.² The theological schools may belong to a particular denomination, and may offer specific training for the ordained ministry (for first or second careers) or for a more general lay ministry. The clergy/lay distinction may also vary between theological education institutions. The focus may be more academic (particularly at a university), more practical (as at some denominational seminaries or missionary Bible colleges), or more formation oriented (as at some Bible colleges or 'discipleship' schools).

While consideration of theological education extends back to Augustine, it is only in the last few decades that theological education has become a more self-reflective discipline. Self-reflection among theological educators has arisen chiefly with a growing sense of unease and concern about the current theological education situation, an unease which extends across denominational and theological traditions,³ and geographical areas.⁴

The disquiet in the discussion centres chiefly on the question, 'what is the purpose of theological education?' and results in searching for a common core or purpose. The outcome of the discussion has been a range of models, sometimes with attending pedagogies. The theological education debate has centred on Protestant theological education in the United States of America, however there are also almost as many views and opinions on theological education as there are theological educators (and students), but these views do not necessarily interact with the ongoing debate.

² Charles R. Foster et al., *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 55, Donald Senior and Timothy Weber, "What Is the Character of Curriculum, Formation, and Cultivation of Ministerial Leadership in the Good Theological School?," *Theological Education* 30, no. 2 (1994): 18.

³ Rebecca S. Chopp, "Situating the Structure: Prophetic Feminism and Theological Education," in *Shifting Boundaries: Contextual Approaches to the Structure of Theological Education*, ed. Barbara G. Wheeler and Edward Farley (Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox, 1991), Lawson, "Marginalization and Renewal.", Dom Bernado Olivera, OSCO, "Maturity and Generation: The Spiritual Formation of Our Young People," *Spiritus* 3, no. 1 (2003), Senior and Weber, "Formation in Theological School.", A. J. van den Blink, "Reflections on Spirituality in Anglican Theological Education," *Anglican Theological Review* 81, no. 3 (1999).

⁴ Robert Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), Graham Houghton, "Theological Education for Leadership Development," in *Educating for Tomorrow*, ed. Manfred Waldemar Kohl and A.N. Lal Senanayake (Bangalore and Indianapolis: Saiacs Press and Overseas Council International, 2002), Lee Wanak, "Theological Curriculum Change for the Local 21st Century Context," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 26, no. 3 (2002), John White, "A Future for Anglican Ministerial Education: Some Personal Reflections," *Anglican Theological Review* 79, no. 3 (1997).

My concern in this thesis is Protestant theological education, particularly within the evangelical tradition. Evangelical theological education, however, does not exist in a vacuum and is affected by changes within theological education as a whole. As the evangelical movement properly belongs to only the last two centuries it shares a history of theological education with other traditions.⁵ Accordingly the discussion in this chapter covers a broad historical and theological range. I also make reference to theological education in South Asia, the location of my field research.

Defining formation

A range of descriptors is used for the particular kind of formation desired in theological education. Some terms used frequently in writing regarding this outcome of theological education are: 'formation,'⁶ 'moral formation,'⁷ 'spiritual formation,'⁸ 'ministry formation,'⁹ 'transformation,'¹⁰ 'discipling,'¹¹ and even 'leadership development.'¹² In this thesis I use the term 'formation,' without an adjective, to refer to the change I understand to be in view.

⁵ Noll numbers Luther, Calvin and Cranmer in the ranks of evangelicals, however the evangelical movement is seen to have begun in the early eighteenth century and is found across denominations. Mark Noll, Cornelius Jr. Plantinga, and David Wells, "Evangelical Theology Today," *Theology Today* 51, no. 4 (1995): 498. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* 20-34.

⁶ For instance Jackson W. Carroll et al., *Being There: Culture and Formation in Two Theological Schools* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). George P Schnier, "Formation as a Unifying Concept of Theological Education," *Theological Education* 21, no. Spr (1985), Charles M. Wood, *Vision and Discernment: An Orientation in Theological Study* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985).

⁷ For instance Richard John Neuhaus, ed., *Theological Education and Moral Formation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992).

⁸ Daniel Aleshire, "Seminaries and the Ecology of Faith: An Interview with Daniel Aleshire," *The Christian Century*, Feb 3-10 1999, 111, John W O'Malley, "Spiritual Formation for Ministry: Some Roman Catholic Traditions - Their Past and Present," in *Theological Education and Moral Education*, ed. Richard John Neuhaus (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992). L. Gregory Jones and Willie James Jennings, "Formed for Ministry: A Program for Spiritual Formation," *Christian Century*, Feb 2-9 2000.

⁹ White, "A Future for Anglican Ministerial Education: Some Personal Reflections." John Pobee, ed., *Viable Theological Education* (Geneva: WCC, 1997).

¹⁰ For instance James E. Loder, "Transformation in Christian Education," in *Theological Perspectives on Christian Formation*, ed. Jeff Astley, Leslie J Francis, and Colin Crowder (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1996), Letty M. Russell, *Education as Transformation: Women in Theological Education* (1998).

¹¹ For instance Vergil Gerber, ed., *Discipling through Theological Education by Extension: A Fresh Approach to Theological Education in the 1980s* (Chicago Moody Press, 1980).

¹² For instance Houghton, "Theological Education for Leadership Development." Philip S et al Keane, "What Is the Character of Teaching, Learning, and the Scholarly Task in the Good Theological School," *Theological Education* 30, no. 2 (1994): 42.

The formation related terms are used relatively interchangeably among varying theological perspectives. Banks considers that the term moral formation as compared to spiritual formation is a mainline/evangelical difference.¹³ Formation has remained an important part of the Catholic training paradigm for centuries, particularly as a part of the Counter Reformation.¹⁴ Formation, however termed, is a more recent aspect of discussion within Protestant theological education.

Formation is defined in a variety of ways. Aleshire notes the import of spiritual formation on person, church, society and world.¹⁵ The (North American) Association of Theological Schools considers the formation fundamental for ministry to include “emotional maturity, personal faith, moral integrity, and social concern.”¹⁶ Lindbeck, from a post liberal background, suggests a generic formula for spiritual formation as a “deep and personally committed appropriation of a comprehensive and coherent outlook on life and the world”¹⁷ rephrased later to “internalized... faith.”¹⁸ Recalling ministers who have helped him develop a “vocabulary of faith with which to think about everything” Dykstra talks of the pastoral imagination as a kind of “internal gyroscope” that ministers need, which includes aspects of committed faith, biblical understanding, and contextual awareness.¹⁹ Farley says formation is developing *theologia*, or theological wisdom, the ability to think and behave theologically and reflectively which he regards as the purpose of theological education.²⁰ Lawson, of an evangelical tradition, writes of “personal and spiritual growth, transformation into the image of Jesus Christ in character, attitudes and actions as the Holy Spirit works within people’s lives” which results in personal piety and stronger relationships with others.²¹

From the foregoing range of understandings of formation two aspects are seen. Firstly formation occurs in reference to an external paradigm which becomes ‘internalized.’ The other aspect is one

¹³ Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models*, 26.

¹⁴ O'Malley, "Spiritual Formation for Ministry: Some Roman Catholic Traditions - Their Past and Present," 79.

¹⁵ Aleshire, "Seminaries and the Ecology of Faith: An Interview with Daniel Aleshire," 110.

¹⁶ Association of Theological Schools, *05 General Institutional Standards* (2005 [cited Sept. 29 2006]); available from <http://www.ats.edu/accrediting/standards/05GeneralStandards.pdf>.

¹⁷ George Lindbeck, "Spiritual Formation and Theological Education," in *Theological Perspectives on Christian Formation*, ed. Jeff Astley, Colin Crowder, and Leslie J Francis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 287.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 299.

¹⁹ Craig Dykstra, "The Pastoral Imagination," *Initiatives in Religion* 9, no. 1 (2001): 1,2,15.

²⁰ Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 157, 62-71.

²¹ Lawson, "Marginalization and Renewal," 438.

of individual maturity where a person's thinking and behaving is a mature personal expression of their faith.²² Formation for each tradition includes aspects that are particular to its own understanding of Christian faith, and shared aspects of human development, the cognitive, social, moral, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of development which lead to a way of being and interpreting one's life. Formation understood in this way overlaps with, but is not the same as, faith development.²³

I offer below my understanding of evangelical formation as an example of how the shared evangelical aspects interact with general human developmental aspects in a broad picture of formation, or becoming like Christ. I use this understanding to interact with theories and field research throughout the thesis. I include five interrelated factors in this outline of formation: a person's relationship with God, relationships with others, thinking theologically, communicating the gospel in word and deed, and students' personal self-understanding. For each factor I present an understanding of the external paradigm from an evangelical perspective followed by indicators of mature human development.

Relationship with God: In an evangelical focus Jesus Christ, and his death and resurrection, is central to a student's relationship with God. During their course of theological education students would learn to sustain and nurture their relationship with God through individual and corporate worship, prayer, Bible reading, and ministry.

Changes in students' relationship with God would move from an uncritical and unthinking devotion to a relationship which is truly reflective. In the theological educational environment students would develop at the same time knowledge of God and a deeper and more personally committed relationship with God. Such an intimacy with God will touch every aspect of students' lives, which has ramifications for the other dimensions of formation as shown in the factors below.

²² O'Malley considers the two aspects are heart conversion and conforming to an external paradigm, yet I argue that the conversion should be accompanied by continuing development. O'Malley, "Spiritual Formation for Ministry: Some Roman Catholic Traditions - Their Past and Present," 86. Barnett considers a similar pairing of private becoming and fulfilling public expectations for a student in general education Ronald Barnett, "Being and Becoming: A Student Trajectory," *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 15, no. 2 (1996): 72-84, esp 82.

²³ Faith development is covered in chapter three pages 105 - 54

Thinking theologically: Students in evangelical theological education would learn to work from a worldview of Biblical authority in matters of spirituality, doctrine and ethics.²⁴ Students would gain a foundation in biblical and theological studies as the basis for making theological judgements in the situations students may encounter in life and ministry. Students' biblical understanding will engage with religious, personal, social, and ethical issues, in awareness of the context, with consistency across issues and between thinking and behaviour.

The development of theological thought means students move from an uncritical acceptance of received positions to an ability to be aware of a variety of positions and what justifies them, and to make and be able to defend choices among interpretive possibilities. Thinking theologically includes both rational and extra-rational domains.

Communicating the gospel in word and deed: Students would prepare to communicate a living faith appropriately into their own context, consistent with the evangelical imperative to be involved in mission and ministry.²⁵ Communicating faith includes passion, skill, and vision. Students will be involved in honing mission and ministry skills and vision for a faith lived out into local and global situations, within and across boundaries of ethnicity, class, and faith commitments. Students would also develop a persona of service, a concern for social justice, an ability to cultivate community with an orientation toward servant leadership.

In a range of situations students would become competent at presenting material and responses to situations that are a result of their own growing faith, displaying developing spiritual discernment.

Relationships with others: The hallmark of love shown in care and concern for others is central to this aspect of formation. Students will develop a positive Christian character, increasing development of the fruit of the Spirit, with concomitant control of inappropriate emotions and responses.

²⁴ Alister McGrath, *A Passion for Truth: The Intellectual Coherence of Evangelicalism* (Leicester Apollos, 1996), 22.

²⁵ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* 10-12, McGrath, *A Passion for Truth*, 22.

Students' personal development would result in an ability to maintain appropriate interdependent relationships, showing the ability to worship, work, and relax with others.

Personal understanding: At one and the same time theological education provides an environment for God to be active in formation of these students, and students are responsible for their own formation.

Students will be self-aware and self-reflective, aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, gifts and skills. Students would start to recognise the socio-cultural and personal factors that have shaped and continue to shape them as people.

These five factors are moderated by a student's level of development, and by what a student brings with her in terms of educational and family background, ministry experience, and ability. Students who are unable to sustain and nurture their relationship with God, to claim and defend theological ideas, who do not keep in balance the need for inner reflection and an outward focus in the carrying out of ministry and mission, who are unable to maintain mature and positive relationships, or who lack self-awareness, would indicate that there are aspects of formation in which the student needs particular guidance.

The outline of formation above incorporates spheres of life including the personal God-ward relationship, a cognitive aspect, ministry, and relationships with others, and speaks of integration of these into the whole person. Cognitive, social-personal, moral and faith development, and their relation to formation, are covered in chapter 3.

The need for intentional formation

The question of whether or not formation should be an intentional focus of theological education has been a major part of the theological education debate. Lindbeck, for instance, thinks that intentional spiritual formation is not good for the level of intellectual activity of the seminary yet concurs it is appropriate and necessary for the students.²⁶ On the other hand Niebuhr wrote that theological education is something more than objective study, and that the personal involvement

²⁶ Lindbeck, "Spiritual Formation and Theological Education," 296, 301.

in the object of study is 'hazardous.'²⁷ Sheldrake argues regarding the self-implicating nature of theology that to study theology and to know God must result in a response to the truths encountered.²⁸ Niebuhr and Sheldrake are two of many authors who name formation as an intrinsic part of theological education.

Models of theological education in the past rested on a notion of formation by osmosis, the idea that in learning theology a person was also being formed.²⁹ There has been an implicit assumption that the study of text and doctrine, history and practice, would result naturally in formation. An Anglican vicar recalls of his training experience that "it seems that theology and spirituality were assumed to be largely the same thing."³⁰ Certainly formation is an outcome of deep understanding of, and response to, Scripture, but without an intentional focus the full potential of that formation may not occur.

Institutional culture is also a significant factor in formation. The authors of a three year (1989-92) ethnological study of two schools, one evangelical and the other a main-line theological school, discovered that whether intended or not theological education is formative. The study showed that the process of shaping was not fundamentally different in both places, even though the culture and the purpose of the schools were different. Three general comments emerged regarding formation. First, institutional culture plays a large part in formation, second, the experience is dominated by faculty effect, and third, formation requires long term exposure to the school culture.³¹

Institutional culture contains both explicit and implicit elements of theological emphasis and educational philosophy. Elements of institutional culture are found in the way that the programme is formulated, the emphases of the curriculum, and in the formal and informal expectations of students. Young uses a pedagogy grid to show how variations in pedagogical

²⁷ H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry: Reflections on the Aims of Theological Education*, First paperback, 1977 ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), 118.

²⁸ Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology: Christian Living and the Doctrine of God*, ed. Stephen Sykes, *Trinity and Truth* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998a), 23.

²⁹ Dennis M. Campbell, "Theological Education and Moral Formation: What's Going on in Seminaries Today?," in *Theological Education and Moral Education*, ed. Richard John Neuhaus (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 17, Houghton, "Theological Education for Leadership Development," 199.

³⁰ van den Blink, "Reflections on Spirituality in Anglican Theological Education," 431.

³¹ Carroll et al., *Being There*, 270-75.

style from transmissive to transformational, and teacher-student relationships on a continuum from distant to involved, affect the institutional culture.³² Foster notes different aspects of institutional culture which impinge on the educational experience are institutional self-consciousness about teaching, institutional cohesion, and curricular balance.³³ Schools which are reflexive regarding their educational practice, and how that engaged with the needs of the world in which ministry is undertaken, were seen to be more ‘transformational.’³⁴ Coherence refers to the way a school manages to keep a balance between varying competing goals and stakeholders, so the ethos of the school is met in the way that aspects of the programme reinforce one another.³⁵ Curricular balance also needs to be achieved between the competing theoretical, skill based and formational outcomes. Without attention to reflection regarding educational practice, coherence in school ethos, and managing curricular balance, formation will also be cultural formation by osmosis.

It is the lack of intentional formation that has been the focus of much of the concern in the discussion of theological education. From a practical perspective it is clear that it is quite possible to study theology without becoming ‘implicated.’ Students need to be guided in making the crucial connections to their lives of the theology studied. The reasons for this are manifold, some resting within the students themselves, and others with the philosophical underpinnings of education, and the curricula fragmentation identified in theological education. An explanation of these three reasons forms the next section of this chapter.

Factors mitigating against formation

Prior student formation

Some of the discussion regarding the need for formation takes into account changing societal factors which mean the student body has formational needs which are different from those of the middle of the last century. The student body of fifty years ago would have been nurtured and

³² Mark Young, "Planning Theological Education in Mission Settings: A Context Sensitive Approach," in *With an Eye on the Future*, ed. Duane Elmer and Lois McKinney (California: Marc, 1996), 79.

³³ Foster et al., *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination*, 374.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 375.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 376.

shaped in faith by church and aspects of society.³⁶ This is part of the background to the argument that formation is the role of the church, rather than the theological school, while accepting that it is now necessary.³⁷ Today “students are underexposed to the Bible’s content, theological witness, authority, artistry, drama and humor,”³⁸ and do not show the nurturing influence and effect on character and developing spirituality of an earlier age. Instead students have a much wider range of experiences both religiously and personally,³⁹ with formation that may be inimical to what the seminary seeks to engender.

Students entering theological education, apart from the variations mentioned earlier, also come with some understanding of their faith, some level of commitment to that faith and varying concomitant behaviour or action as a response to those positions. Students also have gaps in these areas, and distortions in the way they think, feel and act. If the study of theology is self-implicating, if theology does not exist in a vacuum but it impacts on the person, then with ongoing study of theology there will be changes in the way that students think, in how they express their faith, and in how they live out their faith commitments. The integration of faith in the intrapersonal sphere has not always been attended to specifically. The lack of attention to formation is partly because of understandings of ‘formation’ being incidental rather than intentional, partly due to the fragmented curriculum, and partly due to philosophical separation of rational and non-rational factors.

Discussion regarding formation often includes an awareness that students come with varied backgrounds and so different formational needs. What the discussion does not include, however, is a strategy to ‘undo’ some of the formation students bring with them. Formation is as much *transformation* (change from the current form) from previously assimilated ways of thinking, interpreting, and responding, as it is formation from a neutral starting point. There may be

³⁶ Malcom L. Warford, "Introduction," in *Practical Wisdom on Theological Teaching and Learning* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 3.

³⁷ Aleshire, "Seminaries and the Ecology of Faith: An Interview with Daniel Aleshire.", Jones and Jennings, "Formed for Ministry: A Program for Spiritual Formation.", Lindbeck, "Spiritual Formation and Theological Education.", Philip Sheldrake, "The Role of Spiritual Direction in the Context of Theological Education," *Anglican Theological Review* 80, no. 3 (1998b), White, "A Future for Anglican Ministerial Education: Some Personal Reflections.", to name a few from a range of backgrounds who see the need for formation.

³⁸ Stephen L. Cook, "Teaching the Bible in a New Millenium," *Anglican Theological Review* 84, no. 1 (2002): 4.

³⁹ Senior and Weber, "Formation in Theological School," 18.

reluctance, even inability, on the part of students to perceive how their patterns of interpretation and response impede formation.

In the course of their studies students may find themselves confronted with differences in what they study and their own thinking and behaving, or they may not notice discrepancies. Students may be unaware of the cultural assumptions, epistemological limitations, and personal psychological understandings deeply inscribed in their consciousness, which confine them and which are not easily transformed. For instance, familial patterns of gender roles, and aggressive or passive responses to conflict, may govern the way a student responds in similar situations. No matter how well theology may be taught (for instance regarding gender), and how well understood, unconscious patterns may remain until a pathway to their articulation and evaluation is able to be made. Something more than simply teaching theology is required for students to take cognisance of deeply held assumptions which when challenged may lead to a deeper level of formation. Ongoing maturity and formation is not simply revising this past but moving forward to a more discerning future.

Philosophical underpinnings

Student's prior formation is not solely responsible for an inability to grow in formation. Philosophical beliefs also mitigate against formation and integration of learning. One of these is the legacy of Descartes, which privileges reason and rationality over intuition, imagination and emotion. Such privileging of reason results in an educational environment where cognitive competency is valued and evaluated, but where aspects such as imagination and emotion are not given space. This neglect of extra-rational factors then obstructs the assimilation of learning into emotions and behaviour.⁴⁰

The effect of the rational/extra-rational divide can be seen in educational theory from Rousseau, the cognitive development theory of Piaget, and moral development theory of Kohlberg. Cognitive development theory is largely rational and does not bring into account extra-rational factors which influence development. Fowler, critiquing Piaget and Kohlberg in the process of

⁴⁰ I will use the phrase 'extra-rational' throughout this thesis to refer to aspects such as emotion, imagination, and intuition which work alongside rationality.

constructing his theory of faith development, drew attention to their focus on rationality and lack of inclusion of emotion and intuition, criticising “their very restrictive understanding of the role of imagination in knowing, their neglect of symbolic processes generally and the related lack of attention to unconscious structuring processes other than those constituting reasoning.”⁴¹

One of the areas where this disjunction between rational and extra-rational functions is reflected particularly within theological education is the separation of theology and spirituality. The separation of theology and spirituality has roots in the early centuries of the Christian era, with an urban-rural split with the urbanisation of schooling favouring academic theology. The more mystical or ‘spiritual’ aspects of religion centred, and were fostered, in the rural monastic settings.

Two separate lines of training developed in monastic and cathedral schools, both of which extended further in theological studies and clergy education.⁴² Within the monastic schools, the first attributed to Benedict of Nursia (480-547), the training related to spiritual disciplines and was training for monastic life and leadership,⁴³ rather than a career in rigorous academic study. Cathedral schools, attached to the urban based cathedrals, trained clergy in the liberal arts, adapted for use in understanding the Christian faith.

By the eleventh and twelfth century there was another change, this time with the introduction of the scholastic model, a more rigorous use of liberal arts methodology.⁴⁴ In the thirteenth century with the establishment of universities came the shift to professional university education rather than the more haphazard clergy apprenticeship of the past.⁴⁵ The effect of scholasticism was “the progressive change of theology from an experience and response to the Gospel’s message to an

⁴¹ James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), 103.

⁴² Sidney Rooy, "Historical Models of Theological Education," in *New Alternatives in Theological Education*, ed. Rene Padilla (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1988), 56-62, Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*, Revised ed. (London: SPCK, 1995), 44.

⁴³ Rooy, "Historical Models of Theological Education," 56-58, Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*, 43-4. Colin Williams, "Purpose in a University Divinity School," *Theological Education* 17, no. Spring (1978): 70-71. Benedict of Nursia, *Prologue from the Rule of St. Benedict* (The Liturgical Press, 1981 [cited January 9, 2007]); available from www.mountmichael.org/aboutus/rule.htm.

⁴⁴ Wood, *Vision and Discernment*, 28.

⁴⁵ O'Malley, "Spiritual Formation for Ministry: Some Roman Catholic Traditions - Their Past and Present," 80, Rooy, "Historical Models of Theological Education," 59-61, Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology*, 39.

intellectual abstraction,"⁴⁶ which brought about a separation between intellectual and affective faculties.⁴⁷ For instance, it meant the gradual systemisation of meditation and prayer, and interest in spirituality which was separated from ethics.⁴⁸ From the advent of the scholastic age the study of theology became academic, separated from ministry and spirituality.⁴⁹

Protestantism and the divide between spirituality and theology

In the early centuries of the Protestant Reformation theological education continued in the existing patterns. The Protestant movement had arisen from the university setting and continued to train within it. There was from the beginning an emphasis on learning and preaching, in accord with the Protestant emphasis on preaching.⁵⁰ There was also an emphasis on the integration of study and formation. In undertaking a survey of theological education in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Muller writes:

*The older Protestant education model inculcated both a rigorous engagement with the technical disciplines and a rigorous cultivation of personal and corporate piety – and, what is more, it assumed that each of these aspects of theological study reinforced the other and led to the spiritual formation of the whole person.*⁵¹

Within the evangelical tradition the balance between rigorous engagement with the technical disciplines (theology) and piety (or spirituality) continued. The influences on retaining the balance were historical and theological. Historically, the emphasis on rationality in the Enlightenment led to greater understanding, and theologically evangelical emphases on piety and activism kept the balance with spirituality.

⁴⁶ Rooy, "Historical Models of Theological Education," 60.

⁴⁷ Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology*, 40.

⁴⁸ Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*, 44.

⁴⁹ O'Malley, "Spiritual Formation for Ministry: Some Roman Catholic Traditions - Their Past and Present," 81.

⁵⁰ Thomas Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age: The Education of Lutheran Pastors in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *The Protestant Clergy of Early Modern Europe*, ed. C. Scott. Dixon and Luise. Schorn-Schütte (New York: Macmillan Palgrave, 2003), 121-2, McLaughlin, "The Making of the Protestant Pastor: The Theological Foundations of a Clerical Estate," in *The Protestant Clergy of Early Modern Europe*, ed. C. Scott. Dixon and Luise. Schorn-Schütte (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 61, R.N. Swanson, "Before the Protestant Clergy: The Construction and Deconstruction of Medieval Priesthood," in *The Protestant Clergy of Early Modern Europe*, ed. C. Scott. Dixon and Luise. Schorn-Schütte (New York: Macmillan Palgrave, 2003), 43.

Lindbeck, "Spiritual Formation and Theological Education," 294.

⁵¹ Richard A. Muller, "The Era of Protestant Orthodoxy," in *Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition*, ed. D.G. Hart and R. Albert Mohler, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 127.

The effect of the Enlightenment on evangelicalism was to ensure that rational understanding of the gospel message was endorsed from the start of the movement.⁵² Bebbington attributes part of the early rise in the evangelical movement to its alliance with the rationality of the Enlightenment.⁵³ Its effects were seen in an antithesis to metaphysics, with a delight in natural theology and ‘commonsense philosophy,’ to optimism, moderate Calvinism, pragmatism, humanitarianism, and the validity of experience.⁵⁴ The twin emphases of rationality and experience in the Enlightenment affected the development of evangelicalism and its theological education in terms of maintaining the balance between knowledge and the personal emphasis on relationship with God and formation.

A study by Bradley illustrates these mutual influences of reason and personal piety, and points to the reason for the withdrawal of evangelical scholars from academia.⁵⁵ For evangelical scholars, the acquisition of knowledge was meant to aid piety, and when it did not, it was treated with suspicion. Slowly, the turn towards piety became a spurning of any scholarly interest which did not show immediate benefit in religious fervour.⁵⁶ Moreover, Bradley proposes that “the emphasis on the utility of knowledge and the subservience of all knowledge to the end of piety seems to have ill prepared students and scholars alike for coping with the full range of critical thought emerging in the new German scholarship.”⁵⁷ Bradley argues that emphasis on piety is the reason for the division in evangelicalism between practical theology, or piety, and scholarly theological study.

In a different vein Bebbington, picking up the effect of activism in evangelicalism in the nineteenth century, notes that “learning...could be regarded as a dispensable luxury. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Independent ministers were trained not in theology or Greek, but simply in preaching. The same factor could inhibit scholarship even at the universities.”⁵⁸

⁵² Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* 50-55.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 58-74.

⁵⁵ Bradley studied the influence of nineteenth century evangelical English writers from both non-conformist and conformist backgrounds, on the state of North American theological education. James E. Bradley, "The Nineteenth Century," in *Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition*, ed. D.G. Hart and R. Albert Mohler, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 148-70.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 151-2.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁵⁸ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* 12.

Bebbington is pointing to the separation of theology and practice rather than piety, but it impacted on the withdrawal by evangelicals from scholarly theological study.

In the current situation in theological education and the work of formation the split between theology and spirituality gives rise to two kinds of response and danger. Lawson, sketching the new rise of evangelical colleges in the US in the latter half of the twentieth century, says that on the one hand there is the danger that emphasis on Bible study can lead to “contentment with knowing the content of the Scripture instead of being transformed by it.”⁵⁹ Nicholls’ warning goes further, stating that “acquiring knowledge of the content of Scripture is no guarantee of spiritual growth. In fact it can lead to spiritual deadness and to agnosticism.”⁶⁰ Lindbeck points to the problem that when both the teaching of theology and the practical training for ministers is not linked intrinsically with spirituality then reflectiveness or ability to ‘think theologically’ is not engendered, leaving theology as content without application.⁶¹

At the other extreme lies an emphasis on personal growth or “self-focused spirituality lacking in compassion and righteous indignation over the effects of sin in this world, including our own.”⁶² One effect of this is what Noll has titled in his call for change “*The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*,”⁶³ which is an evangelicalism unable to grapple well with intellectual issues of faith which emerged in the era of biblical criticism. Jones argues that (American) Christians have lost contact with Scripture which forms them, and where it is easier to discuss issues of historicity than be challenged by the issues themselves.⁶⁴ Williams’ challenge of forty years ago, penned more specifically for the university setting than the Bible school, acts as a corrective to the readiness for intellectual pursuit to become a final goal:

⁵⁹ Lawson, "Marginalization and Renewal," 450.

⁶⁰ Bruce Nicholls, "The Role of Spiritual Development in Theological Education," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 19, no. J1 (1995): 231.

⁶¹ Lindbeck, "Spiritual Formation and Theological Education," 295.

⁶² Lawson, "Marginalization and Renewal," 451.

⁶³ Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1994).

⁶⁴ L. Gregory Jones, "Formed and Transformed by Scripture," in *Character and Scripture: Moral Formation, Community, and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. William P Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 20.

*To keep alive the tension between the critical, analytical approach of the upward way of reason and the downward way God takes to remind us that our search after wisdom must be redeemed by the wisdom of the Cross.*⁶⁵

The separation of spirituality and theology has endured into the present day. It is partly mirrored in the current popular interest in spirituality which sees religion as ‘stranger’ or ‘rival’ rather than ‘partner.’⁶⁶ Spirituality which ignores religion is a spirituality that is largely bereft of theological foundations.⁶⁷ Spirituality is understood as meeting the personal, imaginative, and emotional needs of the soul,⁶⁸ whereas theology is seen as dry and cognitive.⁶⁹

The effect of Cartesian dualism in theological education has resulted in students (and teachers) having a framework which separates reason and rationality from extra-rational processes of learning and responding. More particularly, theology and spirituality, as rational and intuitive aspects of religion, have come to be seen as mutually exclusive rather than mutually enhancing aspects of the Christian life. When theology and spirituality are separated in this way a balanced formation which includes growing cognitive understanding and passionate religion lies beyond the grasp of many students. When imparting theology does not meet the personal spiritual needs of students the split between theology and spirituality becomes another challenge to formation within theological education, and so is a contributory factor mitigating against formation.

Curricular fragmentation

Apart from prior student formation and the split between theology and spirituality, a third aspect identified as inhibiting formation in theological education is what Farley has nominated the ‘fragmentation of the curriculum.’⁷⁰ Because students study so many areas which are not integrated in any meaningful way, a well rounded theological understanding giving rise to self-

⁶⁵ Williams, "Purpose in a University Divinity School," 70.

⁶⁶ Sandra M. Schneiders, "Religion Vs. Spirituality: A Contemporary Conundrum," *Spiritus* 3, no. 2 (2003): 164-5.

⁶⁷ For instance O’Sullivan calls for spirituality, but it is a spirituality which does not rely on institutionalized religion. Edmund O’Sullivan, "The Project and Vision of Transformative Education: Integral Transformative Learning," in *Expanding the Boundaries of Transformative Learning*, ed. Edmund O’Sullivan, Amish Morrell, and Mary Ann O’Connor (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 10.

⁶⁸ James M. Houston, "Christian Spirituality: A Contextual Perspective," in *For All the Saints: Evangelical Theology and Christian Spirituality*, ed. Timothy George and Alister McGrath (Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 29, Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology*, 198.

⁶⁹ Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology*, 3-4.

⁷⁰ Farley, *Theologia*.

implicating theology does not necessarily occur. The development of the curriculum to reach its current fragmented state is outlined in the next section.

Theological education developed slowly over the centuries in various ways. Augustine is credited with beginning the first training for clergy in 388,⁷¹ beginning a movement toward the establishment of training an established hierarchy responsible for training others. His book *De doctrina christiana*, (*Teaching Christianity*) a kind of text book for training clergy, consists of three parts of guidance in biblical interpretation with a final fourth part concerning rhetorical method. That is, the curriculum was largely based on biblical understanding. Rotelle points out “Augustine's specific purpose...to educate people in a faith which by its nature needs to be ‘thought out.’”⁷²

The curriculum for clergy training gradually developed over the centuries. By the twelfth century the curriculum consisted of scholasticism and biblical studies.⁷³ In 1563 there was a Conciliar decree requiring seminary training for diocesan clergy. The new seminaries were concerned with “moral education and practice” rather than theology,⁷⁴ but the seminary model which began at this time, moving training out of the university, was to influence a similar trend in Protestant clergy training in America. At the time the concern was training in character, for removing the clergy from the attractions in the world, rather than spiritual formation, although within a century there was to be a new move with a new emphasis on spiritual formation and calling.⁷⁵

With the Protestant Reformation,⁷⁶ the emphases on biblical studies, theology, and practical studies formed the basis of what later became the four-fold encyclopaedia.⁷⁷ Muller writes of Witsius, one of the developers of such training, that:

⁷¹ Rooy, "Historical Models of Theological Education," 57.

⁷² Saint Augustine. "The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century Series", ed John Rotelle. (Place Published: O.S.A © Augustinian Heritage Institute 1991- , Published in print by New City Press 1991-, InteLex Corporation, , 2001 (accessed).

⁷³ Rooy, "Historical Models of Theological Education," 63.

⁷⁴ O'Malley, "Spiritual Formation for Ministry: Some Roman Catholic Traditions - Their Past and Present," 88.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 88-9.

⁷⁶ C. Scott Dixon and Luise Schorn-Schütte, eds., *The Protestant Clergy of Early Modern Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 3-23, Kaufmann, "The Education of Lutheran Pastors in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," 121-2, Muller, "The Era of Protestant Orthodoxy," 103-28.

⁷⁷ Muller, "The Era of Protestant Orthodoxy," 125.

*Spiritual discipline is not something to be added to the curriculum so much as it is a fundamental aspect of the student's approach to the life of study and to the life of ministry for which it prepares him.*⁷⁸

That is, while there may have been a wide ranging curriculum, the core purpose was formation.

The neglect of formation within Protestant theological education is attributed to changes dating back to the late eighteenth century. Farley initially diagnosed the situation as an outcome of the way in which Schleiermacher argued for a place for theology within academia in the newly founded university of Berlin. Schleiermacher's argument was that, along with law and medicine, knowledge of theology was necessary for the good of society and could be included as a rational objective science.⁷⁹ He argued that his model would increase the functionality of clergy by equipping them intellectually. If practitioners of the church could be better fitted to continue to research and understand theology they would be better fitted for ministering to their people and to society as a whole. The studies were to be relevant to the need of church leadership, but they also had to prove their relevance as pure research and critical scholarship. Theology became the subject of inquiry about God and the church; not to know God but to understand the origins and nature of Christian phenomena. Schleiermacher fixed the subject areas for research as historical theology, philosophical theology, and practical theology. From this developed what is called the fourfold *encyclopaedia*, the division into biblical studies, systematic theology, pastoral theology and church history.⁸⁰ In this way practical theology became sidelined, as 'application' was seen as a technology and not pure research, and the accepted disciplines became less practical in their pursuit of scientific credibility. As the format for theological education became knowing how to research, and the subject matter had to be capable of research (*wissenschaft*), theological teachers were those with a capacity for scholarly research. The study of theology became an academic exercise, and it was possible to study theology without adhering to a position of faith and so, arguably, formation.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 123.

⁷⁹ Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models*, 34, Farley, *Theologia*, 3-8, Williams, "Purpose in a University Divinity School," 68, Wood, *Vision and Discernment*, 5-19.

⁸⁰ While Muller identifies the beginnings of such curricula fragmentation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was with the establishment of the University of Berlin that the study of theology became objective and separated from the faith of the student.

In the ensuing centuries, as the fields of knowledge of the fourfold encyclopaedia grew, they too were included in the curriculum. For instance, an understanding of psychology was seen to be necessary for better pastoral practice, so courses in psychology and counselling were added. Further, with the fragmentation of the curriculum, the depth of knowledge increased, there was more and more to be studied and the curriculum became crowded. Ultimately, theological education became acquiring knowledge rather than either *wissenshaft* or formation.

In Europe Protestant theological education continued using the university model, until in some instances the present. In the USA, the spiritual awakening and the response to the change in theological education meant the apprenticeship model gave way to denominational seminaries founded in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The adoption of the German model and the fourfold encyclopaedia in the USA was to address the lack of rigorous scholarship. Tension between scholarship and formation continued.⁸¹

During the twentieth century there were various assessments of the task of theological education within North America, notably in 1956 by Richard Niebuhr. Niebuhr proposed the thesis that the seminary was the intellectual centre of the church, and its focus should be love of God and for neighbour.⁸² Niebuhr's study identified problems of lack of unity and lack of purpose due to a wide ranging curriculum, however it did not question the fourfold curriculum.⁸³ Later, in the mid-seventies the Association for Theological Schools consulted and published a study on their purpose, but the focus of the study was on medium and no compelling argument against the arrangement of the theological curriculum was forthcoming.⁸⁴

Kelsey analyses the situation by saying that two very different understandings of the purpose of theological education had developed, and tended to stand in opposition to each other. The first is to form character, which he calls the classical or Athens model. The second is to develop minds, the Berlin model. These models relate to anthropological understanding, and whether to be human is to have "the capacity of reason in intuitive, cognitive judgment to apprehend the

⁸¹ Melissa Harrison, "Theological Education: Past Present and Future: A Comparison with Legal Education," *Sewanee Theological Review* 45, no. 4 (2002): 402.

⁸² Niebuhr states that the purpose of the church is the love of God and neighbour, but the intellect needs to be focused on this love too. Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry*, 107.

⁸³ Harrison, "Theological Versus Legal Education," 405, Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry*.

⁸⁴ Theological Education issues no. 2, 1966 and 14, 1978

ultimate principle of being and of value – that is, God,” or “reason’s capacity to test and if necessary correct any and all ‘intuitions’ – that is, its capacity to engage in disciplined and orderly critical inquiry.”⁸⁵

The fragmented curriculum, with a resulting focus on academic competency, forms the backdrop for the third problem affecting formation in theological education. Wood reasons that the culture which separated theoretical from practical has intensified in recent scholarship, so theological scholarship often exists without reference to practical training. Further, as the paradigm has been theory to practice, scholarship is not affected by practical concerns, when in fact theory and practice need interdependence and the effect of one upon another.⁸⁶ Lawson notes the problem of increasing specialisation within evangelical theological education, so that the “increasing number of specializations within the field of Christian education threatens to fracture it.”⁸⁷

Ultimately, theological education has been organized in such a way that completing courses is valued and evaluated over the integration of learning, which compounds the disjunction of theology and spirituality, and further negatively impacts on students’ formation.

In summary, three major factors have been identified which hinder formation. The first of these is prior student formation, or distorted formation. The philosophical underpinning of the educational system which separates reason from emotion, intuition, and imagination, and especially theology from spirituality, is the second of the constraints. The third factor is curricular fragmentation which leads to disparate rather than integrated learning.

Restoring the practice of formation

To enhance student formation, changes in the three areas that hinder formation are needed. First, I briefly consider the situation regarding the philosophical understanding of knowing and learning which affects theological education. Then I consider how Farley’s analysis of the fragmented curriculum has led to curricula changes, and I look at pedagogical changes that

⁸⁵ David H. Kelsey, *Between Athens and Berlin: The Theological Education Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 26.

⁸⁶ Wood, *Vision and Discernment*, 61-63.

⁸⁷ Lawson, "Marginalization and Renewal," 450.

enable students to identify and put in place the implications present in the teaching that may address problems with prior formation.

Reuniting rational and extra-rational, theology and spirituality

The need for change in integrating theology and spirituality is widely recognised. What is less well documented, however, is how to integrate the two. There must be a change in educators' attitudes before practical steps can be undertaken. Those reared and educated in the dualistic academy, where non-rational aspects of knowing have been disparaged, require a mind-set revolution in order to recreate an atmosphere where rational and extra-rational processes are given equal credence in learning.

The resurgence of interest in spirituality results in a certain ambivalence in mainstream education. A respondent in a survey conducted by Duerr about spirituality and transformative education, objected to the inclusion of a spiritual sphere, upholding the Enlightenment point of view in arguing that education should be objective and value-free. The converse, that education should be "heart centred and ethically aware" is still subject to debate resting on the continuing effects of Cartesian dualism.⁸⁸ In this vein O'Sullivan calls for the inclusion of spiritual values in general education.⁸⁹

Similar changes regarding the inclusion of spirituality are also occurring in theological education. Schneiders sees the integration of Catholic spirituality and Protestant biblical criticism as a meeting point for spirituality and theology.⁹⁰ While for many, serious biblical scholarship has seemed inimical to spirituality, Schneiders argues that the most penetrating biblical scholarship through the ages has been by those with both the tools of scholarship and passionate spirituality. The understanding that "transformative engagement with the text is the ultimate *raison d'être* of

⁸⁸ Maia Duerr, Arthur Zajonc, and Diane Dana, "Survey of Transformative and Spiritual Dimensions of Higher Education," *Journal of Transformative Education* 1, no. 3 (2003): 203.

⁸⁹ O'Sullivan, "The Project and Vision of Transformative Education: Integral Transformative Learning," 10.

⁹⁰ Sandra Schneiders, "Biblical Spirituality," *Interpretation* 56, no. 2 (2002): 133.

biblical study within the ecclesial community,"⁹¹ is evidence of the shift to a re-integration of theology and spirituality.

Other writers in theological education write of the need for spirituality in theological education. Sheldrake argues whether it is possible to study theology without expecting that formation must take place.⁹² Van den Blink argues that the contribution of the Anglican tradition to theological education has been of a theological education environment in which everything must relate to spirituality, in an inclusive and communal fashion.⁹³ Accordingly van den Blink argues that spirituality must be the 'matrix' for theology,⁹⁴ seeing the separation of spirituality and theology as the major reason for the problem in theological education. Paulsell suggests that what is needed are "irresistible models of intellectual work as spiritually formative," a spirituality of intellectual work which will help faculty as well as students to make the spirituality/theology integration.⁹⁵ Similarly, Bradley cautions that formation cannot be an add-on but must take place within the intellectual academic work of the student.⁹⁶

Chopp and Siejk use feminist perspectives to argue for the conjoining of emotion and intellect as necessary for authentic faith. Siejk draws attention especially to dichotomies such as the separation of reason and emotion, objective and subjective knowing, and their pairing with masculine and feminine ways of knowing. For Siejk, formation includes integration, including that of experience with knowledge.⁹⁷ Chopp brings up many of the same problems raised by other commentators (fragmentation, lack of holism, lack of contextuality), and recognizes that the problems are other than patriarchalism,⁹⁸ or systems that privilege men over women. Chopp argues that much of the debate has been philosophical in terms of looking for the right 'idea' with

⁹¹ Ibid.: 141-2.

⁹² Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology*, 23.

⁹³ van den Blink, "Reflections on Spirituality in Anglican Theological Education," 100.

⁹⁴ Ibid.: 429.

⁹⁵ Stephanie Paulsell, "Theological Table Talk: Spiritual Formation and Intellectual Work in Theological Education," *Theology Today* 55, no. 2 (1998): 233.

⁹⁶ Bradley, "The Nineteenth Century," 169.

⁹⁷ Kate Siejk, "Toward a Holistic Religious Education: Reflections and Pedagogical Possibilities," *Religious Education* 89, no. 2 (1994): 277-9.

⁹⁸ Chopp, "Situating the Structure: Prophetic Feminism and Theological Education," 73.

the assumption that from that everything will flow correctly,⁹⁹ and instead contends for a more contextual and praxis oriented approach to theological education.

In summary there is growing awareness of the need for education which is inclusive of extra-rational perspectives, and for theology which is inclusive of spirituality. Wilson Chow states the challenge as one of keeping the balance between academic discipline and affective attachment, although not a balance which separates them but “bringing these aspects together into a whole and doing them at the same time.”¹⁰⁰ Hwa Yung draws attention to the Chinese scholar-gentleman and the Indian guru who “actualize and embody in their own persons and lives their learning.”¹⁰¹ There is, however, still a lack of practical examples and models to bring about change.

Educational and Curricular changes

The majority of changes being made to theological education as a result of the debate regarding formation have been in the area of curriculum and pedagogy. Curriculum changes include both new curricula and the inclusion of spiritual formation courses and classes. Pedagogical changes include a focus on non-formal elements of the learning environment, student/faculty interaction, and fostering reflection.

The recognition of the fragmented curriculum and the associated debate resulted in new models of theological education. Farley, a leader in the debate, analysed the problem of lack of purpose and unity in theological education and presented a model for the formation of theological wisdom,¹⁰² Hough and Cobb developed a model biased toward the professional education of clergy,¹⁰³ and Kelsey and Wood offered models which were inclusive of both types.¹⁰⁴ Banks,

⁹⁹ Rebecca S. Chopp, *Saving Work* (finsh find book: 1995), 9.

¹⁰⁰ Wilson W Chow, "An Integrated Approach to Theological Education," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 19, no. JI (1995): 221.

¹⁰¹ Yung Hwa, "Critical Issues Facing Theological Education in Asia," *Transformation* 12, no. O-D (1995): 4.

¹⁰² Edward Farley, *The Fragility of Knowledge: Theological Education in the Church and the University*, trans. 0800620801 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), Farley, *Theologia*.

¹⁰³ J.C. Hough and J.B. Cobb, *Christian Identity and Theological Education* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985).

¹⁰⁴ David H. Kelsey, *To Understand God Truly: What's Theological About a Theological School* (Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox, 1992), Wood, *Vision and Discernment*.

from outside of the North American debate, offered a 'missional' model where learning took place in practical ministry situations.¹⁰⁵

Farley argued that the fourfold breakdown of the theological curricula was in reality a fragmentation of the original '*theologia*,' a *habitus* or mindset of integrated theology. Farley maintained that as Berlin brought fragmentation, reintroducing the notion of *theologia* could bring unity. This was essentially a return to an earlier model of formation or *paidea*. He urged the reintegration of the faith aspects of training, because the only unity which had remained was the functional one of training clergy, which was not enough to develop what was needed in theological students. He proposed a more integrative model or praxis of education. His *theologia* was largely a cognitive, rational function of formation, but did have aspects of moral or spiritual formation.¹⁰⁶ Farley's analysis, however, was the starting point for more discussion.

Kelsey uses the 'Athens'/'Berlin' interpretation to discuss and critique the dominant or representative models, to give more definition to the debate about theological education. Apart from an analysis of Farley's model, which Kelsey aligned with the Athens model, the other large grouping of models was represented mainly by Hough and Cobb, who argued that theological education is analogous to clergy education, and is professional development.¹⁰⁷ Hough and Cobb used their model to meet the purpose of theological education as the "practical Christian thinker" for church leadership. In Kelsey's schema, Hough and Cobb have developed a 'Berlin' model, focussed on the end product of thinking and doing rather than being.

Kelsey contributed to the debate with an eclectic model which encompassed both maieutic (bringing to birth) and mimetic (imitation) functions of training.¹⁰⁸ He distinguished formation from theological education while affirming that they are interdependent,¹⁰⁹ balancing between Athens and Berlin.

¹⁰⁵ Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models*.

¹⁰⁶ Farley, *Theologia*.

¹⁰⁷ Hough and Cobb, *Christian Identity and Theological Education*, Ch. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Kelsey, *To Understand God Truly: What's Theological About a Theological School*.

¹⁰⁹ David H. Kelsey, "'Formation' And Theological Schooling," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 43, no. 1-4 (1998): 39.

Wood also presented a model, “*Vision and Discernment*,” which was situated between the character formation and academic learning paradigms.¹¹⁰ Wood proposed developing theological reflection involving a dialectical relationship between vision, the theoretical whole, and discernment, the discrimination of particulars.¹¹¹ Wood argued that the different understandings of theological education as formation, thinking about doctrine, and professional training, could all be contained by using the rubric of vision and discernment. Wood conceded that it was important that students have some theological judgements, so that they emerge with an understanding of Christian faith and witness. Further, gaining theological judgements is the way for students to learn to make *more* theological judgements. He says:

*One learns to make judgements chiefly by making judgments, and then examining their grounds and implications, reflecting on one’s performance, and trying again.*¹¹²

By engaging in theological reflection, formation and learning doctrine influence each other. Professional development has a place in that students need to understand theology in order to decide the best way to practice it.¹¹³ Wood combined practice with formation and study. Later Wood argued that theological education functioned in the church specifically for the development of church leadership, but also more generally for all to be equipped for a range of ministries. That is, while all people can be involved in ministry, only some become leaders in the church. The leaders are especially in need of spiritual formation. Leaders are to be subject to the pressures to act, temptations of ministry, and demands to give spiritual help,¹¹⁴ and formation to deal with these stresses in their lives should be part of the training programme.

The models presented by Farley, Kelsey, and Wood are concerned primarily with meeting the need for unity in theological education by responding to the fragmented curriculum. Farley’s model deals with the lack of integration of curriculum. Woods works on the development of a new curriculum which seeks to create links between the fields of study. Kelsey’s model is more

¹¹⁰ Wood, *Vision and Discernment*.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 67-77.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 81.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 93-95.

¹¹⁴ Charles M. Wood, "Theological Education and Education for Church Leadership," in *Theological Perspectives on Christian Formation*, ed. Jeff Astley, Leslie J Francis, and Colin Crowder (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 308-9.

concerned with the character of the schooling and does not delve into the course of study.¹¹⁵ Farley's model and concern with theologia is still largely cognitive, and Kelsey's 'to understand God truly' is a cognitively oriented model.¹¹⁶ While for Woods, the development of 'vision and discernment' is formation of the capacity and activity of making theological judgements, this is also biased toward cognitive rationality. These models do not deal actively with the philosophical divide between the rational and extra-rational;¹¹⁷ nor do they help heal the theology/spirituality separation. While formation is a theme that resonates, there is no attention given to students' prior formation that may need to be challenged and evaluated.

Other approaches to integration the theological curriculum involve moving beyond the seminary confines in a more specific way. Banks presented a 'missional model.' He argued that formation occurs not as preparatory to ministry but in the midst of ministry: "For Jesus, instructing his disciples in a way that was spiritually and morally formative was not everything."¹¹⁸ The emphasis in the missional training model is in being involved in mission, not preparing for it. Formation happens in overcoming the challenges involved in service.

Since Farley's diagnosis, curriculum review or redevelopment has become an important element in seminary reviews.¹¹⁹ There are also guides for the curriculum development process.¹²⁰ New models of curriculum typically include more integration of practice and theory, and more integration across the four-fold curriculum. Accordingly many schools are bringing change into

¹¹⁵ Kelsey, *To Understand God Truly: What's Theological About a Theological School*. While ch 9 is titled 'The Course of Study' Kelsey does not advocate any particular course or curriculum.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 203. Kelsey says the accent is on "cultivating more nuanced and perceptive capacities for judgement." Sands comments on the academic nature of the verb 'understand' and adverb 'truly' to bring out this point. Edward Sands, "What Is Your Orientation? Perspectives on the Aim of Theological Education," *Journal of Christian Education* 44, no. 3 (2001): 9.

¹¹⁷ Although Kelsey is aware that for some the way to know God is through the affections Kelsey, *To Understand God Truly: What's Theological About a Theological School*, 42.

¹¹⁸ Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models*, 110.

¹¹⁹ For instance, Ferris reviews eight varied approaches to renewal in evangelical schools from around the world in Robert W Ferris, *Renewal in Theological Education: Strategies for Change* (Wheaton: Billy Graham Center, 1990). Brueggemann presents an integrated curriculum before Farley's analysis, Walter Brueggemann, "An Attempt at an Interdisciplinary M.Div. Curriculum," *Theological Education* 13, no. Spring (1977).

¹²⁰ For instance Ford uses an outcomes based educational approach Leroy Ford, *A Curriculum Design Manual for Theological Education* (Nashville: Broadman, 1991).

their curriculum and attempting to provide a learning experience integrating spirituality with theology and practical work.¹²¹

The research of Foster showed how formation was not simply extra-curricula or something that occurred outside the seminary classroom. Foster classified the way that formation was integrated into classroom activities into three approaches of a pedagogy of formation: practising the presence of God, practising holiness, and practising religious leadership. By practising the presence of God Foster refers to ways of including encounter with God in the classroom so that a new consciousness of God's activity in the world may be appreciated. Practising holiness builds on the first awareness of the presence of God and refers to "the character of the clergy – to the congruence of devotion and belief, to mind and heart." The third approach, practising religious leadership, relates to ways of making judgements and patterns of leadership that are in line with the theology espoused.¹²² While Foster distinguished a pedagogy of formation, it was one pedagogy of four along with pedagogies of interpretation, contextualisation and performance. He noted, however, that these pedagogies 'do not function as alternate modes of knowing,' rather they co-exist but with a variation in emphasis.¹²³

Courses in spiritual formation, a new field in Protestant theological education, have also been developed in an effort to meet the formational needs of student and seminary. The debate and the practical situation on the ground have led educators to acknowledge that there needs to be a better balance of curriculum and formation.¹²⁴ Strege noted, however, that a new field can add to the curricular fragmentation rather than counter it.¹²⁵

Another response to the problem of the fragmented curriculum is to emphasise non-formal factors within the programme, including group activities and student/faculty interaction, to enhance formation. The place of the residential seminary is part of this discussion, for the formational

¹²¹ Keane, "What Is the Character of Teaching, Learning, and the Scholarly Task in the Good Theological School," 38.

¹²² Foster et al., *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination*, 100-01, 03-4.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 372.

¹²⁴ Senior and Weber, "Formation in Theological School," 19.

¹²⁵ Merle Strege, "Chasing Schleiermacher's Ghost: The Reform of Theological Education in the 1980's," in *Theological Education and Moral Formation*, ed. Richard John Neuhaus (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 118.

benefits that entail from a programme whose formational approach includes the seminary environment outside of the classroom.

Conversely, distance learning and part-time study have been suggested to increase the integration of material with the students' lives, so students retain links with home and community.¹²⁶ The latter assumes students have the skills to do the requisite reflection. Cram also suggested that if theological education took place in the marketplace rather than the seminary,¹²⁷ it could hold its own in the marketplace.

Farley's analysis of the fragmented curriculum led to a targeted response on the curricula of theological education. There are a range of new models of theological education, different foci of the new curricula, plus other options such as part-time models and spiritual formation courses, for creating a more integrated theological learning experience. Generally, however, these models do not meet the challenge of prior student formation, or necessarily respond to the disjunction of theology and spirituality. One aspect of change, however, does respond to some of these needs, the place of reflection as a pedagogical method. Reflection is the topic in the next section.

Reflection as a pedagogical method

The place of reflection is given considerable attention as a pedagogical method for enhancing formation. For instance Wood encouraged reflection across the curriculum, arising in vision and discernment.¹²⁸ MacInnis affirmed the place of reflection when he applied Augustine's work to modern theological education:

*Theological education should draw students into a reflective process which assists them in the quest for a deeper personal faith, for a well-grounded confession of that faith, and for life within a community of faith.*¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Douglas A Martz, "Seminary Reform: A Blueprint for Revisioning," *Sewanee Theological Review* 41, no. 4 (1998): 363, White, "A Future for Anglican Ministerial Education: Some Personal Reflections."

¹²⁷ Ronald Cram and Stanley P. Saunders, "Feet Partly of Iron and Partly of Clay: Pedagogy and the Curriculum of Theological Education," *Theological Education*, no. Spring (1992): 26.

¹²⁸ Wood, *Vision and Discernment*, 69.

¹²⁹ John MacInnis, "Theological Education as Formation for Ministry," in *Theological Literacy for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Rodney L. Peterson and Nancy M. Rourke (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 382-3.

Killen and de Beer outline a five part reflective process, which begins with entering into an experience, followed by being attentive to feelings as pointers to responses, exploring the images that may be aroused through contemplation, finally leading to insight which is brought to fruition in action.¹³⁰

This is theological reflection – to allow the thoughts, feelings, images, and insights that arise from the concrete events of our lives to be in genuine conversation with the wisdom of the entire Christian community throughout the ages.

*Theological reflection is the discipline of exploring our individual and corporate experience in conversation with the wisdom of a religious heritage. The conversation is a genuine dialogue that seeks to hear from our own beliefs, actions, and perspectives, as well as from those of the tradition. It respects the integrity of both. Theological reflection therefore may confirm, challenge, clarify and expand how we understand our own experience and how we understand the religious tradition. The outcome is new truth and meaning for living.*¹³¹

As well as attending to ‘cognitive rationality’ in religious tradition, Killen and de Beer’s description of theological reflection attends to extra-rational factors which more rationally oriented models of reflection do not take into account. In *Being There*, an ethnological study of formation in two different types of theological school, the authors recount that that the formation process in both theological schools was seen as initial encounter, challenge, struggle and resolution. These four phases are analogous to the stages of reflection in Killen above, and in Mezirow’s transformative learning theory.¹³²

Reflection may help students in the three areas outlined in this chapter as problematic to formation: first in students’ own self-understanding and growth including prior formation, second in integration of theology and practice to compensate for the fragmented curriculum, and third in that larger integration of theology and spirituality. The contexts of the discussion regarding reflection echo the three areas mitigating against formation, in reflection integrating theory and

¹³⁰ Patricia O’Connell Killen and John de Beer, *The Art of Theological Reflection* (New York: Crossroad, 1994; reprint, 2001), 21.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 18, 51.

¹³² Carroll et al., *Being There*, 222.

practice across the fragmented curriculum, reflection uniting theology and spirituality, and reflection for continuing formation.

Reflection to integrate the theory and practice

Traditional theological education works from theory to practice, yet reflecting on practice feeding back into theory is advanced by many writers as a way of integrating theology and developing ministry skills. The principles underlying the reflective practice model outlined by Schon,¹³³ regarding how effective practice involves constant reflection, form the backdrop for reflection on ministry practice. The reflective practice model includes the development of ministry skills, the mutuality of experience and theory, and ultimately how experience and theory affect the student's understanding of self, theology and ministry.¹³⁴ In Hough and Cobb's model of theological education, reflection on practice accomplishes ministerial competence.¹³⁵ At Duke Seminary a programme to help students be more intentionally reflective included reflection about the impact of service on their study and prayer.¹³⁶ The range of models indicate that alongside effective ministry skills, in reflection students learn to relate ministry practice to theory and to their personal development, so that they integrate all aspects of their learning. In the long term to learn to be continually reflective in ministry means continuing to learn to integrate practice with new learning, and so to be continually effective as contexts and situations change.

Reflection for theology and spirituality

Reflection is a way for students to integrate theology with spirituality, and their own previously held views. Reflection on theology and their own views may lead to change, or deeper personal understanding. Programmes of theological education may not require self-reflection of students, students may have little aptitude or interest in thinking theologically, or that interest may not be

¹³³ Donald A. Schon, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

¹³⁴ See also Hough and Cobb, *Christian Identity and Theological Education*, 85-90., Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed*, ed. John Christopher Thomas, Rick D. Moore, and Steven J. Land, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplemental Series 2* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), Jones and Jennings, "Formed for Ministry: A Program for Spiritual Formation," 124-5.

¹³⁵ Hough and Cobb, *Christian Identity and Theological Education*, 90.

¹³⁶ Jones and Jennings, "Formed for Ministry: A Program for Spiritual Formation," 125.

linked to students' own developing spirituality.¹³⁷ Wood writes that the ability to reflect is central to the purpose of education; further, reflection helps students to be aware of their own biases, so as to have some objectivity.

*The ideology of theological inquiry – the ways in which theologians' social location and social interests may lead them unwittingly both to distort and to misrepresent their inquiry – deserves careful study; such study is indeed one of the ways in which theology needs to become "more critical," in this case self-critical.*¹³⁸

Without reflection students' theology may be assumed uncritically, simply inherited from authorities leaving students without the 'suppleness and vitality' that is needed when challenged.¹³⁹ This is a danger when the curriculum is too packed to give students time to reflect and 'own' their ideas,¹⁴⁰ or even to construct new ones for themselves.¹⁴¹ Giving space in the classroom for reflection provides structure for students to learn to reflect.¹⁴² Houghton pointedly says: "It is our business to help our students to think, much more than it is our responsibility to provide them with information."¹⁴³

Critical reflection requires a certain level of both cognitive and moral development, and some students "lack the moral virtues requisite for critical reflection; they are not honest enough to accept the conclusions of rational argument."¹⁴⁴ Killen talks of attitudes of certitude and self-assurance; certitude is a way of knowing which does not allow for other possibilities, and self-assurance rests on one's own experience without gaining from other ways of knowing,¹⁴⁵ and both can inhibit theological reflection:

The problem with reflecting from the standpoint of certitude is that it allows in no new meanings or surprises... [it] simply reinforces the way things are emotionally, politically, economically, and in every other way.

¹³⁷ Lindbeck, "Spiritual Formation and Theological Education," 295.

¹³⁸ Wood, *Vision and Discernment*, 60-61.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁴⁰ Houghton, "Theological Education for Leadership Development," 204. Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models*, 2.

¹⁴¹ Lindbeck, "Spiritual Formation and Theological Education," 295.

¹⁴² Cram and Saunders, "Feet Partly of Iron and Partly of Clay," 31.

¹⁴³ Houghton, "Theological Education for Leadership Development," 209.

¹⁴⁴ Strege, "Chasing Schleiermacher's Ghost: The Reform of Theological Education in the 1980's," 124.

¹⁴⁵ Similar to pre- and quasi-reflective epistemological positions, see Ch 3 page 92

*...the standpoint of self-assurance also frustrates the movement toward insight...we rely solely on our current experience and perspective. If we refer to the wisdom of our Christian heritage we do so to reinforce what we already think, to support the agendas we already hold.*¹⁴⁶

In contrast the standpoint of exploration allows dialogue between experience and reflection,¹⁴⁷ in such a way that the relationship between theology and spirituality may start to meet again:

*Although good theology is possible without spiritual maturity (or even belief), it is generally better... when it is done by the spiritually mature.*¹⁴⁸

The lack of practical ways of reinforcing the relationship between spirituality and theology was noted above. The role of reflection in drawing together theology and spirituality is one positive method which may aid students in incorporating both aspects into balanced formation.

Reflection for continuing formation

Through critical self-reflection students can develop self-awareness. More than the reflection engendered by theory and practice dislocations, there is the need to learn to reflect, and to self-reflect, on what one chooses to believe.¹⁴⁹ Wood argues regarding formation's ongoing process, that the "aim of theological education is not to form Christians, but to form the habit of critical reflection on one's formation,"¹⁵⁰ and sees transformation as a unifying principle for theological education.¹⁵¹ Reflection acts to review the past, and orient toward the future. Students may evaluate prior understandings and "inauthentic self-understanding,"¹⁵² and their own practices of faith.¹⁵³ This kind of reflection brings "to conscious scrutiny behaviour which might otherwise be governed by habit, or convention, or unconscious motives, or various other factors."¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁶ Killen and Beer, *Theological Reflection*, 48.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁴⁸ Lindbeck, "Spiritual Formation and Theological Education," 292.

¹⁴⁹ Cram and Saunders, "Feet Partly of Iron and Partly of Clay," 31.

¹⁵⁰ Wood, "Theological Education and Education for Church Leadership," 310.

¹⁵¹ Loder, "Transformation in Christian Education."

¹⁵² Kelsey, "'Formation' And Theological Schooling," 33-4, 38-40.

¹⁵³ Jones and Jennings, "Formed for Ministry: A Program for Spiritual Formation," 124.

¹⁵⁴ Wood, "Theological Inquiry and Theological Education," 82.

Reflection may lead students to think about who they should 'be,'¹⁵⁵ and to move toward learning the "world-view toward which they are shaped."¹⁵⁶

Spirituality is often seen as highly individualistic,¹⁵⁷ as are some aspects of spiritual formation. Kelsey attributes this to the Enlightenment.¹⁵⁸ Theological education is communal, and it is in the community atmosphere which is inclusive of race, gender, class, experience and theological position that the formative kind of conversation can take place where a variety of perspectives are presented and argued.¹⁵⁹ The third area of reflection in the Duke programme concerned students being self-reflective about the relationship aspect of formation in the community environment.¹⁶⁰ In theological education, reflection regarding relationships, and communal discussion and reflection on theology, can help students to be aware of the communal and contextual aspects of spirituality.

One recent approach to reflection is the new interest in Protestant circles in the use of spiritual directors in formation.¹⁶¹ Spiritual direction includes processes for dealing with, for instance, the presence of implicit theologies, what is "misshapen in lives," crises which need to be addressed, and "changing patterns of belief structures and their affect on faith."¹⁶² Sheldrake offers the need for spiritual direction as a way of increasing integration of study and learning, although advises it should not be connected with the assessment and educational routines of the training. Sheldrake explains spiritual direction can help in the crises of different phases of theological education. At entry students are faced with questions on self-discovery mixed with discovery that a Bible school or seminary is filled with people struggling with the same troubling influences as

¹⁵⁵ Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology*, 55-6.

¹⁵⁶ Kelsey, "'Formation' And Theological Schooling," 33-34, 38-40.

¹⁵⁷ A study by Holder and Dahill, while acknowledging the place of experience, saw that the implicit definition of spirituality was that of a solitary soul without reference to context and encounter. A. Holder and Lisa E. Dahill, "Teaching Christian Spirituality in Seminaries Today," *Christian Spirituality Bulletin* 7, no. (Fall/Winter) (1999): 12.

¹⁵⁸ Kelsey, "'Formation' And Theological Schooling," 40.

¹⁵⁹ Cram and Saunders, "Feet Partly of Iron and Partly of Clay," 25-6.

¹⁶⁰ Jones and Jennings, "Formed for Ministry: A Program for Spiritual Formation," 125.

¹⁶¹ Martz, "Seminary Reform: A Blueprint for Revisioning," 362-4.

¹⁶² Implicit theologies are theological assumptions people hold that have not been formally articulated. Sheldrake, "The Role of Spiritual Direction in the Context of Theological Education," 378, White, "A Future for Anglican Ministerial Education: Some Personal Reflections."

themselves. Towards the end of training is another kind of crisis, as students feel unprepared for ministry.¹⁶³

Formation does not necessarily occur through critical reflection, and sometimes occurs through unreflected imitation. There is a formational (or malformational)¹⁶⁴ impact on students of faculty who model, intentionally and unintentionally, reflection, formation, relationships with God and others, theological thinking, and ministry practice. Following a faculty model may lead a student to a critically discerned desire to develop similar values or lifestyle options for themselves.

The impact of an integrated model of theological education is that it gives students a framework to encourage their own development and to continue to do that in ways they reflect. Reflection has been referred to by many theological educators as crucial in the integrating and self-implicating aspects inherent in effective theological education, working across the professional/academic divide, and the separation of theology and spirituality.

Conclusion

Formation is a central focus of evangelical theological education. Notwithstanding that formation is understood in various ways, the lack of formation in theological education has been the subject of debate and discussion over the previous decades. In this chapter I presented a fivefold understanding of formation, and three major factors which hinder formation in theological education. The debate regarding formation has been part of a larger discussion regarding the unity and purpose of theological education.

Formation is a difficult concept to capture, carrying a range of meanings which varies with those who use the term. I presented five factors which contribute to formation, concerning relationships to God, thinking theologically, communicating the gospel, relationships to others, and self-understanding, as parameters for further discussion of formation. Formation seen as encompassing these five factors encompasses academic theological understanding (wissenschaft) and ministry skills as a point of unity in theological education. When theological education is

¹⁶³ Sheldrake, "The Role of Spiritual Direction in the Context of Theological Education," 370-5.

¹⁶⁴ The impact is malformational when faculty model behaviour that is not consistent with the theology being taught. Foster et al., *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination*, 115-6.

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concerned with formative development, it acts to promote formational self-awareness, and model and support students in formation. Therefore thinking theologically, and an effective use of ministry skills, are part of this greater purpose.

There are three major contributory factors to the need for explicit attention to formation within theological education. They are first students' personal need for formation and transformation, second the philosophical foundations which privileged discursive knowing over intuitive and affective knowing, and third the fragmentation of the theological education curriculum.

First, students have a need for personal formation because the prior shaping of their lives from their home, society and education means they think, relate, and behave out of their unconscious world views or frames of reference. Prior formation may be divergent from the formation outcomes of theological education. Helping students to become aware of discrepancies, and to be able to reflect upon the source of their own assumptions, is a basic step in formation.

Second, the philosophical underpinnings of positivist modernism have devalued non-discursive cognition, which has excluded imaginative, intuitive and affective ways of reasoning from theological thought. This exclusion can be seen in the separation of theology and spirituality. Within evangelical theological education the separation of spirituality and theology may lead to a deeper knowledge of the Scriptures without a correspondingly deeper response to the challenges of lifestyle to which that knowledge may have led. Conversely it may mean a disregarding of intellectual or academic study and an over-reliance on the emotional aspects of religious expression.

Third, the curriculum that undergirds most theological education programmes is based on the fourfold encyclopaedia developed by Schleiermacher. The effect of the fourfold curriculum is a lack of integration of course content in ways of relating to God, thinking theologically, communicating the gospel, relating to others, and self-understanding. Students may be unprepared for continuing formation in all or any of these aspects outside of the course parameters.

Theological Education

Formation is often implicit rather than explicitly addressed in the curriculum, as it has been understood as inimical to theological education. More recent responses have been to address formation in spiritual formation courses, and greater awareness of the impact of student-faculty interaction and non-formal aspects of the training programme which relate to formation. There is also an awareness of the sterility of theology studied from a purely rational framework, resulting in greater inclusion of intuitive and imaginative modes of cognition within the theological education environment. Reflective activities serve to aid the integration of the curriculum, to cross the divide between theology and spirituality, and to guide ongoing formation.

Theological education is not a course to be completed but the inculcation of ways of understanding and reflecting, so students reach a place where they can continue to be aware of the forces moulding them and acting on them, in their thoughts, their emotions, their relationships, their ministry, their theology, and their culture. In this way students can critique their inner selves, their culture and context, and the theology that they will encounter. At its best theological education acts to help students look at their responses and reflect on why they respond as they do, so they can respond to an ever changing scenario. At heart then, improving theological education is a matter of enhancing the formational aspect, and paying attention to the areas which constrain student formation. An awareness and response to the three areas which hinder formation, namely prior student formation, theology/spirituality dualism, and a fragmented curriculum, further advances student formation and accordingly theological education.

Having presented a view of theological education which highlights the current situation with regard to formation in theological education, I propose that the principles and practice of transformative learning might counter and rectify the problems identified as working against formational purposes in the practice of theological education. Transformative learning would also offer a theoretical background to the various reflective practices that are already used in theological education. Transformative learning has an educational philosophical background which can be adapted for use in theological education. In responding to concerns about emphasis on rationalism transformative learning has developed to include emotional elements, which responds to philosophical issues of the division between rational and extra-rational modes.

Theological Education

Transformative learning is also adaptable to a range of theological education models and pedagogical practices. Transformative learning rests on a developmental constructivist understanding of the human person applicable to students' development during theological education. Consequently transformative learning offers a theory which can be applied and researched in order to test its usefulness in responding to the felt need for greater formation in theological education. Accordingly in the next chapter transformative learning theory is explored in detail.

Two ~ Transformative Learning

To bring change you have to change your thinking - then action can start to change. It is easy to change thinking, but it takes a long time to change action. (Naheed FR)

Naheed in this reflection has pointed to two aspects of formation, changing thinking and changing action. While she proposes that changing thinking is easy, this is not always the case, however she is clear that a change in thinking should result in a change in action. Transformative learning is an educational model which brings into place ways to support students as they change their thinking leading to changed action. In the last chapter I argued that student formation within theological education is influenced by students' prior formation, by Cartesian dualism, especially with respect to the separation of spirituality and theology, and by the fragmented curriculum. Transformative learning promotes formation through the revision of students' unarticulated assumptions. In this chapter I show how transformative learning can aid students of theological education first in thinking through their previous formation, second in how it can encourage a more holistic understanding of spirituality and theology, and third how as a pedagogy it encourages integrative reflection.

The practice of transformative learning sits within the rubric of self-directed emancipatory adult education. It has roots in the critical theory of Habermas, emancipatory educational methods of Freire, and its praxis is based on humanistic and constructivist anthropological and epistemological philosophies. Educators with an interest in developing spirituality within mainstream education have written on the use of transformative learning, which serves as a starting point for discussion in adapting the theory for use in theological education. I end this chapter with a critique of the philosophical foundations, cross-cultural implications, and an understanding of transformative learning for evangelical theological education.

Transformative Learning: an overview

Mezirow outlines the parameters of transformative learning in his original book on the theory:

There is need for a learning theory that can explain how adult learners make sense or meaning of their experiences, the nature of the structures that influence the way they construe experience, the dynamics involved in modifying meanings, and the way the structures of meaning themselves undergo changes when learners find them to be dysfunctional.¹

In accord with this preliminary setting out of the theory, the concepts covered in this section are meaning-making, structures of meaning including epistemological perspectives and the way they change, and the processes of transformative learning. The theory is specifically applied to how students make meaning of their faith.

The name ‘transformative learning’ may seem redundant when all education is predicated on advancing change in some manner. The transformation under discussion is emancipatory; it is not directive or manipulative but creates an environment within which students might identify previously uncritically held assumptions, and subject them to review. The review process can lead to transformative change. While ‘transformation’ is used to refer to many different processes in social sciences, in this context it is used specifically to refer to learning where perspectives are changed. The transformation in view here is in contradistinction to the formation of childhood education. The formation which occurs through schooling and socialisation can, however, leave people with maladaptive assumptions and skewed perspectives which limit their thinking and behaviour, and so need to undergo a process of change. Informative learning, the acquisition of knowledge, is separate from but may be related to, transformative learning.

Philosophical background

Mezirow developed the background to his theory from research into adult, mid-life, women returning to education, and through an extensive synthesis of theories from the fields of psychology, philosophy, sociology and political science as well as education.² Mezirow notes that through Freire’s concept of conscientization, he was initially encouraged to re-examine the

¹ Jack Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning* (California: Jossey Bass, 1991a), xii.

² *Ibid.*, xi, xiii. For instance the fields of research cover adult development, (psychology), communication (sociology), learning theory (philosophy).

adult learning theories from which he worked as a consultant in adult education. Habermas and his theory of social knowledge was another major contributor to his thinking.³

Habermas argued that people know only in reference to their social context, as they are part of a larger context. Habermas separated knowledge into the realms of technical, communicative and emancipatory: to learn a skill, understand knowledge, or to bring about change.⁴ Mezirow used these categories in his own theory, but argued that both instrumental (technical) and communicative knowledge could be emancipatory so he integrated the concept of emancipatory knowledge into the first two.⁵

Habermas, and the Frankfurt school of critical theory, are seen as fundamental in the theories of critical pedagogy regarding how education takes issue with power and ideological structures. Freire was also concerned with learning in context, but while Habermas was more concerned with the larger social milieu and bringing change to birth within that larger framework, Freire's initial concern was at the grass roots level, effecting change in the lives of adult education students in his native Brazil. In Freire's notion of conscientization, education meant to teach the learners where they were, in their own social understandings, but also to help them understand the political realities within which they lived, in new ways.⁶ Freire was exiled from his native land as a result of being involved in political education, and in exile expanded the application of his theory to other adult learning concerns.

Mezirow has taken both Freire's and Habermas's concepts and integrated them into his understanding of education. Freire believed that revolutionary change had to emerge from the people: a teacher could not 'bring' freedom but the people concerned must be a part of any struggle.⁷ These concepts run true for the notion of transformative learning whereby teachers cannot nominate for students what is to be changed, or what it might be changed to, they can only

³ Ibid., xvi, Jack Mezirow, ed., *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000a), xiii.

⁴ Jurgen Habermas, "Knowledge and Human Interests: A General Perspective," in *A Habermas Reader*, ed. William Outhwaite (Oxford: Polite Press, 1971), Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 72-89.

⁵ Patricia Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1994), 25, Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 87-89.

⁶ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (Middlesex: Penguin, 1985), 52-59.

⁷ Raymond A. Morrow and Carlos Alberto Torres, *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative and Social Change* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002), 134-5.

be people opening up new ways of looking, and providing the support while these new understandings are explored and tried out. Freire came from a Christian background and had deep faith. His faith becomes evident in his respect for persons, his measures to ensure the dignity of students, the desire to see society transformed to be more humane, and in working against manipulations (although in his later work he does accept that there is some degree of manipulation).⁸ Freire's work has given birth to a range of pedagogies. Sometimes transformative learning as a term is used to refer to a critical pedagogy that is political, cultural and contextual in direction.⁹ In Mezirow's use of the term it is personal transformation that is the issue of focus.

Transformative learning and adult development

Transformative learning theory is a way of explaining adult development in terms of constructing meaning, maturity being attained by the development of more integrated perspectives. In presenting the theory as emancipatory education, development is also seen as a process of emancipation from structures, perspectives and emotions that are limiting. Brookfield considers "...reflecting on the assumptions underlying our and others' ideas and actions, and contemplating alternate ways of thinking and living – is one of the important ways in which we become adults."¹⁰

Meaning-making

*...a learning theory that can explain how adult learners make sense of their experiences...*¹¹

Transformative learning theory is concerned with 'meaning-making.'¹² Part of being human is the search for meaning, and people try to find the reason for almost everything that happens to

⁸ Wayne Cavalier, "The Three Voices of Freire: An Exploration of His Thought over Time," *Religious Education* 97, no. 3 (2002): 262-67.

⁹ C. A. Bowers, "Is Transformative Learning the Trojan Horse of Western Globalization?," *Journal of Transformative Education* 3, no. 2 (2005): 116-25, O'Sullivan, "The Project and Vision of Transformative Education: Integral Transformative Learning," 1-12.

¹⁰ Stephen D. Brookfield, *Developing Critical Thinkers: Challenging Adults to Explore Alternative Ways of Thinking and Acting* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987), x.

¹¹ Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, xii.

them and other people, be it a simple assigning of it all to ‘the way things are’ or more finite causes. The psychiatrist Birtchnell referring to Nunberg’s theory of rationalisation, considers that “the human need to explain and to make sense of is so great that we will create quite unsubstantiated explanations rather than have no explanations at all.”¹³ Mezirow notes:

*If we are unable to understand [the meaning of our experience], we often turn to tradition, thoughtlessly seize explanations by authority figures, or resort to various psychological mechanisms, such as projection or rationalization, to create imaginary meanings.*¹⁴

Part of the trajectory of development is reassessing the place that tradition and authority play in the way that meaning is given to the vicissitudes of life. When tradition becomes outdated, authorities lose their aura and authenticity and structures of meaning are assaulted. Other ways of dealing with dissonance are more psychological in nature: a refusal to ‘see’ the problem or to place the responsibility somewhere else. Transformative learning traces the journey of dissatisfaction with past methods of making meaning into new methods which integrate new perspectives.

Structures of Meaning

*...a learning theory that can explain...the nature of the structures that influence the way [adults] construe experience...*¹⁵

In order to explain how changes in meaning making occur, transformative learning theory outlines how meaning-making is structured into layers of understanding.

¹² Susan Imel, "Transformative Learning in Adulthood," *ERIC Digest* (1998), Jack Mezirow, "Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory," in *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*, ed. J Mezirow (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000b), 3-8, Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 1-36.

¹³ John Birtchnell, *The Two of Me: The Rational Outer Me and the Emotional Inner Me* (Hove, East Sussex: Routledge, 2003), 188.

¹⁴ Mezirow, "Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory," 3.

¹⁵ Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, xii.

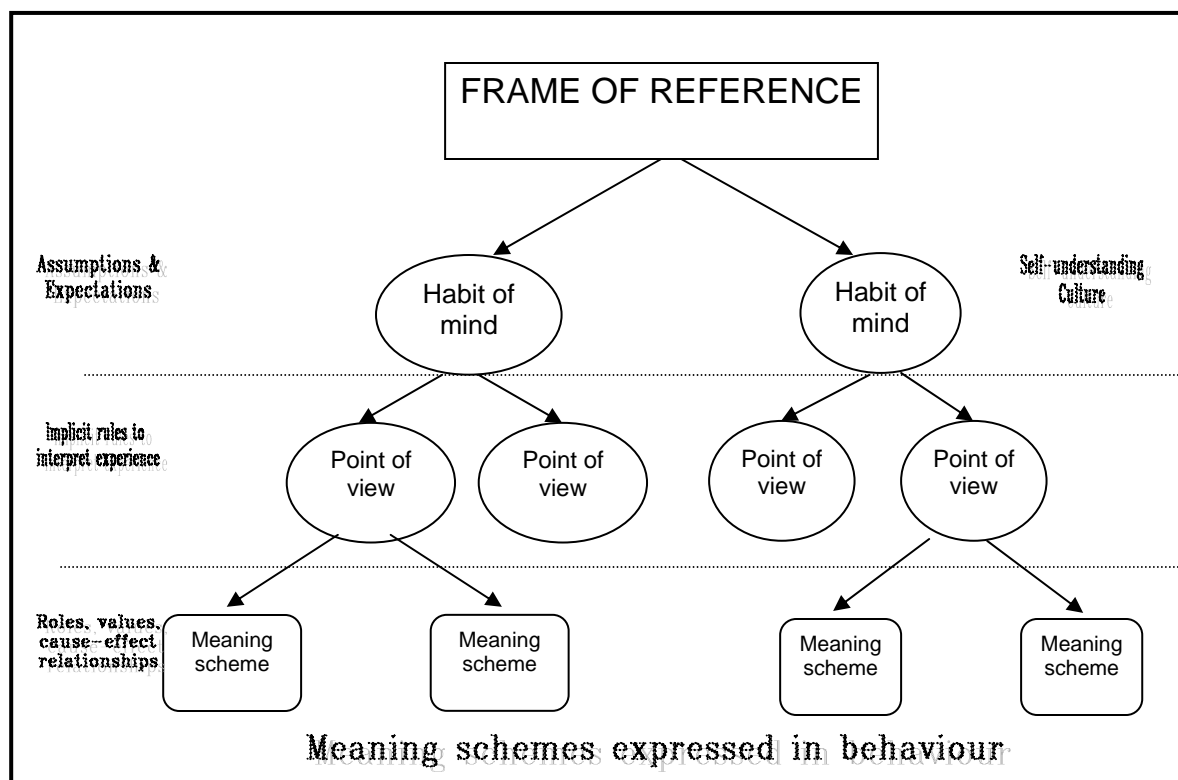


Fig 2.1 Structures of meaning¹⁶

Mezirow interacts with theories in philosophy, linguistics, psychology and sociolinguistics in elaborating and explaining his understanding of frames of reference and their subsets.¹⁷ The overarching structure of meaning or frame of reference, is initially termed a meaning perspective by Mezirow, although the terms tend to be used interchangeably, and in later work ‘frame of reference’ is given preference.¹⁸ These frames of reference, in turn, are made up of habits of mind, which are sets of assumptions and expectations relating to self-understanding, cultural assumptions, or other issues or beliefs. Habits of mind are expressed in points of view, which are

¹⁶ Developed from Patricia Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning. 2nd Ed.* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2006), 37, Mezirow, "Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory," 16-18, Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 44.

¹⁷ These various disciplines use a variety of terms and concepts for explaining the way meaning is structured, including horizons of expectation (Karl Popper), frames (Bateson), personal constructs (Kelly), Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 38-56.

¹⁸ Jack Mezirow, "A Critical Theory of Self-Directed Learning," in *Self-Directed Learning: From Theory to Practice*, ed. Stephen Brookfield, *New Directions for Continuing Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985), 21, Mezirow, "Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory," 16, Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 41-2, Jack and Associates Mezirow, ed., *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood: A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc, 1990), 2.

habitual, “implicit rules we use to interpret experience.”¹⁹ The points of view are further made up of clusters of meaning schemes.²⁰ Meaning schemes tend to be more specific, relating to a particular expectation, such as roles, values, or cause-effect relationships.²¹ Taylor supports the theoretical background with data from empirical research showing meaning schemes to be more specific and unconscious, and they come to awareness in the face of difference. Meaning perspectives are more global, and a revision of a frame of reference is accompanied by readiness to take apposite action.²²

In Mezirow’s early explanations of the theory, meaning perspectives were classified as epistemic, sociolinguistic, and psychological.²³ Later the classification expanded to include other categories, such as moral-ethical, philosophical (including religious), and aesthetic meaning perspectives,²⁴ which overlap and influence each other. Generally different frames of reference held by a person complement each other.²⁵ Meaning perspectives and associated meaning schemes are developed by the general action of the culture so to some extent they are shared, but they also arise from the personal developmental influences on a person, so to some extent they are uniquely held.

The development, distortions, and limitations of epistemic, sociolinguistic, and psychological perspectives have been written about more than those of other kinds of perspectives. Mezirow and Cranton note three types of distortions: distortions related to knowledge, social functions, and oneself and one’s true motives.²⁶ With the extension in types of reference, however, more types of distortion may be identified.

¹⁹ Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 2nd Ed., 37.

²⁰ Mezirow, "Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory," 16-18, Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 44.

²¹ Mezirow, "A Critical Theory of Self-Directed Learning," 21-2.

²² Edward W. Taylor, "Analyzing Research on Transformative Learning Theory," in *Learning as Transformation*, ed. J Mezirow (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 292-8.

²³ Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 41-43.

²⁴ Mezirow, "Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory," 17, Jack Mezirow, "On Critical Reflection," *Adult Education Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (1998): 186.

²⁵ Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 2nd Ed., 25, Mezirow, "Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory," 17.

²⁶ Patricia Cranton, *Professional Development as Transformative Learning: New Perspectives for Teachers of Adults* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996), 103-13, Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 25, 29-40, Mezirow, "How Critical Reflection Triggers Transformative Learning," 14-17, Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 118-44.

Epistemic perspectives relate to the justification of knowledge. There are a number of theories which explain the development of epistemological sophistication, generally tracing a change from knowledge as received, black and white and discrete, to a more complex system of knowledge as constructed, justified in rational discourse, and contingent.²⁷ Mezirow uses the work of Kitchener and King, and their model of reflective judgement, for his understanding of epistemological development.²⁸ Distortions in epistemic perspectives arise due to the inability to conceptualise in ways beyond a student's current level of maturity, inability to distinguish between description and prescription, or abstract and objective, or from a positivist outlook. Learning styles and simply a bounded or limited scope of awareness also lead to epistemic distortions.²⁹ Both Daloz and Kegan, working in the area of developmentalism, argue that any transformation will be an epistemic transformation, in as much as 'habit of mind' and 'point of view' are ways of knowing.³⁰ While epistemology impacts on other understandings, for instance that something may be culturally acceptable, it is not necessarily so that one's epistemological level must change in order to bring about a change of perspective in a frame of reference in another area. While Kitchener and King assert from their research that levels of epistemological complexity are stable across different types of reasoning,³¹ other research has shown that the level of epistemological complexity in one area, perhaps one's area of expertise, may not be evident in another.³² Mezirow also notes that distortions may be distortions in ways of feeling, and not limited to knowing or believing.³³

²⁷ Theories of epistemological development are discussed from pg 92ff.

²⁸ Patricia King and Karen S. Kitchener, *Developing Reflective Judgment* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1994). Other theorists also contribute however, note the presence of Belenky and colleagues (WWK) at the colloquium in 2000 and their contribution to the discussion. Mary Field Belenky and Ann V Stanton, "Inequality, Development, and Connected Knowing," in *Learning as Transformation*, ed. J Mezirow (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000)..

²⁹ Cranton, *Professional Development as Transformative Learning*, 104-5, Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 30-34, Mezirow, "How Critical Reflection Triggers Transformative Learning," 15, Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 119-30.

³⁰ Laurent Daloz has written extensively on mentoring and adult education. Robert Kegan writes in the area of adult development. Laurent A Parks Daloz, "Transformative Learning for the Common Good," in *Learning as Transformation*, ed. J Mezirow (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 104, Robert Kegan, "What "Form" Transforms? A Constructive-Developmental Approach to Transformative Learning," in *Learning as Transformation*, ed. J Mezirow (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 52-54.

³¹ Karen S. Kitchener and Patricia King, "The Reflective Judgment Model: Transforming Assumptions About Knowing," in *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood: A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning.*, ed. Jack and Associates Mezirow (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1990), 166.

³² Lucia Mason, "Personal Epistemologies and Intentional Conceptual Change," in *Intentional Conceptual Change*, ed. Gale M Sinatra and Paul P Pintrich (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003), 216, 29.

³³ Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 5.

Sociolinguistic perspectives are those formed by language and culture. Culture forms perspectives by shaping attitudes and expectations of major and daily events.³⁴ Language also screens attitudes and assumptions, as in the way that in the last decade or so the assumptions behind gendered language have been examined. Distortions arise from unnoticed linguistic traditions, cultural patterns, socioeconomic background, and other such factors, so that is what is perceived as 'normal' cultural behaviour can be atypical in a different cultural milieu.³⁵

Psychological perspectives are those relating to a person's self-concept. Family and educational activities, personality and psychological type, even sometimes random or never repeated comments or events act to shape a person's self-knowledge.³⁶ Distortions affect self-esteem and readiness to engage in certain activities or behaviours.³⁷ Cohen responded to students thinking about themselves in negative ways by helping students recognise spatial, verbal, and kinaesthetic types of intelligence and creativity in order to expand their vision of themselves.³⁸

An educator can help students to learn in all dimensions and attend to transformations in perspectives in all spheres of students' worldview when they have an understanding of the range of perspectives. Some ideas that people use to make meaning have little impact on the rest of their lives (ideas about the weather) but others make a much greater impact (ideas about religion). Students may be encouraged to examine assumptions that may affect their understanding of their social context, but also of themselves and their psychological assumptions, of what undergirds their moral-ethical perspectives, as well as their epistemological frames of reference.

³⁴ Cranton, *Professional Development as Transformative Learning*, 105-7, Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning, 2nd Ed.*, 30-32, Mezirow, "How Critical Reflection Triggers Transformative Learning," 15-16.

³⁵ Cranton, *Professional Development as Transformative Learning*, 105-7, Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 34-38, Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning, 2nd Ed.*, 30-32, Mezirow, "How Critical Reflection Triggers Transformative Learning," 15-16, Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 130-38.

³⁶ Cranton, *Professional Development as Transformative Learning*, 101-03, Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 29.

³⁷ Cranton, *Professional Development as Transformative Learning*, 107-9, Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 38-40, Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 138-43.

³⁸ Cohen gives the example of an adult student who had 'known' she was stupid since 'Mrs Butler in third grade told her so.' Laurence Robert Cohen, "I Ain't So Smart and You Ain't So Dumb: Personal Reassessment in Transformative Learning," *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education* 74 (1997): 62, 64-67.

Transformations

Transformative learning is projected toward ‘perspective transformation,’ or change at the meaning perspective level of structuring understanding, although transformations can occur in habits of mind, points of view, and meaning schemes as well.³⁹ Transformation does not refer to a change in knowledge (an informational increment) or a simple change in behaviour, but a far more thorough going change of perspective.

A major change of perspective is usually initiated by a crisis of some kind; changes in meaning schemes may happen more simply. A change of many meaning schemes may in turn bring about a change of the perspective or frame of reference which they make up; that is meaning schemes may change singly or as a larger joint (epochal) change.⁴⁰ For instance a student with poorly developed social sense might re-evaluate herself and the way she responds and reacts to others as a result of stimuli in course content, other student and teacher behaviour models, and even personality clashes. Her self-evaluation may result in changes in meaning schemes, points of view, habits of mind and meaning perspectives relating to her social sense. In referring to a way of understanding, and a change of understanding, it is not always possible to discern the level (meaning perspective or meaning scheme) at which an assumption functions or a change has occurred. In the example of a student changing in social behaviour a range of understandings might exist that have arisen from familial patterns, from theological understandings of the nature of people, from her personal self-understanding and self-esteem, all of which may function at the level of a meaning scheme, habit of mind, point of view, or meaning perspective. Changes in one may affect changes in another.

Perspective reflection can occur in terms of content, process or premise: reflection on what the perspective is about, how it functions, and the ‘why,’ or the underlying premises of which the perspective is made up. A student might reflect on what she believes about God in relation to, for instance, answered prayer. She might think more about how she developed that image through a particular instance, or years of a way of praying. She might then think about why she arrived at

³⁹ Mezirow, "A Critical Theory of Self-Directed Learning," 23-4.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 24, Mezirow, "How Critical Reflection Triggers Transformative Learning," 13, Mezirow, "Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory," 21.

that image of God and evaluate it more minutely. This will change as she changes her ideas about God, prayer, herself, and concomitant events.

Premise reflection, termed critical reflection, brings about the deepest personal change, transformative learning.⁴¹ At a cognitive developmental level people need to be able to engage in complex cognitive operations in order to assess their own thinking, and the thinking of others, and judge an idea valid or invalid. Students need to develop the ability to be open to other viewpoints, to be able to assess themselves and to accept their own viewpoint as justifiable or otherwise. Challenges to the validity of frames of reference, basic beliefs held about life, can be perceived as very threatening. Nevertheless the changes of these meaning schemes, points of view, habits of mind and ultimately the premises that make up frames of reference result in transformative learning. A frame of reference that has been examined and justified, and is open to challenge and change, is more dependable.⁴² So, to continue with the example of prayer above, a student who has 'examined and justified' the content, process and premise of what she believes about prayer, will be able to hold to that when it seems that prayers are unanswered, and then rather than dismissing prayer (and God) will think more about the process and premise again.

Processes of change

*...a learning theory that can explain...the dynamics involved in modifying meanings...*⁴³

Mezirow originally identified ten phases common to a transformed frame of reference. The first phase was a disorienting dilemma, followed by self-examination, critical assessment, recognition of others' similar transformations, an exploration of options, a plan of action, the acquisition of knowledge and skills, provisional efforts, building of confidence and reintegration.⁴⁴ Other investigators have also elucidated similar phases of the transformation process: for instance the

⁴¹ Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 50-1, Mezirow, "A Critical Theory of Self-Directed Learning," 24-5, Mezirow, "How Critical Reflection Triggers Transformative Learning," 12-13, Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 38, 167-8.

⁴² Mezirow, "Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory," 4, 20.

⁴³ Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, xii.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 168-9.

trigger event, appraisal, exploration, developing alternative perspectives and integration of Brookfield's study.⁴⁵

In her earlier work Cranton sets the phases out as curiosity, confusion, testing, withdrawal, exploration and reflection, turning to others, renewed interest and excitement, re-orientation, equilibrium, and finally advocacy.⁴⁶ The seven facets of the process which are reproduced here in abbreviated form and used throughout my study as a basis of explicating the parts of the process are from later work by Cranton.⁴⁷ In the later work Cranton writes that transformative learning occurs when a student

- i) experiences an activating event
- ii) articulates her assumptions
- iii) begins critical self-reflection
- iv) is open to alternative viewpoints
- v) engages in discourse
- vi) revises her assumptions and perspectives and then
- vii) acts on those revisions

Gould identifies similar processes in his work in a therapeutic context, where the emphasis is on the psychological work to be accomplished rather than perspectives to be changed.⁴⁸ The phases are not steps to be followed consecutively but a process through which people tend to pass, perhaps in a more spiral fashion, perhaps some parts covered simultaneously, on the transformational journey.⁴⁹ The process is personal and individualised. People in similar circumstances may respond differently.

In her later work Cranton conflates the last five phases above into one phase of 'discourse, dialogue, support' which further demonstrates how transformation is a very fluid process.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Brookfield, *Developing Critical Thinkers*, 26-8. Also Cranton and Gould as discussed below.

⁴⁶ Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 72, Patricia Cranton, *Working with Adult Learners* (Toronto, Ontario: Wall & Emerson, Inc., 1992), 151-3.

⁴⁷ Patricia Cranton, "Teaching for Transformation," *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education* 94, no. Spring (2002): 65-66.

⁴⁸ Roger Gould, "The Therapeutic Learning Program," in *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood: A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning*, ed. Jack and Associates Mezirow (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1990), 140-45.

⁴⁹ Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 69-72.

⁵⁰ Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning. 2nd Ed.*, 65-6.

Cranton separately elaborates on the process of self-reflection, and on helping to put revisions into action. While it is useful to be aware of the possible factors to be attended to in the teaching environment, in reality they may not be able to be discerned separately. In the following section I highlight the separate aspects that may underlie any transformation, aware that it is an artificial delineation.

An Activating Event

An activating event, also called a disorienting dilemma, or initiating or trigger event, is something which initiates change. As frames of reference are usually unacknowledged, changing them can never be initially intentional. Life crises and developmental crises can act as trigger events. Change may also begin to occur when a person becomes aware that something – a question, an event, a crisis, viewing a film - shows a different perspective on life from what they already hold, and hints that there is possibly something not quite right with the holder's frame of reference. Even noticing such a difference may still be ignored or the difference justified, for instance by reinforcing prejudices or making reference to authorities as above. People are attached to frames of reference at the emotional and cognitive level. A person is more resistant to change when their beliefs are more deeply held and they deem the knowledge more important. It would seem there must be some kind of continuum on both the cataclysmic nature of the event or the sensitivity and readiness of the person to change for the transformation process to be set in motion. Someone who is ready to change may not need a deeply disturbing activating event, while someone who is fixed in a way of thinking may only change when something happens that leaves little option but to reassess their ingrained assumptions. Cranton suggests that “traumatic crises may not lead to critical self-reflection if the person feels disempowered by the event.”⁵¹ In creating an environment which encourages transformation, there needs to be a balance between challenge which stimulates the need to change, and support which gives the student the strength to begin the difficult journey.

While Mezirow's original research indicated that the initiating event was singular and memorable, Taylor's analysis of later studies shows the notion to be more complex, with

⁵¹ Ibid., 63.

variations in time, depth, and internality or externality of the trigger event.⁵² The trigger may be anything from a sudden realisation to a slowly growing one; one event or the piling up of many.⁵³ Schugurensky used the example of Rosa Parks' involvement in civil rights groups (of the Southern States of the USA) for more than ten years prior to the 'bus incident' which led to a major civil rights movement, as an extreme instance of transformative learning which occurred incrementally with no disorienting dilemma as initiator.⁵⁴

Any event that challenges the assumptions someone holds can trigger perspective change. While an activating event can happen serendipitously through a question, a problem, or a life crisis, teachers can make an intentional effort to maintain a teaching environment which gives opportunity for students to be challenged. In the teaching situation this means presenting different points of view, and also the use of creative arts and other media which may reach beyond rational ideas to what lies behind them. Sanders-Bustle encourages giving space to images, often relegated to the sidelines and ignored: "meaning is created from a mix of representations that are not exclusively text, not exclusively image but rather a polysemic technopodge of the two."⁵⁵

Belenky describes the women in their study as being more willing to learn in a mid-wife environment, and that few described challenge as an impetus to learning. As women are already self-doubting, more doubt is not helpful.⁵⁶ The challenge or activating event in transformative learning comes from within rather than externally imposed, and is an inner disequilibrium to which resolution must be sought.

⁵² Taylor, "Analyzing Research on Transformative Learning Theory," 298-301.

⁵³ Cranton, "Teaching for Transformation," 65, Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 2nd Ed., 63.

⁵⁴ Daniel Schugurensky, "Transformative Learning and Transformative Politics," in *Expanding the Boundaries of Transformative Learning*, ed. Edmund O'Sullivan, Amish Morrell, and Mary Ann O'Connor (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 70-72.

⁵⁵ Lynn Sanders-Bustle, "Introduction: Theoretical Explorations of Image and Inquiry," in *Image, Inquiry and Transformative Practice: Engaging Learners in Creative and Critical Inquiry through Visual Representation*, ed. Lynn Sanders-Bustle, *Studies in Postmodern Theories of Education* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003a), 10.

⁵⁶ Mary Field Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice and Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 227-8.

Articulating Assumptions

The basis for the theory of change is that students have not examined or questioned many firmly held assumptions. When an activating event leads someone to become aware that there is something 'out of kilter,' this is only a first step to transformation. Boyd and Myers refer to a student "staying with her discomfort."⁵⁷ In a situation of discomfort the underlying assumptions need to be articulated. Articulation of unexamined assumptions is not an easy task: assumptions become ingrained with growth and development, they are part of family culture, social sub-culture, and national culture. Assumptions have been learned and reinforced in formal education and the school of life. The process of articulating and examining the assumptions may not be linear, both the articulation and examination may happen together. In order to make assumptions explicit a student must look at their source and consequences. Strategies for articulating assumptions include critical questioning, critical incident exercises, criteria analysis, student autobiographies, and metaphor analysis.⁵⁸ Articulation of assumptions requires a supportive and non-threatening environment, as 'meanings' are being queried and doubted. O'Reilly recommends providing opportunities for students to be listened to, not in the academic way of listening critically, or of preparing to make a counter argument, but "listening like a cow," which gives students room to find their voice, and tell their stories and thus self-reflect.⁵⁹ The relational 'connected knowing' outlined by Belenky, where listeners try to understand the background of a speaker who may be saying something that is different to expectation, is similar to listening in this way.⁶⁰

Critical self-reflection

Critical self-reflection assesses the validity of assumptions once they have been recognised and articulated. The general concept of critical reflection of assumptions is found widely in educational, philosophical, psychotherapeutic and other fields, and "is central to understanding

⁵⁷ Robert D. Boyd and G. J. Myers, "Transformative Education," *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 7, no. 4 (1988): 277.

⁵⁸ Brookfield, *Developing Critical Thinkers*, 89-110, Cranton, "Teaching for Transformation," 67, Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 83-5.

⁵⁹ Mary Rose O'Reilly, *Radical Presence: Teaching as Contemplative Practice* (Portsmouth: Boynton-Cook, 1998), 19, 29.

⁶⁰ Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 114-18. Also see Ch. 3 p. 91 for further discussion.

how adults learn to think for themselves rather than act on the concepts, values, and feelings of others.”⁶¹ In critical reflection people are assessing the basic assumptions that lie behind communications, such as why professional consultations are trusted, or people listen to news items with some element of political cynicism. Mezirow referred to King and Kitchener’s seven stages of learning assumptions, the final two of which are reflective, to explain the cognitive readiness for critical reflection. Critical *self*-reflection is processing one’s own assumptions, requiring cognisance of both the process of one’s own thinking and the context which has brought this process about.

There have been various criticisms of the heavily rational orientation in critical reflection leading to perspective transformation. Early criticism came from Boyd and Myers, who re-interpreted transformative education through the lens of analytical or depth psychology. They laid greater emphasis on symbolic meanings and extra-rational internal psychological processes, with unconsciously held assumptions affecting ego control. Disequilibrium was resolved between ego and other elements of the psyche.⁶² Dirkx paid attention to creative and intuitive aspects of learning that do not rely principally on rational critical reflection.⁶³ Assimilation is a term for learning that occurs without consciously analysing the changes taking place, changes which may occur through intuition or imagination. Mezirow argued that while a transformation in frame of reference may occur through assimilation, transformative learning taking place within adult education crucially includes awareness, leading to critical reflection of assumptions, leading to transformation.⁶⁴ Over time, however, Mezirow himself has given place to what has come to be termed the ‘extra-rational’ dimensions of transformative learning.⁶⁵ Paying attention to the extra-

⁶¹ Mezirow, "On Critical Reflection," 185. For a discussion on the use of critical thinking in adult education see Brookfield, *Developing Critical Thinkers*, 11-12.

⁶² Boyd and Myers, "Transformative Education," 261-84.

⁶³ John M. Dirkx, "Images, Transformative Learning and the Work of Soul," *Adult Learning Special: Contestation, Invitations and Explorations: Spirituality in Adult Learning*, no. EBSCO Publishing (2003): 15-16, John M. Dirkx, "Nurturing Soul in Adult Learning," *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 74, no. Summer (1997): 79-88, John M. Dirkx, "The Power of Feelings: Emotion, Imagination, and the Construction of Meaning in Adult Learning," *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, no. 89 (2001): 63-72, John M. Dirkx, "Transformative Learning and the Journey of Individuation. Eric Digest No. 223," (ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Columbus, OH.[BBB16032], 2000), 1-7, Valerie Grabove, "The Many Facets of Transformative Learning Theory and Practice," *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, no. 74 (1997).

⁶⁴ Mezirow, "On Critical Reflection," 190.

⁶⁵ John M. Dirkx, J Mezirow, and Patricia Cranton, "Musing and Reflections on the Meaning, Context, and Process of Transformative Learning: A Dialogue between John M. Dirkx and Jack Mezirow," *Journal of Transformative Education* 4, no. 2 (2006): 133-4.

rational can be done by providing an environment and material that engages the student on the affective level and by using symbols and art forms to reach a deeper unconscious level.

Cranton used Jungian personality types to discuss individual differences with reference to preferred ways of dealing with reflection in the transformative process.⁶⁶ Jungian personality types are based on the preferences individuals have in using the four psychological functions of thinking, feeling, sensing and intuition.⁶⁷ An introverted thinker may be less inclined to change a perspective, but goes through fairly classical reflective techniques leading to transformation; conversely an extroverted intuitive type may make a more assimilative transformation. Teachers can use a variety of activities to encourage critical reflection in different ways to suit different students. Case studies and similar analytical activities may work well for a person with a preference for the thinking function, but the critical atmosphere may make a person oriented toward feeling uncomfortable, because she has a preference for harmony. A person who prefers the feeling function may respond better to supportive small groups forming a base from which she can critique. Sensing-oriented people respond to concrete activities, and intuitive people respond to games, but these activities may need to be augmented by post-activity analysis to encourage the critical reflection arising from the situation.⁶⁸ Differences in culture, experience, and learning must also be taken into account when providing the right context for transformative learning.⁶⁹

In summary, critical reflection can be modelled, taught, and learned; very often it does not come naturally to students. Students learn to think and discern at the level required for effective critical self-reflection, by repeated efforts, when opportunities for critical reflection become a part of the programme.

⁶⁶ Patricia Cranton, "Individual Differences and Transformative Learning," in *Learning as Transformation*, ed. J Mezirow and Associates (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 181-204, Cranton, *Professional Development as Transformative Learning*, 118-39, Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 92-120, Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning. 2nd Ed.*, 79-99.

⁶⁷ Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning. 2nd Ed.*, 83, Carl J Jung, *Psychological Types*, ed. Sir Herbert Read, et al., vol. 6, The Collected Works of C.G. Jung (London: Routledge, 1971), 330-407.

⁶⁸ Cranton, "Individual Differences and Transformative Learning," 199-200.

⁶⁹ George J. Sefa Dei, "Spiritual Knowledge and Transformative Learning," in *Expanding the Boundaries of Transformative Learning*, ed. Edmund O'Sullivan, Amish Morrell, and Mary Ann O'Connor (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 127-8.

Being open to alternative viewpoints

A student can gain new ways of viewing a situation by being open to alternate viewpoints. When assumptions are tested and found wanting, then an alternative needs to be constructed. To do this a person initially needs a readiness to view different ways of understanding the situation: what could a different frame of reference look like? Role-plays and discussion, the use of images, or actual immersion in different scenarios or situations which might bring a fresh perspective, are helpful educational possibilities.⁷⁰

Alternate viewpoints often come from other people. Other people may be necessary in breaking frameworks of interpretation, and to reflecting points of view, acting as a mirror. The place that others play in personal transformation is frequently mentioned: transformative learning may be personal but it does not occur in isolation, and the place of questioning, dialogue and support recur frequently. Peers involved in the same issues help reinforce reinterpretations a student may make.⁷¹

Engaging in discourse

According to Mezirow discourse is “that specialized use of dialogue devoted to searching for a common understanding and assessment of the justification of an interpretation or belief.”⁷²

Discourse actively assesses one’s own and others perspectives. For discourse to be effective participants need to have the cognitive and emotional maturity to undertake what is a searching procedure. Discourse goes beyond the use of debate or discussion on a controversial or critical issue. It requires students, having previously articulated where their own assumptions lie, to be able to give voice to their questions and possible answers. In discourse students have an opportunity to try out what a new perspective might feel like, and how it might work in their world. For many students being able to give voice to new ideas requires a safe environment where ideas can be explored without fear of judgement. Hennessey shows how making ideas public facilitates the change process, using posters, concept maps, physical models, word

⁷⁰ Cranton, "Teaching for Transformation," 68-9, Sanders-Bustle, "Introduction: Theoretical Explorations of Image and Inquiry," 9-17.

⁷¹ Brookfield, *Developing Critical Thinkers*, 232-3, Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning. 2nd Ed.*, 65.

⁷² Mezirow, "Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory," 10-11.

processing, and videotape, as well as discussion.⁷³ The use of visual and non-discursive ways of 'discourse' is also important in involving all students with varying ideational preferences.

Revising assumptions and perspectives

Revising assumptions might mean an adjustment in existing premises, or developing a new framework. Revision of assumptions requires integrating the previous phases, being aware of what the assumptions were, why they were held, what was wrong with them, what other possibilities might exist, and engaging in discourse about them, in order to come to a point of changing what might be a fundamental way of looking at the world. Revised assumptions may be expressed in a framework of "I used to think that... but now I ...". Students may need a very supportive atmosphere if the revision runs against the predominant culture.⁷⁴

Acting on Revisions

The final and necessary step of transformative learning is putting changed thinking into action. Mezirow was clear that change has not occurred if accompanying action is not taken.⁷⁵ Finally the person needs to act on the revised assumptions and frame of reference. Mezirow outlined the difficulties when he stated:

*It is not enough to understand intellectually the need to change the way one acts; one requires emotional strength and an act of will in order to move forward.*⁷⁶

Making an action plan is helpful. A student who has changed her perspectives can still be unable to act when the situation is seemingly unchanged. An action plan supports the emotional strength and will to put the new perspective in place. Mezirow acknowledged there may be "stalling, backsliding, self-deception and failure," and that the starting point (the activating event) and the

⁷³ M. Gertrude Hennessey, "Metacognitive Aspects of Students' Reflective Discourse: Implications for Intentional Conceptual Change Teaching and Learning," in *Intentional Conceptual Change*, ed. Gale M Sinatra and Paul P Pintrich (Mahwah New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003), 117.

⁷⁴ Cranton, "Teaching for Transformation," 69-70, Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 117-8.

⁷⁵ Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 209. See also Killen and Beer, *Theological Reflection*, 43.

⁷⁶ Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 171.

final end-point (action) are the two most vulnerable places for these negative possibilities.⁷⁷ In a teaching situation an educator can encourage students to make an action plan for bringing new insights into action, and support students in the efforts they make to effect these changes.

Cranton gave a number of practical suggestions to bring new perspective to effect, including working with students to set goals, and to consider how they will be implemented. Students can also consider the short term (tomorrow) and the long term (next year) as they contemplate possible changes in actions. Additionally giving learners the freedom to ask for feedback on their action can motivate them to persevere in new ways of responding.⁷⁸

An activating event, articulating assumptions, critical reflection, alternate viewpoints, discourse, revision and finally a change in action are one way of describing the process of transformation, but they may happen in a far more haphazard way than the above description makes it appear.

The place of the teacher in transformative learning

Empowering students for change

Transformative experiences happen independently of intentional transformative programmes, but transformative teachers want to stimulate the possibility of an environment which encourages and supports transformative learning. The reasons that students may not engage in the process include their current situation, a lack of challenge, and lack of support.

The role of the teacher carries with it the responsibility to create the kind of atmosphere which both challenges and supports students. Without challenge students may not be encouraged to engage the challenge; without support students may withdraw from the struggle. Someone who is without basic necessities and unable to be aware of the option of reflecting on their life, is not able to undertake the transformative journey.⁷⁹ People feel uncertain and vulnerable at a time of transformation; Berger notes a continuum of affect from fearfulness to excitement when facing

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*. 2nd Ed., 171-3.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 119.

the trigger events that lead to transformation.⁸⁰ Pain, fear and anxiety, frustration, and humiliation are conditions in which students lose motivation to continue.⁸¹ Empowering for change through challenge and support could mean both the teacher and the student may need to take risks.⁸²

Teachers should warn students of the risks inherent in exposing and evaluating a comfortable outlook on life. In challenging currently held views and perspectives, the teacher needs to be aware of and help students to recognise when they are grappling with something more than incremental knowledge. As students move into new ways of thinking, teachers will stay with them through it, and help them create new structures of thinking.⁸³ Teachers may employ a variety of educational methods, and be ready to be flexible in different situations, because for each student, and each event, transformation may be different. Arranging field trips or other opportunities will facilitate gaining different perspectives or viewpoints. Brookfield and Cranton write that there is no standard model or guaranteed technique.⁸⁴ The goal is not to please the student, but to empower the student for change. Once change has started to occur, there may be more of a chain reaction leading to more change; empowerment both accompanies change and is a result of change.

Mentoring

Daloz stresses particularly the role of teacher as mentor in the transformative process.⁸⁵ Daloz finds that the strength of a caring relationship between teacher and student is important in fostering transformative learning in the risks associated with change.⁸⁶ Bloom characterizes the work of a mentor in four 'physical' positions: standing behind, walking ahead, face to face and

⁸⁰ Jennifer Garvey Berger, "Dancing on the Threshold of Meaning," *Journal of Transformative Education* 2, no. 4 (2004): 344.

⁸¹ Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 76.

⁸² Brookfield, *Developing Critical Thinkers*, 74, 79, 231-34.

⁸³ Berger, "Dancing on the Threshold of Meaning," 345-49.

⁸⁴ Brookfield, *Developing Critical Thinkers*, 231, Cranton, "Teaching for Transformation," 66.

⁸⁵ Laurent A Parks Daloz, *Mentor: Guiding the Journey of Adult Learners*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 15-16, Daloz, "Transformative Learning for the Common Good," 110.

⁸⁶ Carolyn Clark, "Transformational Learning," *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education* 57, no. 57 (1993): 49, Daloz, *Mentor: Guiding the Journey of Adult Learners*, 246.

shoulder to shoulder.⁸⁷ Standing behind leaves the way ahead clear for the student yet remains supportive. Walking ahead means the mentor functions as a guide for a student entering something new, leading them on a new path. Face to face conveys the notion of listening and reflecting, when “mentors try to frame questions that enable learners to reveal their inner intelligence and clarity of thought.”⁸⁸ By shoulder to shoulder a mentor acts as companion and ally.

Both transformative learning and theological education require a personal angle for transformational goals to become concrete. Cole argues that in large groups an intentional small group substructure can facilitate the interaction required for personal application of implications.⁸⁹

Personal application can also be encouraged, in large and small groups, by creating a supportive environment where students respect each other, so that all are free to question, and to take part in reflective discussion and critical discourse. Student peer support is important, and can be encouraged by formal or informal structures. In the residential theological education environment there are multiple opportunities for students to support one another in friendship, in prayer partnership, and in studying collaboratively.

There are problems and limitations in using transformative learning practices. These are related to a conflict between content and reflection, and the demand transformative learning places on teachers and students.

Educational policies value product over process, and need tangible and gradable outcomes. Transformative learning shifts the imbalance to student-centred rather than content-centred teaching. I have already pointed out the result of this problem in theological education with the bifurcation of spirituality and theology.

⁸⁷ Mayra Bloom, "Multiple Roles of the Mentor Supporting Women's Adult Development," in *Learning Environments for Women's Adult Development: Bridges toward Change*, ed. Kathleen Taylor and Catherine Marienau (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995), 64-70.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁸⁹ Graham A. Cole, "Theological Education: A Personalist Perspective," *Journal of Christian Education* 44, no. 3 (2001): 29.

Another area of concern is to teach in a way that requires so much of the teacher. Students too fear being challenged, being made to feel inadequate, being made to face beliefs and assumptions that they would rather let quietly sit. To make changes is threatening and difficult. Palmer makes a compelling challenge in this regard:

*... we face one final fear – the fear that a live encounter with otherness will challenge or even compel us to change our lives. This is not paranoia: the world really is out to get us! Otherness, taken seriously, always invites transformation, calling us not only to new facts and theories and values but also to new ways of living our lives – and that is the most daunting threat of all.*⁹⁰

Ethical considerations

Whether teachers should facilitate transformation is an ethical issue. I have said above that a transformative teacher wants to create an environment which stimulates transformation, yet in the literature it has been suggested that the ethics of facilitating transformation needs to be considered. For instance, Baumgartner questions whether there should be any intentionality in planning a transformational experience,⁹¹ and Imel accepts that some educators may not be comfortable with the role of change agent.⁹² On the other hand, when Brookfield acknowledges that “critical insight often occurs unexpectedly,”⁹³ he is writing in the context of creating favourable environments for transformative learning. Similarly Daloz remarks that:

*Our responsibility as adult educators goes beyond merely teaching critical reflection, important as that is. Our responsibility is to work to bring about transformation at the individual and societal level that will enable us to realize our fundamental interdependence with one another and the world.*⁹⁴

On balance, there is an understanding that facilitating transformation is acceptable, but the direction of any transformation cannot be dictated, but must be left for each student: “adult

⁹⁰ Parker Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, First ed. (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1998), 38.

⁹¹ Lisa M. Baumgartner, "An Update on Transformative Learning," *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education* 89 (2001): 21.

⁹² Susan Imel, "Change: Connections to Adult Learning and Education," *ERIC Digest* 221 (2000): 4.

⁹³ Brookfield, *Developing Critical Thinkers*, 231-3.

⁹⁴ Daloz, "Transformative Learning for the Common Good," 120.

educators do not indoctrinate.”⁹⁵ Cranton insists that transformative learning is voluntary. Even if it is fostered in the classroom, students engage voluntarily, otherwise transformative learning runs the risk of becoming ‘brainwashing or indoctrination.’⁹⁶ For each student the confluence of time, circumstances, developmental level, and the particular material of the class or course influence whether and what transformation may occur. Within theological education teachers may create an environment that facilitates transformative learning, but it is still each student who must decide to engage on the personal level that brings transformation.

Spirituality and Transformative learning

Over the last two and a half decades while transformative learning has been developed, there has been a burgeoning interest in the place of spirituality in education.⁹⁷ Writers in the field note the lack of definition of spirituality, or rather the proliferation of definitions,⁹⁸ leading Fenwick to call for “more rigorous conceptions of what spirituality means”⁹⁹ and provides eight dimensions through which to understand spirituality.

As transformative learning theory is adapted for spiritual development, the perspective and place of rationality within it changes. Duerr remarks that transformative learning theory was developed in an adult learning context, not one with any direct reference to spirituality.¹⁰⁰ When transformative learning is made more accessible to spirituality there is greater emphasis on the extra-rational dimensions of learning and being, such as intuitive reflection and understanding,

⁹⁵ Mezirow, "Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory," 30.

⁹⁶ Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning. 2nd Ed.*, 6-7.

⁹⁷ For instance books and conference papers Leona English and Marie A Gillen, eds., *Addressing the Spiritual Dimensions of Adult Learning*, vol. 85, *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000a)., Tara Fenwick, Leona English, and Jim Parsons, "Dimensions of Spirituality: A Framework for Adult Educators" (paper presented at the CASAE-ACEEA National Conference 2001 Twentieth Anniversary Proceedings, 2001), Elizabeth J. Tisdell, *Exploring Spirituality and Culture in Adult and Higher Education* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2003a). Definitions and theories on faith and spiritual development are covered in the chapter on development p. 105ff.

⁹⁸ Marie A Gillen and Leona English, "Controversy, Questions, and Suggestins for Further Reading," in *Addressing the Spiritual Dimensions of Adult Learning*, ed. Leona English and Marie A Gillen (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 85, Tisdell, *Exploring Spirituality and Culture*, 28. Dirkx uses the term nurturing soul in the same context, for instance Dirkx, "Images, Transformative Learning and the Work of Soul.", Dirkx, "Nurturing Soul in Adult Learning."

⁹⁹ Fenwick, English, and Parsons, "Dimensions of Spirituality: A Framework for Adult Educators".

¹⁰⁰ Duerr, Zajonc, and Dana, "Survey," 179.

and activities which also include affect and emotions. Dirkx calls for more research and understanding of “the role that imagination and fantasy play in the growth of self-knowledge.”¹⁰¹

Tisdell highlights the place of the affective in transformative learning:

*Attending to spirituality in higher and adult education, particularly as it relates to emancipatory and transformative approaches to education, is about the engagement of passion, which involves the knowledge construction processes of the whole person. The engagement of people’s passion is generally not only about critical reflection or “rational discourse,” it is also about engaging people’s hearts and souls, as well as their minds.*¹⁰²

Tisdell writes that learning about spirituality is “not only about critical reflection,” yet what emerges is that reference to the rational dimension is made only in passing. For instance Tisdell argues that unconscious processing via image, symbol and ritual is rationally less explicable, but opportunity for this kind of soul processing extends the possibility of transformational change occurring.¹⁰³ Further, she argues that “transformative learning is perhaps better anchored if we engage on the spiritual level as well, and draw on how people construct knowledge through unconscious processes.”¹⁰⁴ Dirkx, from a depth psychology perspective, understands that the process is creating connection between the unconscious and conscious self.¹⁰⁵

In practical terms engaging spirituality in education means providing an environment and material that as well as engaging the student on the cognitive level would also engage the student on the affective level. This can be done by using symbols and art forms to reach a deeper unconscious level. Miller suggests the use of practices such as attention, contemplation and,

¹⁰¹ Dirkx, "Nurturing Soul in Adult Learning," 87.

¹⁰² Tisdell, *Exploring Spirituality and Culture*, 187-88.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 55, 204. Elizabeth Tisdell and Derise Tolliver, "The Role of Spirituality in Culturally Relevant and Transformative Adult Education," in *Adult Learning/ Contestations, Invitations, and Explorations: Spirituality in Adult Learning* (2003b), 13-14.

¹⁰⁴ Elizabeth J. Tisdell and Derise E. Tolliver, "The Role of Spirituality in Culturally Relevant and Transformative Adult Education.," *Adult Learning* 12, no. 3 (2001): 13-4.

¹⁰⁵ Dirkx, "Images, Transformative Learning and the Work of Soul," 16, Dirkx, "Nurturing Soul in Adult Learning," 79. Also see Tisdell for whom “transformative learning represents a heroic struggle to wrest consciousness and knowledge from the forces of unconsciousness and ignorance” Tisdell and Tolliver, "The Role of Spirituality in Culturally Relevant and Transformative Adult Education," 13.

interestingly, compassion in this context.¹⁰⁶ Parks talks of imagination in constructing knowledge.¹⁰⁷ Sanders-Bustle writes of the pedagogical possibilities in image which may give rise to “multiple possibilities” for both inquiry and reflection, so that learners may reflect and ‘reconstruct their own lives.’ As Tisdell, Dirkx and other writers discuss the place of spirituality in transformative learning, the rational processes advocated by Mezirow give place to the use of symbols, images and contemplation leading to greater self-knowledge.¹⁰⁸ A survey by Duerr points, however, to the lack of study on the student experience in spiritual transformative learning.¹⁰⁹

Another way spirituality is developed in education is in the use of mentoring. English argues that mentoring nurtures a strong sense of self, models care and concern and encourages the continuous construction of meaning and knowledge.¹¹⁰

Spirituality, transformative learning, and theological education

Spirituality in transformative learning sits well with the need in theological education to cross the theology-spirituality divide. While theological education is not the same as teaching for spirituality, there are characteristics in common, and so some pointers are extracted from this literature. Three aspects of these definitions are important to the nexus between spirituality, transformative learning, and theological education. First, spirituality is connected with meaning-making.¹¹¹ Second is the relation of spirituality to the whole person, as spirituality is connected with cognitive, social, and affective dimensions of being.¹¹² Third is the way that the use of

¹⁰⁶ John (Jack) P. Miller, "Learning from a Spiritual Perspective," in *Expanding the Boundaries of Transformative Learning*, ed. Edmund O'Sullivan, Amish Morrell, and Mary Ann O'Connor (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 96-99.

¹⁰⁷ Tisdell, *Exploring Spirituality and Culture*, 56 but find Parks.

¹⁰⁸ Dirkx, "Images, Transformative Learning and the Work of Soul," 15-16, Dirkx, "Nurturing Soul in Adult Learning," 83.

¹⁰⁹ Duerr, Zajonc, and Dana, "Survey," 209.

¹¹⁰ Leona English, "Spiritual Dimensions of Informal Learning," in *Addressing the Spiritual Dimensions of Adult Learning*, ed. Leona English and Marie A Gillen (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000b), 32-4.

¹¹¹ Dirkx, "The Power of Feelings: Emotion, Imagination, and the Construction of Meaning in Adult Learning.", Tisdell, *Exploring Spirituality and Culture*, 31.

¹¹² Tisdell and Tolliver, "The Role of Spirituality in Culturally Relevant and Transformative Adult Education.," 13-14.

spirituality in education advocates encompassing the realms of the extra-rational, in evoking imagination, intuition and emotion.¹¹³

Transformative learning principles lend themselves well to the exploration of spirituality within education. Spirituality is concerned with meaning-making, and meaning-making is understood to occur through extra rational as well as rational processes. Spirituality is linked with unconscious processes, through symbol, and through imagination and intuition.¹¹⁴

According to Tisdell, real transformation requires the whole person. She argues that transformation is more likely when critical reflection is accompanied by engagement at an emotional and spiritual level.¹¹⁵ Transformation of the whole person is resonant with the formational outcomes in theological education that cover relationships with God, thinking theologically, communicating the gospel, relationships with others and personal self-understanding.

Readiness to include the extra-rational ways of processing, while subject to counter corrective, is valuable in helping to cross the divide which separated the rational and non-rational, and spirituality and theology, which were seen to be contributory to lack of formation in theological education. A transformative learning model would encourage exposing or articulating students' assumptions regarding a spiritual dimension, to subject them to scrutiny and reflection, to bring change in perspectives and consequently action.

There is a strong emphasis in writing about spirituality in education, and in transformative education writing, that 'technique' is not going to produce spirituality. There is, however, also a substantial amount of literature that may help teachers practically to bring the numinous into the classroom, and advance the opportunity for students to have a transformative experience. Tisdell, while reminding her readers of one of the principles of spirituality is that "spiritual experiences

¹¹³ Dirkx, "Images, Transformative Learning and the Work of Soul," 16, Dirkx, "The Power of Feelings: Emotion, Imagination, and the Construction of Meaning in Adult Learning," 63-72, Tisdell, *Exploring Spirituality and Culture*, 34.

¹¹⁴ Tisdell, *Exploring Spirituality and Culture*, 55, Tisdell and Tolliver, "The Role of Spirituality in Culturally Relevant and Transformative Adult Education.," 13.

¹¹⁵ Tisdell and Tolliver, "The Role of Spirituality in Culturally Relevant and Transformative Adult Education.," 13-14.

most often happen by surprise,” is still ready to help create conducive conditions for such surprises to occur.¹¹⁶ An atmosphere for learning includes activities that help the student draw on affective and spiritual dimensions. A correlate to having such activities is being open, providing space rather than a rigid adherence to programme, readiness to explore and engage when opportunities arise, especially through conflict or crisis.

Having outlined the characteristics common to transformative learning, spirituality, and theological education, I consider below the phases in transformative learning described above, in particular how they might impact on the transforming perspectives and meaning schemes which intersect with theology and spirituality.

The activating event: Tite discusses the positive benefits when cognitive dissonance arises in the classroom setting within religious education.¹¹⁷ While the moment may not be planned by the teacher, crises being different for students of different faith commitments and experiences, giving students space to deal with the dissonance facilitates transformative learning.

Compton discusses walking the medieval labyrinth, and the use of sacred space, to access the extra-rational in the use of symbolic method.¹¹⁸ For example, the labyrinth may seem a very simple walk, but the quietness, concentration, and effect of circling into a central point and then returning through the circles, for many students becomes a highly emotional journey which brings to mind memories, concerns, and emotions they did not expect to encounter.

Articulation and reflection on assumptions: Authors discussing change within spirituality prefer time for reflection wherein assumptions can surface, rather than activities to articulate assumptions and critical self-reflection. Killen encourages paying attention to feelings.¹¹⁹ Parks in discussing the development of spirituality rather terms this a ‘pause,’ reminiscent of both

¹¹⁶ Tisdell, *Exploring Spirituality and Culture*, 194.

¹¹⁷ Philip L. Tite, "On the Necessity of Crisis: A Reflection on Pedagogical Conflict and the Academic Study of Religion," *Teaching Theology and Religion* 6, no. 2 (2003).

¹¹⁸ Vanessa Compton, "The Labyrinth: Site and Symbol of Transformation," in *Expanding the Boundaries of Transformative Learning*, ed. Edmund O'Sullivan, Amish Morrell, and Mary Ann O'Connor (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 108-9, 13-4. A diagram of a labyrinth is on page 216

¹¹⁹ Killen and Beer, *Theological Reflection*, 30, 34.

O'Reilly and Palmer in their discussion of classroom dynamics, followed by "image or insight whereby the conflict is resolved and recast in some way."¹²⁰

Killen and de Beer warn that the reflection process can be short-circuited in theological reflection.¹²¹ Often:

*Our human drive for meaning is so strong that it can disrupt reflection... Our habitual interpretive processes can lead us to misinterpret our experience by too quickly putting a meaning on it.*¹²²

Liturgy is also suggested as an activity where ritual action somehow reaches into the deeper recesses of the human psyche and makes possible formation and reformation not simply individually but communally.¹²³

Discourse and other viewpoints: Specific opportunities for discourse and seeing other viewpoints happens rather through a basic principle of spirituality being interconnectedness,¹²⁴ which can be nurtured in having students work together: "significant learning often is not solitary."¹²⁵ For students in theological education, a student body which includes diversity of background, theologically and in other ways, acts as activating event and as an opportunity to research different ways of thinking, doing, and being. In its own way this leads on to a broader vision of God and acceptance of one another.

One constantly recurring factor to emerge is that of the place of the educators. Beyond technique is the need for educators themselves to be in touch with their own spirituality, to be people of

¹²⁰ Tisdell, *Exploring Spirituality and Culture*, 56-7. Sharon Daloz Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2000), 113-15.

¹²¹ Refer p.33 for Killen and de Beer's model of theological reflection.

¹²² Killen and Beer, *Theological Reflection*, 29-31.

¹²³ Fred P. Edie, "Liturgy, Emotion, and the Poetics of Being Human," *Religious Education* 96, no. 4 (2001): 479, Bernard McGinn, "Spirituality Confronts Its Future," *Spiritus* 5, no. 1 (2005): 94.

¹²⁴ Dirx, "Images, Transformative Learning and the Work of Soul.", Dirx, "Nurturing Soul in Adult Learning.", Dirx, "The Power of Feelings: Emotion, Imagination, and the Construction of Meaning in Adult Learning.", Miller, "Learning from a Spiritual Perspective.", Sefa Dei, "Spiritual Knowledge and Transformative Learning.", Tisdell, *Exploring Spirituality and Culture*.

¹²⁵ Tisdell, *Exploring Spirituality and Culture*, 215.

integrity.¹²⁶ Here spirituality in education is something that reaches for the deepest in the educators, that demands not only excellent knowledge of subject matter, painstaking preparation, but presence in the classroom and a concern for students' connection with the material. The teacher's authenticity is seen as particularly important by all these authors.¹²⁷ This is also mirrored in theological education.

Prayer within transformative learning: In this discussion of spirituality, the part that prayer plays in the various phases of transformative learning can also be discussed. A student may find prayer a recourse for dealing with a crisis or disorienting dilemma. In prayer, ideas, thoughts, and difficulties may be articulated which can become the articulation of underlying assumptions. Continuing the conversation with God can be a place for critical self-reflection and for discourse. In group prayer other points of view may be encountered, and prayer which listens to hear what God may be saying may indeed result in hearing a totally different point of view. Prayer may also include the asking for resources and support to deal with the crisis and to put newfound perspectives into practice.

Critiquing Transformative learning

Critique regarding transformative learning relates to its philosophical foundations, to the use made of critical theory, to developmental issues, the place of critical rationality, and power relations in transformative learning.

Habermas, and the Frankfurt school, are seen as fundamental in the theories of critical pedagogy: how education takes issue with power and ideological structures. Mezirow has often been criticised for the weakness of his theory vis a vis social change: the focus is on individual transformation. Part of the criticism stems from Mezirow using Habermas for a theoretical base, and using critical theory to ground areas of knowledge and function of education, yet not extending transformative learning theory to social change.¹²⁸ Mezirow has acknowledged his

¹²⁶ Dirkx, "Images, Transformative Learning and the Work of Soul.", O'Reilley, *Radical Presence*, Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*. Find page nos

¹²⁷ Dirkx, "Nurturing Soul in Adult Learning," 83-85, Tisdell, *Exploring Spirituality and Culture*, 212-3.

¹²⁸ Susan Collard and Michael Law, "The Limits of Perspective Transformation: A Critique of Mezirow's Theory," *Adult Education Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (1989), Arthur L Wilson and Richard C Kiely, "Towards a Critical Theory of

concern is with the individual, but that individual is formed by the society which has to be criticised. It is as the individual becomes aware of distorted sociocultural assumptions derived from a society which needs changing, that individual change can occur, leading on to later societal transformation.¹²⁹ Mezirow rather sees the responsibility of the educator to help a student become aware of the social situations and possible responses, not to lead or organise such change.¹³⁰ Having started with Habermas' theory, however, it would seem Mezirow has left himself open to this charge.

Another area of concern, also stemming from Habermas and critical theory, is in the realm of power relationships in the educational sphere.¹³¹ Within critical theory, discourse requires symmetry or equality of the participants. As Mezirow outlines transformative learning theory the educator is in a position of power,¹³² no matter how carefully he or she may attempt to make up for the fact. Brookfield in summarising studies of Foucault for adult educators brings attention to the more subtle intrusions of power into what educators like to call democratic forms of education: the lessening of privacy in the common dialogic circle for example. Rather than sovereign power he shows how the use of the circle, journals, and other forms result in a kind of self-surveillance on the part of students.¹³³ Within asymmetric relationships there is need for care that all are enabled to participate, and all learn from those that would otherwise be silenced or marginalised.¹³⁴

An initial concern and debate was the emphasis that Mezirow gave to the rational processes involved in critical reflection; indeed he states that without critical reflection there is no perspective transformation. Mezirow sees the higher levels (of epistemic cognition) as those which are in focus in transformative learning,¹³⁵ suggesting that this is not possible before thirty years of age. Belenky argues that transformative learning theory does not allow for those who

Adult Learning/ Education: Transformational Theory and Beyond" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Adult Education Research Conference (43rd), Raleigh, May 2002).

¹²⁹ Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 209.

¹³⁰ Mezirow, "A Critical Theory of Self-Directed Learning," 29.

¹³¹ Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 53-4, Wilson and Kiely, "Towards a Critical Theory of Adult Learning/ Education: Transformational Theory and Beyond".

¹³² Collard and Law, "The Limits of Perspective Transformation: A Critique of Mezirow's Theory," 104.

¹³³ S Brookfield, "Unmasking Power: Foucault and Adult Learning," *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education* 15, no. 1 (2001): 3, 8-9.

¹³⁴ Belenky and Stanton, "Inequality, Development, and Connected Knowing," 74.

¹³⁵ Mezirow, "Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory," 5.

have been disadvantaged by loss of opportunity to learn how to reflect in the way that the theory requires.¹³⁶ This has led to more discussion regarding the need for higher levels of cognitive functioning in order for transformative learning to occur, yet transformations do happen without this order of rationality. Mezirow acknowledges this yet the theory has yet to make room for transformations of the extra-rational intuitive order which lead to assimilation of new perspectives.¹³⁷ For instance within theological education some learning changes may be assimilative. In the study *Being There*¹³⁸ students were formed according to the prevailing seminary culture, but it is not known how much that assimilative change was conformity to outer considerations and how much it was real transformation that would last beyond the time at the theological education centre. As with any change, the depth of its effect can only be seen in the long term consequences.

Boyd and Myers disagree with Mezirow from a stance of depth psychology rather than education and some of the differences can be attributed to different standpoints.¹³⁹ Thus Boyd and Myers point to the ego rather than the unconscious referring to unexamined assumptions. While Boyd and Myers seem to retire from the debate quickly, others take up their ideas, and there continues to be understanding of the processes involved from this Jungian psychological angle.¹⁴⁰ Further, while this was an early criticism of the theory, as time has passed there has been much more inclusion of the creative and intuitive aspects that result in change, as discussed above in the section on critical reflection. Early cognitive development theory was purely rational and did not bring into account extra-rational factors which influenced development. In recent studies emotion has been shown to be essential to knowing, to behaviour, and to social interaction.¹⁴¹ Emotion

¹³⁶ Belenky and Stanton, "Inequality, Development, and Connected Knowing," 73.

¹³⁷ Sharan B Merriam, "The Role of Cognitive Development in Mezirow's Transformational Learning Theory," *Adult Education Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (2004): 65-67.

¹³⁸ As noted in ch. 1; Carroll et al., *Being There*.

¹³⁹ Boyd and Myers, "Transformative Education."

¹⁴⁰ Compton, "The Labyrinth: Site and Symbol of Transformation.", Dirkx, "Images, Transformative Learning and the Work of Soul.", Dirkx, "Nurturing Soul in Adult Learning.", Dirkx, "The Power of Feelings: Emotion, Imagination, and the Construction of Meaning in Adult Learning.", Dirkx, "Transformative Learning and the Journey of Individuation. Eric Digest No. 223."

¹⁴¹ Gisela Labouvie-Vief, "Emotion, Thought and Gender," in *Handbook of Emotion, Adult Development, and Aging*, ed. Carol Magai and Susan H. McFadden (San Diego: Academic Press, 1996), 103.

informs knowledge both from objective and subjective sources, adds value to decision making, and has an effect on tonality of memory.¹⁴² Tisdell argues that

*Human beings construct knowledge and meaning in powerful and often unconscious ways through image, symbol, and ritual. It is consideration of how we do so that is often absent from discussions of cognition, learning, and education.*¹⁴³

In short, it is not possible to be limited to a cognitive, rational model. Thinking and transformation may happen at a deeper level, leaving emotion and intuition to be considered a necessary component of transformative learning.

The relationship between normal adult development and transformation is another area of discussion. Tennant¹⁴⁴ argues that Mezirow is in danger of understanding normal adult development as transformation. He clarifies that changes in meaning schemes may be thought of as part of normal development, while a perspective transformation is something out of ordinary development, giving as an example women's consciousness raising as discussed by Hart.¹⁴⁵ Mezirow in response disagrees that there is need to make a difference between adult development and transformative experiences.¹⁴⁶ Mezirow reasons that adulthood does not need to be seen as stage-like and so require perspective transformations to move from one to another. The relationship between meaning schemes and meaning perspectives may be 'epochal' or 'cumulative.'¹⁴⁷ Tennant seems to argue that a real perspective transformation requires a change in social understanding (so using Hart as example), but Mezirow explains a change in perspective from a limiting childhood inhibition may be just as transformative though not socially related.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² Edie, "Liturgy, Emotion, and the Poetics of Being Human," 474, Lilian H Hill, "The Brain and Consciousness: Sources of Information for Understanding Adult Learning," *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, no. 89 (2001): 76, Sefa Dei, "Spiritual Knowledge and Transformative Learning," 125.

¹⁴³ Tisdell, *Exploring Spirituality and Culture*, 55.

¹⁴⁴ Mark C Tennant, "Perspective Transformation and Adult Development," *Adult Education Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (1993).

¹⁴⁵ Mechthild U. Hart, "Liberation through Consciousness Raising," in *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood: A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning*, ed. Jack Mezirow and Associates (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1990).

¹⁴⁶ Jack Mezirow, "Understanding Transformation Theory," *Adult Education Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (1994b).

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*: 229.

¹⁴⁸ AEQ prints a further response from Tennant to Mezirow's response, in which he agrees to disagree fundamentally on the nature of adult education being for social change: Mark C Tennant, "Response to *Understanding Transformation Theory*," *Adult Education Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (1994).

The goal of transformative learning is to hold frames of reference that are tested and found to be more discriminating and open. Development is socially constructed, including the determination of maturity, or more discriminating frames of reference. Siejk notes that knowledge consensus is dependent on who holds the power for agreeing and selecting explanations.¹⁴⁹ If transformation has occurred when a meaning perspective is more discriminating, a judgement is made on which perspective is more discriminating or inclusive. It could be argued that those that hold the social power are those that make that decision. Gilligan challenges views that hold that autonomy and independence show maturity, rather than empathy, connectedness and interdependence.¹⁵⁰

The need for more empirical research

There is still need for more research in transformative learning in theoretical and empirical areas. In the twenty or so years since the theory was first published, Mezirow has been ready to discuss and be responsive to various criticisms and the theory has continued to change and develop. Taylor, in analysing research on transformative learning,¹⁵¹ also points to opportunities for further research. His analysis shows that much doctoral dissertation research is unpublished and so does not contribute to the discussion.

Taylor notes that while much is written, there is little empirical research and in-depth exploration of concepts in the theory (including feelings such as anger, happiness and shame). Much research is retrospective and there is a need for researchers to be 'present during the transformative experience.'¹⁵²

Cross-cultural critique: Transformative Learning in Pakistan and the Middle East

The use of an educational theory in a context different from its origin requires careful attention to cultural educational traditions. There have been a few studies of transformative learning in South

¹⁴⁹ Siejk, "Toward a Holistic Religious Education: Reflections and Pedagogical Possibilities," 274.

¹⁵⁰ Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan, *Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girls' Development* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992), 214-5, 16-32, Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982, 1993), 167-8, Carol Gilligan, "In a Different Voice: Visions of Maturity," in *Women's Spirituality: Resources of Christian Development*, ed. Joann Wolski Conn (Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 1996), 105-30.

¹⁵¹ Taylor, "Analyzing Research on Transformative Learning Theory."

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 319.

Asia and the Middle East. Factors of the educational environment in the Middle East are resonant with those in Pakistan, and I make reference to Richardson and Clarke's discussion on the use of reflection within transformative learning. Richardson argued that the educational environment in the UAE is "incongruent with the underlying assumptions of reflective practice."¹⁵³ In response Clarke argued for a dynamic view of culture where change is possible, and for reflection as a "human' capacity."¹⁵⁴ Clarke contends that reflection is a bona-fide useful process within Arab-Islamic culture, and that students benefit greatly from the opportunity to reflect on their teaching practice and lives in general.

Kanu investigated the cultural factors affecting South Asian students at the Institute for Educational Development at Aga Khan University in Karachi, Pakistan and found an antipathy to 'combative' discursive practices which disturbed harmonious relationships and a need for more highly structured and supportive learning frameworks rather than independent learning.¹⁵⁵ While Kanu was involved in the early years of the programme from 1994-6, Ashraf was involved when the programme had been established for longer and finds much greater acceptance from students for the reflective environment due to the institutional environment, faculty modelling and pedagogical practices used.¹⁵⁶

The limited literature from the area of the world where my field studies take place suggests that reflective practices and constructivist pedagogies may be a new experience culturally and educationally for students. This does not rule out the use of the theory. In Pakistan effective

¹⁵³ Richardson worked in a women's college in the United Arab Emirates and described the educational environment as being male dominated, with a knowledge acquisition or 'banking' pedagogy, little opportunity to develop complex epistemologies, and tribal rather than individual identity. Patricia M. Richardson, "Possible Influences of Arabic-Islamic Culture on the Reflective Practices Proposed for an Education Degree at the Higher Colleges of Technology in the United Arab Emirates," *International Journal of Educational Development* 24, no. 4 (2004): 435.

¹⁵⁴ Clarke was also working in the United Arab Emirates. M. Clarke and D. Otaky, "Reflection 'on' and 'in' Teacher Education in the United Arab Emirates," *International Journal of Educational Development*, In Press, Corrected Proof, Available online 21 November 2005 (2005): 120.

¹⁵⁵ Yatta Kanu, "Tensions and Dilemmas of Cross-Cultural Transfer of Knowledge: Post-Structural/Postcolonial Reflections on an Innovative Teacher Education in Pakistan," *International Journal of Educational Development* 25, no. 5 (2005): 503-7.

¹⁵⁶ Dilshad Ashraf et al., "Reconceptualization of Teacher Education: Experiences from the Context of a Multicultural Developing Country," *Journal of Transformative Education* 3, no. 3 (2005): 279-82.

transformative learning may require a supportive environment. If more of a connected knowing rather than combative knowing pedagogy is used it would also support more transformation.¹⁵⁷

Evangelical Theological Critique

In order to use transformative learning in evangelical theological education, it should be subject to critical evaluation from an evangelical standpoint. While some parts of the Christian church have beheld any kind of theory from the social realm with distaste, on the other hand at times theology has been excoriated for the too easy assimilation of ideas from psychology and education without attending to the suppositions that underlie them.¹⁵⁸ In Noll's criticism of modern evangelical thinking he draws attention to earlier evangelical theologians who "examined sensitively ... the best thinking of their own day."¹⁵⁹ Grenz, likewise, argues for the use of social science's understanding of individual development to identify the change the Spirit works in people in their Christian life.¹⁶⁰ Evangelicals are learning to embrace the truth of God's world and creation found in the Bible *and* through reason and research.

In the few accounts of transformative learning being used within theological education there is no accompanying critique.¹⁶¹ This implies the theory can be assimilated without review. How theological education may gain from using transformative learning is tempered by evaluation from a theological standpoint.

Mezirow included 'religious doctrine' in the philosophical category of meaning perspectives,¹⁶² although the classification system has areas of overlap.¹⁶³ There is a sense in which deeply held religious belief extends and influences all other categories. A concept of God, as relationship with the transcendent Other, impinges on every aspect of life. It will affect the epistemological,

¹⁵⁷ For connected knowing see p.91

¹⁵⁸ Robert Coles, "Psychology as Faith," *Theology Today* find quoted at beg of ?? book (1985): 70.

¹⁵⁹ Noll, Plantinga, and Wells, "Evangelical Theology Today," 498.

¹⁶⁰ Stanley J. Grenz, *Renewing the Centre: Evangelical Theology in a Post-Theological Era* (Grand Rapids Michigan: Baker Academic, 2000), 210.

¹⁶¹ Laurie Dale Bailey, "Meaningful Learning and Perspective Transformation in Adult Theological Education Students" (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1996), Laura L. Sawyer, "Seeding and Sustaining Transformative Learning, Development, and Spiritual Growth in Higher Education: A Case Study" (PhD dissertation, Union Institute and University, 2004).

¹⁶² Mezirow, "Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory," 17.

¹⁶³ Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning. 2nd Ed.*, 41.

psychological, moral, social, and other categories of meaning perspective that Mezirow presents. Epistemologically the existence of the transcendent absolute that is God's being affects epistemology. Psychologically self-concept is deeply affected by being in relationship with, knowing oneself loved by, forgiven by, made in the image of, accepted by, a God with attributes of supreme love and justice. Moral imperatives change when all humanity is seen as created in God's image, and intended recipients of redemption. If this is the case though, erroneous or distorted theological assumptions have very far reaching effects on the whole of life. Part of the ambit of theological education is to resolve contradictions among these various perspectives, and help students to develop a biblically referenced and stable frame of reference which in turn gives stability to their Christian living. So a 'Christian world view' is a frame of reference which is formed and transformed during theological education and could stand alone as a category of meaning perspective.

The following critique is through an evangelical lens, looking particularly at the epistemological bases, anthropological understandings, pedagogical practices and the teleology of the theory.

Epistemology: An evangelical understanding holds God to be true and absolute, and Scripture as normative. All understandings which are arrived at must ultimately be liable to be critiqued from the point of view of Scripture.¹⁶⁴

Transformative learning is based on a constructivist understanding of knowledge,

*As there are no fixed truths or totally definitive knowledge, and because circumstances change, the human condition may be best understood as a continuous effort to negotiate contested meanings.*¹⁶⁵

This is also outlined by Cranton:

*If we were to claim the existence of absolute truths or universal constructs that are independent of our knowledge of them, the goal of learning would be to discover the right answers rather than to reflect on our perspectives of the world.*¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ McGrath, *A Passion for Truth*, 53-66.

¹⁶⁵ Mezirow, ed., *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*, 3.

¹⁶⁶ Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*. 2nd Ed., 23.

Cranton speaks of emancipatory teaching where emancipatory knowledge is fostered so “students become more open in their views and free from the constraints of unquestioned assumptions.”¹⁶⁷ There is an extent to which it is emancipatory to understand the basis or background of what one believes, but as there is also an expectation that not every perspective that is examined is changed, sometimes the examination leads to the confirmation of the perspective. It is possible then surely that emancipatory learning, in the context of a world where there are some absolutes, would lead students to be more sure, more discriminating and integrative because they have thought through and understood the implications of what they believe.

Part of the reason that transformative learning has such appeal within theological education, is that theology challenges theological understandings, and psychological and sociocultural frameworks. Studying theology can be emancipatory even if some of the elements of that theology are based on absolute knowledge.

A theology which includes areas of absolute knowledge does not mean there is no role for the construction of knowledge in interpretation of understanding about God and how that relates to living in the world around in our current context. Finding the edges of the absolute and what is up for discussion and construction is, however, in dispute.

Cranton suggests ‘unexamined assumptions’ is a better term than ‘distorted assumptions’ which Mezirow used. Based on an epistemology that does hold to some absolutes it is, however, possible that some assumptions are not just unexamined but are distorted and false. In contradistinction to Cranton, there are some areas in theological education (and life itself) where objective truth is the object of the search for meaning and there are options that are not acceptable.

Anthropology: Two fundamental aspects govern an evangelical anthropological understanding: that people are made in the image of God, and that image has been marred by sin. That people are made in the image of God, and that salvation includes being transformed into the Christ, opens up opportunity and direction for growth and maturity. An image of God marred by sin

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 116.

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points an educator to challenge and care to support students in attaining the growth they are able to reach. The humanistic assumptions underlying transformative learning theory are also limited in not including either of these aspects.

Moreover within Christian theology transformation is the work of the Spirit of God. The underlying premise of transformative learning is that people can change themselves by their own efforts. A Christian understanding is that transformation includes both the work of God and human application and effort.

The human condition means that motivations and actions are distorted by human limitations and predispositions toward sin. Transformative learning suggest that people simply have erroneous assumptions: yet people cannot always see the extent of their own sin, and cannot recognize where their assumptions are wrong. Further, as with critiques of moral theory, and as Mezirow himself acknowledges, simply knowing the right thing to do does not always guarantee change is effected. God's intervention via Scripture and the Holy Spirit is needed in order to do this effectively.

Repentance from past actions and attitudes is also important in Christian growth. In transformative learning theory unexamined assumptions influence attitudes and behaviour, thus there is no need to confess and renounce previous attitudes and actions, there is simply a new (more integrative, discerning) perspective, 'maturity.' Yet sometimes attitudes and behaviours are guided not by wrong assumptions but by selfish, unloving, greedy, angry or other such predispositions. People may even accept that their actions are wrong, but still not change them. The place of repentance, forgiveness, grace, and divine strength in adopting new attitudes and actions plays a powerful part in many transformations.

This is not to say that some unexamined assumptions are not simply the result of epistemological, sociocultural, psychological or other distortions from our context. That does not, however, account for all of the wrong thinking and behaviour of which people are capable.

Pedagogy: Respect for persons, egalitarian rather than hierarchical structures, supportive relationships and the use of mentoring are well established in Christian education. Theological

education is concerned with training students to reflect, with special reference to reflection about formation.¹⁶⁸ Transformative learning pedagogical principles resonate well with a Christian framework of pedagogical understanding.

Teleology: Within a Christian framework there is a concept that maturity is a process rather than an end, while at the same time there is an ultimate end that will only be reached the other side of this life. The ultimate purpose in the Christian life is the worship of God. For transformative learning theory, and for Christian growth, there is always the possibility of further growth. Within transformative learning theory lies the idea that there will be a more integrative, more discerning, perspective. This resonates with developmental theories that show movement toward wider perspectives. Where transformative learning theory is critiqued for its lack of social integration, as has been Christian theology in some ages, a holistic Christian theology must include a wider social arena as a part of the 'activism' of evangelicalism.

The 'more discerning, discriminative' lens of Mezirow begs the question as to more discerning according to whom. This too is contextually based and affected by the very processes that are being transformed. From an evangelical framework the *telos* would be to more approximate biblical standards, to become more like Jesus in terms of motives, virtues, perspectives, behaviour, and action, and ultimately to worship God. While Mezirow is careful never to determine an end, within a theological framework there must be a more definitive kingdom oriented teleology.

In summary while there are divergences from theological understanding regarding the nature of knowledge, of the human person, and of the ultimate purpose of education and of life itself, when these are kept in mind transformative learning can contribute to more effective formation within theological education.

¹⁶⁸ Spear suggests that Jesus used a transformative framework and was more concerned with 'how to think rather than what to think.' Stephen Spear, "The Transformation of Enculturated Consciousness in the Teachings of Jesus," *Journal of Transformative Education* 3, no. 4 (2005): 355, 69.

Conclusion

Transformative learning is an adult education theory which seeks to direct adults' natural impetus to make meaning into examining existing frames of reference in order to bring new understandings where these are found to be limiting. Frames of reference are ways of looking at the world, which are seen in the habits of mind and points of view that people hold.

Transformation in respect of transformative learning theory is a change in these frames of reference or habits of mind. The ways of thinking are classified as occurring in various domains, including epistemological, socio-cultural, and psychological.

The process of change in transformative learning requires people to become aware of their assumptions which are inconsistent with other aspects of the world-view they hold. Awareness may happen through some kind of activating event or a disorienting dilemma. A change occurs when the underlying assumptions are articulated and evaluated leading to a revision. The evaluation may occur through personal reflection, considering others' points of view, and discourse with others. A transformation has occurred when it results in change of action.

While such transformations may happen naturally, by providing an appropriate environment students may be helped both to change and also to learn how to be a person continually able to reflect and bring personal change into their person.

Transformative learning has been incorporated as a pedagogy with the burgeoning interest in spirituality within education, not necessarily connected with religious or theological education. Notwithstanding the early criticism of transformative learning as being overly rational, the use of transformative learning has been integrated into learning which seeks to enhance spirituality.

Areas of critique regarding transformative learning are in regard to the stress on rationality, the individual rather than societal change focus, and a theological critique. There is also discussion regarding transformative learning consonant with development or separate to development.

Transformative learning as an adult educational theory can be used, with some discernment, as a means for formation within theological education. To be used in theological education

Transformative Learning

transformative learning must be used within a rubric of understanding where some foundational philosophical underpinnings are at odds with an evangelical understanding regarding the absolute nature of knowledge, the end-point of transformation, and the nature of persons. Transformative learning principles regarding unarticulated assumptions and depth psychology are a useful background for the formational ideas that students bring to theological education which need to be reshaped and transformed. The practice and articulated processes of transformative learning find resonances especially with reflective practices of theological education already in use, but give a unity and theoretical whole to the use of these reflective practices. The developmental constructivist understanding of the human person is applicable to the development going on within theological education, when interpreted as part of a holistic response to the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life.

Possibilities for testing and research in transformative learning include the need for more study during the process change rather than retrospectively, including in spiritually transformative learning. These are areas which can be included in a study of the part transformative learning plays in theological education.

Transformative learning can address the need for formation in theological education. Formational goals are related to areas of normal human development and maturity. Transformative learning is also termed a developmental theory. The relationship between formation, and development, and how that relationship is addressed by transformative learning, is the issue to which I turn in the next chapter.

Three ~ Formation and Development

I have changed and I would want that girls who also come here would also be able to get out of this restrictive mind-set and make their own identity. (Parveen FI)

Parveen is aware of change in her life. Some of that change is developmental, in her forging her own identity, and some of the change relates to formational aims. Within theological education there is great diversity in the way the student body is made up, and this diversity is compounded by the individual variety in students. Students are on their individual life journey, and bring their experiences and developmental processes to their experience of theological education.

When shifting from an information-centred pedagogy to a student-centred pedagogy an awareness of the developmental movement of students is key to providing the supportive structures that augment the formational process.

In this chapter I discuss the relationship between formation and development, especially cognitive, personal, moral and faith development, as they relate to the practice of theological education and transformative learning. I lay out a basic understanding of the developmental processes that are occurring as transformative learning is taking place. Some of this development is supported by transformational teaching. If educators are aware of the developmental parameters for students, they can provide reassurance as students pass through developmental changes.¹ Teachers can then honour the development of a student at a particular time, not expecting maturity which is beyond the particular stage.

Adult Development

The notion that adults develop is relatively recent. Until the last century it was thought that adulthood was static, and when someone reached adulthood they stopped developing. Accordingly while childhood development has been studied extensively, until the last hundred

¹ Sharan B Merriam and Rosemary S. Caffarella, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide*, Second ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 107.

years there was little research on adult development.² Development, in childhood and adulthood, has been studied in physical, cognitive (and more latterly epistemological), socio-personal, moral and spiritual (or faith) aspects. Physical change after a certain age is mainly conceived of as negative³ and does not impinge significantly on learning.⁴ Development in the other domains throughout adulthood is seen as positive. Initially these domains primarily were studied separately. More recent studies show that cognitive, social, moral and faith development act upon each other, and understandings of adult development have become more integrative.⁵ The extent to which development in each area is dependent on the others, and can be integrated, is disputed. Integrative theories tend to be more conceptual than empirical.⁶ Kerka draws attention to the need for models of adult development as transformative, rather than additive, for effective adult education.⁷

Whether development theories are age related, sequential, or related to navigating life-time transitions, Daloz suggests that they may all be seen as viable alternate maps for the life journey.⁸ Undue focus on stages or phases can result in categorising people into stages rather than being aware of the process:

*Perhaps, as educators, we should avoid any preconceived notions about predictable and relatively stable stages or phases of development, and should focus more on the process of change and transformation and the ways the various influences on development interact.*⁹

² Carolyn M. Clark and Rosemary S. Caffarella, "Theorizing Adult Development," *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education* 84, no. An Update on Adult Development Theory: New Ways of Thinking about the Life Course (1999): 3.

³ Vivian Mott, "Our Complex Human Body: Biological Development Explored," in *An Update on Adult Development Theory: New Ways of Thinking About the Life Course*, ed. Carolyn M. Clark and Rosemary S. Caffarella, *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1999), 9-17.

⁴ Merriam and Caffarella, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide*, 96.

⁵ Rosemary S. Caffarella and Carolyn M. Clark, "Development and Learning: Themes and Conclusions," *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education* 84, no. An Update on Adult Development Theory: New Ways of Thinking about the Life Course (1999): 97-100. Merriam and Caffarella, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide*, esp. Ch 6.

⁶ Clark and Caffarella, "Theorizing Adult Development," 6.

⁷ Sandra Kerka, "The Balancing Act of Adult Life," *ERIC Digest* ED 459 323 (2001).

⁸ Daloz, *Mentor: Guiding the Journey of Adult Learners*, 46.

⁹ Mark C Tennant and Phillip Pogson, *Learning and Change in the Adult Years: A Developmental Perspective*, ed. Alan B. Knox, *Higher and Adult Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995), 94.

In order to understand processes of change as stages in this chapter I lay out what may be happening in the student's developmental journey, not simply the stages of development.

'Development' and 'Formation'

As students come into programmes from a variety of backgrounds and developmental levels, both theological educators and transformative educators (and transformative theological educators) work with their students wherever they are in their developmental journey. For each individual 'a person's developmental status at any given time is right for that individual at that time,'¹⁰ and the 'potential fullness of each stage needs to be recognised and realized. Each stage has a potential wholeness, grace and integrity.'¹¹ Yet while acknowledging that development cannot be forced, educators may wish to understand the process and provide an environment that enhances development, following the "implied plan of action in a developmental sequence."¹²

Some desired change is related specifically to the acquisition of the curriculum objectives, some change is related to more general personal development,¹³ and some of the 'transformation' that students undergo is that of personal frames of reference. Formational outcomes rest on optimal developmental issues. Within developmental pathways lay frameworks of understanding that are brought to light by the transformative learning process. These two are interlocking issues, and the line between natural developmental processes and growth as a specific educational outcome is blurred.

Within transformative learning there also seems to be some confusion between normal development and the personal development which occurs with a change in an individually held frame of reference. In her review of the 2005 Transformative Education Conference, Smith notes that, "During the appreciative inquiry sessions, it seemed as if transformative learning and normal

¹⁰ Merriam and Caffarella, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide*, 101, Kathleen Taylor and Catherine Marienau, eds., *Learning Environments for Womens' Adult Development: Bridges toward Change*, vol. 65, *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995), 93-4.

¹¹ James W. Fowler, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning," in *Faith Development and Fowler*, ed. Craig Dykstra and Sharon Parks (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1986), 38.

¹² Ann V Stanton, "Reconfiguring Teaching and Knowing in the College Classroom," in *Knowledge, Difference, and Power: Essays Inspired By "Women's Ways of Knowing."* ed. Nancy Rule Goldberger, et al. (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 40.

¹³ Barnett, "Being and Becoming: A Student Trajectory," 73.

adult development issues were merged.”¹⁴ She comments that responses people made about personal transformative learning experiences “reflected changes in world view or habits that could well represent developmental stages from Erikson’s theory.”¹⁵ Smith is left asking:

*Is there a difference between a disorientating dilemma that leads to a perspective change as demonstrated in transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991) and normal development?*¹⁶

Transformative learning theory has been criticised in just this regard in the past.¹⁷ Mezirow originally presented transformative learning as a developmental theory:¹⁸

*It is clear that transformative learning is also developmental theory, most particularly cognitive development.*¹⁹

*Adult development is seen as an adult’s progressively enhanced capacity to validate prior learning through reflective discourse and to act upon the resulting insights. Anything that moves the individual toward a more inclusive, differentiated, permeable (open to other points of view), and integrated meaning perspective, the validity of which has been established through rational discourse, aids an adult’s development.*²⁰

Stage changes (when using stage theories) are perspective transformations. They are altered ways of seeing the world, whether they are epistemic, psychosocial, personal or other types of assumptions. Not all stage changes are the result of the rational transformation that Mezirow outlines as being normative for transformative learning. Some changes are assimilative or

¹⁴ Patricia Cranton et al., "Conference Report: Reflections on the Sixth International Transformative Learning Conference," *Journal of Transformative Education* 4, no. 2 (2006): 150-51.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Collard and Law, "The Limits of Perspective Transformation: A Critique of Mezirow's Theory," 99-107. Tennant, "Perspective Transformation and Adult Development," 34-42.

¹⁸ Collard and Law, "The Limits of Perspective Transformation: A Critique of Mezirow's Theory," 100.

¹⁹ Jack Mezirow, "Forum Comment on Sharan Merriam's "The Role of Cognitive Development in Mezirow's Transformational Learning Theory"," *Adult Education Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (2004).

²⁰ Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 7.

intuitive changes without rational evaluation; some individual personality traits heighten this possibility.²¹

In chapter one I argued that formation in theological education included the internalisation of a paradigm correlating to a theological perspective and aspects of human development. Some types of perspective transformation may not end in stage changes; within theological education they may be the internalisation of a way of looking at the world in accord with a theological paradigm. Changes of a perspective, habit of mind, or point of view that internalise a theological paradigm may be formational rather than developmental.

In the remainder of this chapter I discuss developmental theories in relation to formation. In my research study the participants were late adolescent, early adult, minority Christian community women, undertaking theological education in Pakistan. I specifically reference theories of development regarding women, with attention to transitional processes and stages of late adolescence and early adulthood. Reference is also made to minority identity development. In briefly sketching theories of cognitive and epistemological, socio-personal, and moral development I show how they impinge on developing faith. I discuss how these interact with each other and the outline of formation presented in chapter one, in the areas of relationship with God, thinking theologically, communicating the gospel, relationships with others and self-understanding. Where appropriate I have indicated the kind of ‘formational’ change that might be occurring either within a stage or accompanying the developmental transition.

Cognitive development

In this section I consider how students at this level are developing an understanding of the complexity of knowledge, and their own confidence to discern better understandings and to construct new understandings. This is developed with particular reference to “Women’s Ways of

²¹ As Cranton outlines different responses to trigger events, see page 58

Knowing” (WWK) of Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, and the Reflective Judgement Model of Kitchener and King.²²

While Mezirow acknowledges that “cognitive development is indeed foundational for transformative learning” Kegan more definitely argues that transformative learning is cognitive development:

*Thus genuinely transformational learning is always to some extent an epistemological change rather than merely a change in behavioural repertoire or an increase in the quantity or fund of knowledge.*²³

Adult cognitive development theory extends the original work of Piaget’s theory, which was developed in the early part of last century. Piaget showed children’s gradually developing ability to reason and think, culminating in formal operations. Theorists after Piaget have taken this further, proposing a post-formal operations stage which allows people to handle a number of concepts at a time. Perry showed how adults develop complexity, outlining the change from dualistic authority-based epistemologies to nine levels of more complex personally authored epistemologies.²⁴ Belenky based her research on women’s developing cognitive ability on Perry’s studies, giving rise to a related but slightly differing series of cognitive development. Kitchener’s more nuanced theory on reflective judgement is also based on Perry’s work. I use Belenky’s, and Kitchener and King’s theories to discuss the developing cognitive maturity of students in my field study.

Women’s Ways of Knowing

Belenky proposed five epistemologies or strategies that women have for knowing, from the Silenced Knower, through the Received, Subjective, Procedural, to the Constructivist Knower. Belenky did not claim the ways of knowing were exclusively female, but were based on studies

²² Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, Belenky and Stanton, "Inequality, Development, and Connected Knowing.", P. M. King and Karen S. Kitchener, "The Reflective Judgment Model: Twenty Years of Research on Epistemic Cognition," in *Personal Epistemology: The Psychology of Beliefs About Knowledge and Knowing*, ed. Hofer B.K. and Paul P Pintrich (Mahwah N.J.: Erlbaum, 2002), King and Kitchener, *Developing Reflective Judgment*, Kitchener and King, "The Reflective Judgment Model: Transforming Assumptions About Knowing."

²³ Kegan, "What "Form" Transforms?," 48.

²⁴ Merriam and Caffarella, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide*, 142. William G. Perry, Jr., *Forms of Ethical and Intellectual Development in the College Years* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999).

among women. Perry's original study with mainly white middle class male subjects showed linear homogenous development.²⁵ Belenky's study with women subjects from a wider range of backgrounds, discerned a greater variety of possible development strategies.²⁶ In a follow-up volume to WWK, Debold suggests the reasons for the difference between women's and men's knowing shown in the study:

*By using William Perry's scheme (1968) for epistemological development in the college years as a foundation for their work on women, the authors inherited not only a framework that relies on a unitary, monovocal self but also one that rests on a relatively unproblematic relationship with culturally authorized knowledge that divides mind and body. Perry's young men's relationship with authority, even when oppositional, is relatively straightforward because they do stand to inherit the kingdom. For women and girls, however, such inheritance is far less likely given the historical persistence of cultural subordination perpetuated by the creation of women as subjects outside public discourse and power.*²⁷

That is, because the pervading culture is male, women and girls do not fit into the ways of thinking in the same way that men do. So rather than the neat linear framework Perry found, Belenky suggested a more complex development pathway. To over generalize, and work with an essentialist or reductionist framework regarding women's cognitive development, is to err the other way. While women may have a cognitive pattern that is more contextual and embedded in environmental factors, this may have more to do with cultural upbringing than an inherent gendered structure. For instance if a culture reinforces girls and women from an early age for being quiet, for not asking questions or challenging others' opinions, this will affect her learning style, but may not be inherently a women's style of learning.²⁸

²⁵ Although later studies rectified the white middle class bias, Lee L Kniefelkamp, "Introduction," in *Forms of Ethical and Intellectual Development in the College Years* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), xv.

²⁶ Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 14-15.

²⁷ Elizabeth Debold, Deborah Tolman, and Lyn Mikel Brown, "Embodying Knowledge, Knowing Desire," in *Knowledge, Difference, and Power: Essays Inspired By "Women's Ways of Knowing."* ed. Nancy Rule Goldberger, et al. (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 115.

²⁸ Elisabeth R. Hayes, "A New Look at Women's Learning," *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education* 89 (2001): 36, 39.

I briefly summarise below the five epistemologies Belenky proposed. The simplest of these epistemologies, rarely found in the study, is the Silenced Knower: a woman who is silent, who does not believe that she knows anything and simply listens and accepts what is said to her.

The second category, that of the Received Knower, is of a woman who learns by listening to friends and authorities, believing that knowledge exists as an external entity. She can report what she has learned from others but she does not believe that she can construct ideas, nor that authorities do.²⁹ Movement to the Subjective Knower stage comes from realising the dissonance caused when there is more than one voice saying different things.³⁰

For the Subjective Knower the locus of knowledge has moved from externally to internally mediated, as something experienced. A Subjective Knower will prefer her own opinion and 'gut instinct,' and even mistrust written knowledge. She is not able to reflect on her ideas, or to see them as objectified.³¹

The Procedural Knower is starting to realise the complexity of knowledge, and to acknowledge the need for objectivity, analysis and justification of opinions. The Procedural Knowers divide into connected and separate knowing. Separate knowing is the critical analytical knowing of the classroom; connected knowing is proposed as a more feminine way of listening to understand where someone is coming from in order to empathise with the person rather than judge their ideas. In the final stages of this epistemology intuitions and feelings may be attended to in a new way, along with reason.³²

The fifth way of knowing is the Constructivist, tolerating ambiguity and realising the possibility of revising ideas along with changing evidence.

²⁹ Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 37, 51, Belenky and Stanton, "Inequality, Development, and Connected Knowing," 83.

³⁰ Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 51.

³¹ Ibid., 54-75. Belenky and Stanton, "Inequality, Development, and Connected Knowing," 84.

³² Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 87-130.

The Reflective Judgement Model

Kitchener and King developed the seven stage Reflective Judgement Model, which shows a development in the way that people deal with complex and ill-structured problems.³³ Kitchener and King argue that much thinking about cognitive development does not distinguish sufficiently between well and ill-structured problems. Some problems are difficult in the complexity of the problem but there is a clear answer to be developed, however ill-structured problems have no clear solution. Kitchener and King have shown the development of understanding epistemological complexity, at the same time as developing confidence in oneself and one's own cognitive processes.³⁴ Epistemological development is based on three principal criteria: the certainty of knowledge, the process by which knowledge is obtained and the type of evidence that confirms the veracity of knowledge.³⁵ The seven stages of Kitchener and King's model are grouped into three levels of pre-reflective, quasi-reflective, and reflective judgement. These are set out in Fig 3.1.

The first three stages of the Reflective Judgement Model are grouped into the pre-reflective level. In stage one, knowledge is concrete and absolute, gained through observation, and discrepancies are not perceived. Complexity in the certainty of knowledge increases at stage two with the realisation that there is some knowledge not everyone knows. In stage two, knowledge comes through observation and from authorities. Differences are seen, but because knowledge is concrete then when there is difference one aspect must be right and others wrong. The right answer must be obtained from a 'good' authority source. A person at stage three is aware of gaps in knowledge, but these are assigned to temporary uncertainty, which can be filled by a requisite authority. Because knowledge is concrete and cannot be inferred, what is not known is decided on the basis of what feels right, or personal opinion. This compares in some ways with the Received Knower stage in Belenky's model.

³³ There is overlap between this model and that of Belenky et al, but the Belenky model is not based on this level of epistemic question. King and Kitchener, "The Reflective Judgment Model: Twenty Years of Research on Epistemic Cognition," 51.

³⁴ King and Kitchener, *Developing Reflective Judgment*. King and Kitchener, "The Reflective Judgment Model: Twenty Years of Research on Epistemic Cognition.", Kitchener and King, "The Reflective Judgment Model: Transforming Assumptions About Knowing."

³⁵ Roger H. Bruning et al., *Cognitive Psychology and Instruction*, 4th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson/Merrill/Prentice Hall, 2004), 148-9.

In the quasi reflective level, stages four and five, there is the beginning of awareness that there are some things that may never be known for certain. Knowledge can be abstract rather than complete. Giving reasons is seen as part of the justification of knowledge, yet this is still abstract and conclusions are idiosyncratic: there is no problem when evidence contradicts opinion, and evidence may be chosen according to preconceived ideas. Experts are seen to be in as ambiguous a situation as the individual. In stage five, knowledge and its justification is context bound. Logic is used within a context, but not across contexts. Development beyond stage four reasoning does not typically occur before age twenty-four.³⁶ Quasi reflective knowing is similar to the Subjective Knower in Belenky’s model, with more development being similar to some aspects of procedural knowing.

	Certainty of knowledge	Process: distinction b/w Belief/ knowledge Fact/ opinion	Type of evidence (how known)
Pre-reflective	Concrete *Absolute certain *Some not known *Yet to be known	No distinction Discrepancies denied, seen as errors *can’t infer knowledge	From expert or ‘good’ authority; no use of ‘evidence’; Poss. unjustified or unexamined; * so ‘feels right’ ; authorities biased
Quasi-reflective	Uncertain Differentiated Abstraction *Contextual * Subjective	Choose evidence/ arguments to fit belief	Idiosyncratic; use evidence but can’t draw conclusions *context specific conclusions
Reflective	Constructed Interpretations known * Most reasonable	Differentiated	Compare evidence Evaluate criteria *open to change

Fig 3.1 Schema of Epistemological Complexity ³⁷

At the reflective level people show awareness that knowledge is constructed: conclusions are reached by taking a best stance on the basis of well reasoned argument. This extends in stage seven to a greater ability to reflect and reach reasonable evaluations, with the awareness that new

³⁶ Kitchener and King, "The Reflective Judgment Model: Transforming Assumptions About Knowing," 166-7.

³⁷ Developed from King and Kitchener, *Developing Reflective Judgment*, Ch. 3, 44-74

information may lead to another evaluation with new conclusions.³⁸ Belenky's Constructivist Knower is equivalent in epistemological aspects to the Kitchener and King reflective position.

Research by Kitchener and King with the Reflective Judgement Model research has shown that people may deal with different problems at different levels: "characterizing individuals as being "in" or "at" a single stage is clearly erroneous and should be avoided."³⁹ Ruddick questioned whether there are cognitive stages or whether subjects choose sometimes one strategy and sometimes another depending on context.⁴⁰

Spending time at the subjective stage is important for women as this is the place where they regain their own voice⁴¹ (lost as they entered adolescence).⁴² Perry and Piaget claim that challenge and disequilibrium are the precursors for change; studies with women have found that a nurturing or encouraging environment is a prerequisite, especially moving from receiving to subjective stages.⁴³ At more complex epistemological levels Fishback found no gender difference between men and women in wanting challenge for development.⁴⁴ Possibly in earlier stages encouragement is important until a certain level of confidence is attained, after which challenge or disequilibrium are motivators for growth. If a teacher knows the stage at which an individual might be processing information, she may be able to affirm a student and enable her to move ahead.⁴⁵

Students start transitions from one stage to the next as the limitations of the position are seen: in the pre-reflexive level a student starts to become aware that people hold different views and have arguments for each, and the 'expert' teacher does not come out with a fixed solution or

³⁸ Ibid., 66-73.

³⁹ King and Kitchener, "The Reflective Judgment Model: Twenty Years of Research on Epistemic Cognition," 45, King and Kitchener, *Developing Reflective Judgment*, 242-3.

⁴⁰ Sarah Ruddick, "Reason's Femininity: A Case for Connected Knowing," in *Knowledge, Difference, and Power: Essays Inspired By "Women's Ways of Knowing."* ed. Nancy Rule Goldberger, et al. (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 251-55.

⁴¹ Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 54, Debold, Tolman, and Brown, "Embodying Knowledge, Knowing Desire," 86.

⁴² Brown and Gilligan, *Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girls' Development*, 4.

⁴³ Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 60-61, 194. Stanton, "Reconfiguring Teaching and Knowing in the College Classroom," 41.

⁴⁴ S.J. Fishback and C.J. Polson, "The Cognitive Development of Adult Undergraduate Students" (paper presented at the 17th Annual Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing and Community Education, Muncie, IN, 1998), 4.

⁴⁵ Stanton, "Reconfiguring Teaching and Knowing in the College Classroom," 40.

endorsement for one or other choice. Teacher presentation of material where there are a variety of opinions, and class discussions where it becomes clear everyone does not think the same, may be initially unsettling for a student, but help in the transition. Conversely, students' ability to participate in discourse and debate will depend on their awareness of the uncertainty of knowledge and how it is constructed.

Transition from the subjective standpoint of 'if everyone can have their own opinion I can have mine' becomes a launch pad for more complexity when the realisation dawns on the student that there are objective reasons for preferring one interpretation over another. Interactive activities where reasons for a preference are given and the logic behind a choice is clarified, and where students need to justify their choices, helps students in the next transition. Studies indicate that students can understand reasoning at one level higher than their current understanding.⁴⁶

Developing cognitive complexity has implications for students in theological education. One area of tension lies between biblical authority as a norm and developing an epistemological position which subjects all givens to scrutiny.⁴⁷ Many students enter theological education with an epistemological framework of certain knowledge, and are ready to grant expert authority to teachers and elders. Students entering biblical studies discover questions and methodologies that they did not know existed, and they may discover that there are a variety of options for understanding issues and for interpreting the Bible. A student with a proclivity for pre-reflective or received knowing may find the uncertainty unsettling, but it can also be a trigger for movement to a more complex epistemology. A received knower cannot make choices confidently between varying theological possibilities, but awaits guidance for the 'right' answer. Teaching content, resources, and interactive pedagogies help students to stretch within the stage they are in, and to move into the next phase of cognitive sophistication when they are ready. Further, students may be aware of uncertainty in other spheres, that of relationships for example, but have thought about biblical studies as something certain. It is possible that their epistemological complexity in one domain will have to be carried over into another.

⁴⁶ King and Kitchener, "The Reflective Judgment Model: Twenty Years of Research on Epistemic Cognition," 45.

⁴⁷ Scott discusses strategies for dealing with conflicting claims to Biblical authority in a theological education context, David A. Scott, "Teaching the Authority of the Bible," *Anglican Theological Review* 84, no. 1 (2002).

In a theological education environment students may move from subjective knowing, or pre-reflective levels into quasi-reflective or reflective thinking in order to deal effectively with material they study. Self-reflection helps students to integrate more thoroughly what they are learning into their own life. Students may grow in faith as they also develop epistemological sophistication.

Students also need critical thinking skills to regard their faith within a whole world context.⁴⁸

Implicit levels of cognitive ability lie behind practical and affective goals. Students may have a range of articulated and unarticulated desires to make meaning in the light of their faith. A course of theological studies requires some content learning: much of that is a prerequisite for being able to make judgements. Students should be able to deal procedurally with knowledge, to process knowledge to come to her own point of view, reasonably and rationally argued, about elements of faith understanding and how that plays out practically and ethically in life and ministry. Students should be able to construct knowledge, to develop studies and sermons and responses to pastoral and ethical problems, and to respond out of their own understanding and not regurgitated information from texts and professors, for productive ministry. Cognitively, a student should develop a faith that gives meaning to her life, in such a way that she in turn can help others in their own search for meaning. While many students are asking questions in their desire for meaning, sometimes the course material may force a student to work out her own answers to a range of questions.

When students study theories of growth, it can help them understand some of their own developmental struggles,⁴⁹ although Belenky suggests that students in the received knower position find it difficult to conceive of themselves as growing and developing.⁵⁰ Part of a theological education curriculum may include child development as students study faith education for children, as at UBTC. Students may transfer that burgeoning understanding of

⁴⁸ Elna K. Solvang, "Thinking Developmentally: The Bible, the First-Year College Student, and Diversity," *Teaching Theology and Religion* 7, no. 4 (2004): 223.

⁴⁹ Catherine Marienau, "In Their Own Voices: Women Learning About Their Own Development," in *Learning Environments for Women's Adult Development: Bridges toward Change*, ed. Kathleen Taylor and Catherine Marienau (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995), 38-39, Stanton, "Reconfiguring Teaching and Knowing in the College Classroom," 36.

⁵⁰ Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 50-51.

childhood development with a similar understanding of their own growth and ability to think and reason, and with their own ability to handle varying amounts of conflicting material.

The issue of faith development is one possible example of a particular frame of reference which may change within the larger epistemological framework. Understanding cognitive development is needed for the creation of a learning environment which enhances students learning at the cognitive developmental stage they currently operate at, but also to give opportunity for a deeper and more complex epistemological sophistication to develop. Theological education that is formative and developmental helps a student think about her life and how her faith gives that life meaning, and supports how that thinking changes with the passage of time and integration of life's experiences. For students to think theologically and make theological judgements they will become aware of the complexity of knowing and judging and be able to construct and defend judgments.⁵¹

Socio-Personal Development

Socio-Personal development explains the development of identity, and understanding social roles and relationships. There are a number of theories that seek to give understanding to the rhythms of social development, for instance Levinson outlines life's transitions, and Erikson and Kegan present stage theories. In Erikson's description of ego development the motivators and crises of growth are related to social contextual variables.⁵² The major social development theories were developed from research largely based on those of privileged position in society, with a predominantly male perspective, privileging independence and autonomy over connectedness and interdependence.⁵³ Research on women's development either adapts the major social theories for

⁵¹ See the formation outcome, 'thinking theologically', page 10

⁵² Erik H Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle* (New York: Norton, 1959, 1980), 51-107.

⁵³ Evangeline A. Wheeler, Lena M. Ampadu, and Esther Wangari, "Lifespan Development Revisited: African Centred Spirituality Throughout the Life Cycle," *Journal of Adult Development* 9, no. 1 (2002). Patricia M. Reeves, "Psychological Development: Becoming a Person," in *An Update on Adult Development Theory: New Ways of Thinking About the Life Course*, ed. Carolyn M. Clark and Rosemary S. Caffarella, *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1999), 20. Jovita Ross-Gordon, M., "Gender Development and Gendered Adult Development," in *An Update on Adult Development Theory: New Ways of Thinking About the Life Course*, ed. Carolyn M. Clark and Rosemary S. Caffarella, *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1999), 32. Kathleen Taylor, "Development as Separation and Connection: Finding a Balance," in *An Update on Adult Development Theory: New Ways of Thinking About the Life Course*, ed. Carolyn M.

women or starts anew to build up data from the experiences of women. New and adapted theories on women's development show the importance of relationships and point to the lack of linearity in development.⁵⁴

Kegan describes personal growth in terms of connectedness and autonomy. The understanding of self as subject and other as object broadens with growing cognitive complexity, so that each new understanding of self is more and more able to have a separate identity from the others that form the environment.⁵⁵ In each cognitive move there is a correspondingly more complex social sphere:

Each new balance sees you (the object) more fully as you; guarantees, in a qualitatively new way, your distinct integrity. Put another way, each new balance corrects a too-subjective view of you; in this sense each new balance represents a qualitative reduction of what another psychology might call "projected ambivalence."⁵⁶

The adolescent and adult stages of Kegan's theory are the Interpersonal Balance, the Institutional Balance, and the Interindividual Balance. The adolescent would be dealing with the Interpersonal balance (Stage 3) where they need to decide between being part of two groups and deciding which they want, "...it is more that there is no self independent of the context of 'other people liking.'"⁵⁷ In the fourth stage, the Institutional balance, there is a new level of independence from these various contexts which have shaped identity.⁵⁸ The fifth 'Interindividual' stage balances between the autonomy and connectedness of earlier stages.

Kegan uses his theory to explain gender and cultural differences. From a gendered standpoint Western men tend toward autonomy, and Western women to connectedness. From a cultural

Clark and Rosemary S. Caffarella, *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1999), 60.

⁵⁴ Rosemary S. Caffarella and Sandra K. Olson, "Psychosocial Development of Women: A Critical Review of the Literature," *Adult Education Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (1993): 126-7, 35, 43.

⁵⁵ Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 100-02.

standpoint connectedness is found more in Eastern cultures, and Western cultures tend toward autonomy.⁵⁹ Kegan affirms that difference is not prejudicial:

Evidence of a recessive pole notwithstanding, the differing emphasis among cultures and sexes seems to me quite powerful, enduring, and beyond question of noncomparable dignity and stature. There should be no question of one emphasis being any 'better' than another, certainly not on developmental grounds.⁶⁰

Kegan explains development in terms of a spiral of change from connectedness to autonomy. Kegan suggests that if men and women have different orientations, then in the spirals of development women may spend more time in, and have more difficulty emerging from, the Interpersonal stage where there is more connectedness and less autonomy. For men the difficulty may be in emerging from the Institutional stage. Gilligan also explains relational embeddedness as the way masculinity is defined through separation and femininity through attachment.⁶¹

Cognitive development impinges on personal development.⁶² Baxter Magolda finds from her study among post college adults that “constructing an adult identity [involves] an epistemological dimension, an intrapersonal and an interpersonal dimension.”⁶³ As the title of her article *Constructing Adult Identities* suggests, cognitive development moves toward ‘construction,’ and identity development also moves toward ‘constructing’ one’s own identity. As adults construct their identities there is a ‘shift from external to internal self-definition.’⁶⁴ Similar to Kegan’s Interindividual self, this stage is marked by both self-autonomy and connectedness.⁶⁵ Baxter Magolda writes that for her study participants this type of self-authoring occurred when the educational context provided models and opportunities for self-reflection.⁶⁶ From Baxter Magolda’s research I suggest that using transformative learning pedagogy may be helpful in

⁵⁹ Kegan does not explain if Western women are more connected or autonomous compared to Eastern men.

⁶⁰ Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, 208-9, 10.

⁶¹ Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 8-9.

⁶² Kitchener and King report that there is little empirical work on the relationship between their model of epistemological complexity and ego development..King and Kitchener, "The Reflective Judgment Model: Twenty Years of Research on Epistemic Cognition," 53, King and Kitchener, *Developing Reflective Judgment*, 215-17.

⁶³ Marcia B. Baxter Magolda, "Constructing Adult Identities," *Journal of College Student Development* 40, no. 6 (1999): 629.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*: 633.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*: 641.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*: 642-3.

giving students opportunities to think about building their own identity and growing in self-understanding.

Conn, Liebert, and Berchmans use Kegan's theory of the evolving self from the standpoint of Christian anthropology.⁶⁷ Conn refers to Kegan in her theory of development of spiritual and personal maturity,⁶⁸ and it informs further work by Conn and by Liebert.⁶⁹ Both Conn and Liebert show how the desire for autonomy and intimacy of the intrapersonal and extrapersonal balance influence the development of relationships both with others and God. Conn and Liebert use the terms conformist, conscientious and interpersonal self. The conformist self is dependent on the relationship with God, and yet this is a very external dependency. For instance the knowledge of God's will is behavioural rather than attitudinal, and prayer is directed to behavioural matters.⁷⁰ In the Conscientious self the balance moves toward autonomy, until a final balance is achieved in the interpersonal self. For Conn the "more mature person is characterised by freer love and more realistic self-knowledge and self-acceptance."⁷¹ Movement through the stages is aided by "helpful pressures so people can grow:... confirming, contradicting, and continuing."⁷²

Clearly, interpersonal relationships provide the most crucial context for supporting development. The power of friends, family, and spiritual directors to challenge one's assumptions about reality and one's place in it can be extremely important developmental stimuli...⁷³

Challenging assumptions is part of the route for development in Conn's theoretical perspective.

⁶⁷ Robert Berchmans, *A Study of Lonergan's Self-Transcending Subject and Kegan's Evolving Self: A Framework for Christian Anthropology*, vol. 14, *Roman Catholic Studies* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001).

⁶⁸ Joann Wolski Conn, *Spirituality and Personal Maturity* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 1989).

⁶⁹ Joann Wolski Conn, "A Developmental View of Salesian Spirituality," in *Women's Spirituality: Resources of Christian Development*, ed. Wolski Joann Conn (Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 1996), 313-25. Elizabeth Liebert, "Changing Life Patterns," in *Women's Spirituality: Resources of Christian Development*, ed. Wolski Joann Conn (Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 1996), 349-60.

⁷⁰ Liebert, "Women's Spirituality," 350.

⁷¹ Conn, "Women's Spirituality," 315.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 318.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

Minority Identity Development

Kegan and Erikson are working from out of their own Western context, but they attempt to leave room for different cultures. The theory is dependent on the adoption of culturally based age related roles, within a Western context where role exploration is possible. Role exploration is not necessarily so in other cultures.⁷⁴ Identity development is further complicated among minorities, whose minority identity formation is not affirmed or reinforced by the dominant culture.⁷⁵ A supportive environment among minority groups possibly gives individuals opportunity to construct their own identity, even in apposition to the majority culture.

For example minority Christian women in a patriarchal Islamic setting are dealing with the pressures and problems of normal development, and balancing cultural norms with their burgeoning sense of identity. As students' cognitive understanding is becoming more complex, so is the ability to think of themselves as an individual in relation to others; they are coming to new understandings of their Christian identity and their identity as young women.

As Kegan notes (see above) the culture is one that favours a dependent rather than autonomous identity balance. In a theological education setting, collaborative and cooperative activities which help students develop an interactive interdependent attitude can be balanced with individual assignments. The dependent and interactive focus often makes individual activities a challenge in Pakistan: students feel obligated to 'help' weaker ones even when that means wholesale copying of assignments. On the other hand collaborative activities can leave some students feeling encumbered by the weaker students. Practical ministry opportunities which students undertake in pairs or groups can become occasions for student reflection on social development.

Personal development has an impact on all formation areas: relationships with God, with others, ministry and personal understanding.

⁷⁴ Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, "Emerging Adulthood: A Theory of Development from the Late Teens through the Twenties," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 5 (2000): 3 of 20.

⁷⁵ Lisa M. Baumgartner and Sharan B Merriam, eds., *Adult Learning and Development: Multicultural Stories* (Malabar: Krieger, 2000), 3.

Moral development

Moral development relates to growth in knowing and choosing to do what is right or best in a situation. Concomitantly moral development should result in knowing and choosing not to do what is wrong, and being able to respond appropriately when the wrong has been done. Moral development theory tends to be limited to discussing the ability to make moral choices, without dealing with how the motivation for the attendant affective and behavioural consequences are attained.⁷⁶ Making poor moral choices is often the point where a student or graduate of any theological training institute draws attention from community and media.

Lawrence Kohlberg, who developed a six (later seven) stage theory of moral development, is the reference theory for all work in the field.⁷⁷ The underlying structure of the theory relies on the cognitive developmental work of Piaget showing a change in reasoning regarding moral choices and decision making with developing ability to reason. The seven stages are broadly grouped together into three levels. Pre-conventional moral behaviour is concerned with good and bad consequences of behaviour, conventional moral development rests on social group and societal consequences, and post-conventional levels relate to decisions arrived at from a rational understanding of best practice.

The foundational moral issue for Kohlberg is justice; how justice is achieved or reasoned about is the apex of morality.⁷⁸ Higher standards of morality are arrived at due to increasing cognitive development, whereby more advanced reasoning leads to more advanced morality. Cognitive conflict triggers reasoning and movement onto a 'higher' moral level.⁷⁹ Moral problems, however, are often ill-structured, and cognitive development has been found to be related to, but

⁷⁶ Roger Straughan, "Why Act on Kohlberg's Moral Judgement?," in *Lawrence Kohlberg, Consensus and Controversy*, ed. Sohan Modgil and Celia Modgil (Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1985), 151, 55. Charles Bailey, "Kohlberg on Morality and Feeling," in *Lawrence Kohlberg, Consensus and Controversy*, ed. Sohan Modgil and Celia Modgil (Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1985), 199.

⁷⁷ Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Psychology of Moral Development: The Nature and Validity of Moral Stages*, vol. II, *Essays in Moral Development* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 344-72.

⁷⁸ Robert Carter, "Does Kohlberg Avoid Relativism?," in *Lawrence Kohlberg, Consensus and Controversy*, ed. Sohan Modgil and Celia Modgil (Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1985), 16.

⁷⁹ Don Locke, "A Psychologist among the Philosophers: Philosophical Aspects of Kohlberg's Theories," in *Lawrence Kohlberg, Consensus and Controversy*, ed. Sohan Modgil and Celia Modgil (Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1985), 28.

insufficient, to develop moral judgement.⁸⁰ Moral reasoning requires something other than cognitive complexity.

Gilligan phrases the dimensions of moral dilemmas in a different guise: a problem of relationship and hurt, of conflicting responsibilities. For women, moral responses are related to engagement with others, to a more complex situating of the problem, and are taken from real situations rather than hypothetical examples. Conflicts are resolved through a graduated sequence of survival, goodness and care.⁸¹ Woods surveys studies and writes that hypothetical situations generally elicited higher levels of moral development than real life situations; and found little difference between men and women. Some of the gender bias found is due to the differing use of hypothetical and real life situations, as in real life a care type response is more common for both men and women.⁸² Gilligan contends that morality for women is different:

*The very traits that traditionally have defined the "goodness" of women, their care for and sensitivity to the needs of others, are those that mark them as deficient in moral development.*⁸³

Gilligan's corrective regarding the connectedness of moral decisions also adds nuance to theories which relate to social development. Gilligan links aspects of care to development, so that development means changing the way caring is seen:

*When the distinction between helping and pleasing frees the activity of taking care from the wish for approval by others, the ethic of responsibility can become a self-chosen anchor of personal integrity and strength.*⁸⁴

Kohlberg's stages are helpful in showing how people see the consequences of the moral choices they make: personal consequences, societal consequences, or rational decision making. Gilligan and others have found when dealing with people in the midst of their own decision making processes, with real problems facing them, that there are differences in moral developmental

⁸⁰ King and Kitchener, *Developing Reflective Judgment*, 204, 12.

⁸¹ Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 105.

⁸² Cindy JP. Woods, "Gender Differences in Moral Development and Acquisition: A Review of Kohlberg's and Gilligan's Models of Justice and Care.," *Social Behavior & Personality*. Vol 24, no. 4 (1996): 379.

⁸³ Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 18.

⁸⁴ Gilligan, "Visions of Maturity," 126.

levels.⁸⁵ Differences in hypothetical situations and real-life decision making have been found in empirical studies.⁸⁶

Joy argues that analyses of cross cultural data on moral development show little trace of post conventional morality where there is no notion in the culture of a transcendent being “of principled character.”⁸⁷ The only ultimate is from outside the human sphere, not in human thinking or reasoning. Kohlberg’s later inclusion of stage seven thinking is an attempt to include a dimension of union with God, but is heavily criticized as this transcendent criterion needs to infiltrate the entire theory. Little focus of discussion is on the philosophical, theological, and gender based assumptions that underwrite the theory, or on the way the empirical research does or does not faithfully portray the practical situation.

Fowler argues that Kohlberg ignores that people in fact create themselves from the choices they make.⁸⁸ This suggests to me there is a moral level of proximate development which with scaffolding can be achieved so a person feels enabled to choose to do ‘the right thing.’ This would help to bridge the gap between knowing the right thing to do and being able to do it, so having made what could be a difficult choice, a person would be encouraged and supported to bring that decision into practice.

In formative evangelical theological education, students should become aware of the basis on which they make moral decisions. Some students may make their decisions from a preconventional point of view, including the awareness that ‘God is watching’ which affects their moral behaviour. As they develop both cognitively and socially, as well as grow in a more internally mediated faith, there should be accompanying moral development. As students develop socially, they may be more aware of their moral decision making and motivation for behaviour in terms of social consequences. Development can be promoted by opportunities to discuss moral

⁸⁵ Marion Smith, "Religious Education," in *Lawrence Kohlberg, Consensus and Controversy*, ed. Sohan Modgil and Celia Modgil (Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1985), 285.

⁸⁶ Woods, "Gender Differences in Moral Development and Acquisition: A Review of Kohlberg's and Gilligan's Models of Justice and Care.," 379.

⁸⁷ Donald Joy, "Kohlberg Revisited: A Super-Naturalist Speaks His Mind," in *Moral Development Foundations: Judeo-Christian Alternatives to Piaget/ Kohlberg*, ed. Donald Joy (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983), 54-5.

⁸⁸ John Broughton, "Political Psychology of Faith Development Theory," in *Faith Development and Fowler*, ed. Craig Dykstra and Sharon Parks (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1986), 22.

decision making in the light of biblical principles, and also in the mentoring and modelling that provides for students motivation for living in accord with decisions that they make from a sound moral format. In this regard, moral formation may impact on embedded assumptions and practices of moral behaviour that will be reconsidered and given new practical outcomes.

Faith Development

James Fowler, the central figure in faith development theory, describes faith as part of human development.⁸⁹ Fowler describes faith as beginning in a relationship,⁹⁰ commenting on its (the word faith's) lack of 'verbal' power, so faith is to put one's trust in. Faith is thus separate from believing. This kind of faith can be given to many things: a kind of polytheism where many different items in our world are given overweening importance but nothing unitary significance. Fowler calls henotheism the situation where one thing is given such significance that a life can revolve around it, but in fact it may not deserve to have such significance given to it. Fowler uses the example of a surgeon whose life revolves around his medical practice and world. True radical monotheism is having one object that is indeed worthy of that esteem that should be given to it, and which then becomes the unifying object of life.⁹¹

Generic human faith and the faith of religious conviction relates to the rest of the growing and developing that is part of human life.⁹² Meaning making is the rubric used for both faith development and spiritual development:⁹³ meaning in life is a function of what kind of faith is

⁸⁹ Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, xiii. Discussion on cognitive, personal, and moral development rested on assumptions that there are certain norms of understanding of the human person and growth that lie beneath these concepts. The development of more complex thinking, more mature personal social skills and more internally governed and reasoned moral choices is easily seen. Yet when the conversation moves to faith development it becomes more complex: whether faith development is a universal human trait seems less self-evident, in that people talk of 'having faith' or 'not having faith.' Not all people would grant that they have faith, and a variety of religious beliefs indicate further variety in what faith means.

⁹⁰ Fowler, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning," 16-19.

⁹¹ Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 20.

⁹² Ruth E. Ray and Susan H. McFadden, "The Web and the Quilt: Alternatives to the Heroic Journey toward Spiritual Development," *Journal of Adult Development* 8, no. 4 (2001), Jan Sinnott, "Development and Yearning: Cognitive Aspects of Spiritual Development," *Journal of Adult Development* 1, no. 2 (1994), Jan Sinnott, "'A Time for the Condor and the Eagle to Fly Together': Relations between Spirit and Adult Development in Healing Techniques in Several Cultures," *Journal of Adult Development* 8, no. 4 (2001).

⁹³ Tisdell, *Exploring Spirituality and Culture*, 28-9. Joann Mulqueen and John L. Elias, "Understanding Spiritual Development through Cognitive Development," *Journal of Pastoral Counseling* 35 (2000): 106.

brought to one's outlook on life,⁹⁴ whether that is a humanistic 'faith' in reason and the goodness of humanity, a faith that makes all life without hope and meaning, or a religiously defined faith. Fowler describes faith as "a successive progression of more complex, differentiated, and comprehensive modes of knowing and valuing."⁹⁵ In this way faith development is akin to the transformation that Mezirow describes in transformative learning theory.⁹⁶

When there is such a range of understanding what spirituality is, then there is a concomitant range and problem in identifying development, or stages in development,⁹⁷ and observing and assessing spirituality. In spite of a number of instruments for measuring spirituality generally it can be said that while indicators can be measured, spirituality itself cannot be measured.⁹⁸ This is not to say that faith is more viable with greater epistemological sophistication: Young found students' varying cognitive development did not impact on the viability of students' faith.⁹⁹

Moberg writes that the faith of conviction, and that development that might also be called 'spiritual' can be described regarding the content of faith, that is substantive, or the way faith is lived out, functional.¹⁰⁰ Fowler's theory, and Oser's Religious Judgement theory are cognitively oriented theories.¹⁰¹ I first outline Fowler's cognitively oriented stages of faith, and later briefly Slee's relationally oriented patterns of women's faith.

Fowler's Stages of Faith

Fowler outlined a series of six stages of faith development, and aligned these with stages of psychosocial development put forward both by Erikson and Levinson, based on the cognitive

⁹⁴ Fowler, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning," 15.

⁹⁵ James W. Fowler, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development and Christian Faith* (Blackburn: Dove, 1984), 57.

⁹⁶ Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 7.

⁹⁷ Tisdell, *Exploring Spirituality and Culture*.

⁹⁸ David Moberg, "Assessing and Measuring Spirituality: Confronting Dilemmas of Universal and Particular Evaluative Criteria," *Journal of Adult Development* 9, no. 1 (2002): 54.

⁹⁹ J. Scott Young, Craig S. Cashwell, and V. Jeanne Woolington, "The Relationship of Spirituality to Cognitive and Moral Development and Purpose in Life: An Exploratory Investigation," *Counseling and Values* 43, no. 1 (1998): 67.

¹⁰⁰ Moberg, "Assessing and Measuring Spirituality," 48-9.

¹⁰¹ Fritz K. Oser, "The Development of Religious Judgment," in *Religious Development in Childhood and Adolescence*, ed. W. George Scarlett and Fritz K. Oser (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991), Fritz K. Oser and Paul Gmunder, *Religious Judgement: A Developmental Approach*, trans. Norbert F. Hahn (Birmingham Ala: Religious Education Press, 1991).

development of Piaget and the moral development theory developed by Kohlberg. Change in processes and structures, rather than the stage, is what must be kept in mind.¹⁰² This may mean that at times of struggle, while the person may experience 'losing faith,' they may be times of growth in faith.¹⁰³ Notwithstanding that Fowler's research was with mainly white, middle class, American, Judeo-Christian subjects, he conceived the stages to be generic stages for human development in all world faiths, without reference to any particular dogma. The first two faith stages relate to infancy and childhood. Here I outline stages and transitions for the third, fourth and fifth stages, those of adolescent and early adult faith development.

Synthetic Conventional Faith (stage three): As a child reaches adolescence thinking becomes more complex, and so does thinking about faith, but with the transition into stage three faith there is also an intense personal dimension as teenagers strive to find their place in the world. Synthetic conventional faith is 'synthetic' in that it takes on whole the faith structures of the context, and 'conventional' in that it is the structure that those around also have. Faith is conventional as teenagers try to fit into the world that they find themselves in, while longing as an individual for personal confirmation.¹⁰⁴ Younger students may be transitioning from synthetic conventional faith as they begin theological education.

Individuative Faith (stage four): Changes from stage three to four, predicated upon the life changes from 17-22 years, do not always happen. If the transition does not happen before mid life, it is less likely to happen.¹⁰⁵ A person at stage four faith has constructed their own identity and their own world outlook: personalised individuative-reflective faith. The transition to stage four occurs as young people 'leave home' either physically or in a conceptual way.¹⁰⁶ They may clash with authority structures or be in conflict with the structures of faith or belief that previously informed their identity and outlook. The locus of authority becomes internalised, and

¹⁰² Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 57. James W. Fowler, "Faith Development at 30: Naming the Challenges of Faith in a New Millennium," *Religious Education* 99, no. 4 (2004): 417.

¹⁰³ Stokes, *Faith Is a Verb: Dynamics of Adult Faith Development* (Mystic: Twenty-third Publications, 1990), 63.

¹⁰⁴ Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 153.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 162.

they decide for themselves whether or not they agree with authorities.¹⁰⁷ Socially it is a time of tension between the individual or the group, the subjectivity of feeling, or critical reflection, self-fulfilment or service for others, and the relative or the absolute.¹⁰⁸ Although it is a time of reflection and confidence in thinking, the gradual realisation that life is complex and maybe does not fit the neat categorisation of the early logical faith brings about the next transition.¹⁰⁹

Conjunctive Faith (stage five): As developmentally life is seen as more complex, as more sophisticated epistemology leaves room for ambiguity and the ability to see both or many sides of an issue simultaneously, then a person is in transition toward conjunctive faith; an “epistemological humility in the face of the intricacy and richness of mystery.”¹¹⁰ This is typically seen in mid-life and beyond.¹¹¹

Fowler’s stages of development and the corresponding transitions provide a way of understanding how developing cognitive, social and moral development interact with the development of meaning-making within faith. Fowler shows heavy reliance on developing cognitive complexity. The stress on rationality could also contribute to a division of theology and spirituality, in spite of the fact that Fowler attempts to bring in mystical, symbolic, and image related factors.

Women’s Faith Development

Ray and McFadden talk about women’s spiritual development by looking at how relationships are conducted and how social behaviour changes.¹¹² Tisdell proffers the idea that spiritual development theories “may be related to becoming authentically oneself.”¹¹³ Women’s faith development is seen as more relational than rational.¹¹⁴ Slee’s research with women’s faith

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 179, James W. Fowler, "Stages in Faith Consciousness," in *Religious Development in Childhood and Adolescence*, ed. W. George Scarlett and Fritz K. Oser, *New Directions for Child Development* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991), 38-39.

¹⁰⁸ Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 182.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 183.

¹¹⁰ Fowler, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning," 30.

¹¹¹ Fowler, "Stages in Faith Consciousness," 40.

¹¹² Ray and McFadden, "Alternatives to the Heroic Journey," 203.

¹¹³ Tisdell, *Exploring Spirituality and Culture*, 28-9, 89.

¹¹⁴ Nicola Slee, *Women's Faith Development: Patterns and Processes*, ed. Leslie J Francis and Jeff Astley, *Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 79-80.

development shows this in the three recurring patterns of alienation, awakening and relationality she found in women's experience. The first, of alienation, is one where relationships to self, others and of faith, is lost.¹¹⁵ The second pattern is that of awakening, where a woman is empowered to recognise and be her own self.¹¹⁶ By the third pattern, relationality, Slee is referring to the need for women to continue to hold true to the self they have discovered and yet maintain relationships and be open to service. Slee suggests relationships undergird all ways of being in faith rather than a particular stage,¹¹⁷ and found that her interviews with research subjects were also times of growth in faith for them.¹¹⁸

Faith development and formation

Faith development in Fowler's terms is a movement through the structures of faith; formation may be change within those structures. To think about faith development without the aspects that make that faith germane to life, the intuitive, volitional, and convictional aspects of faith, can lead to a sterile discussion. The interweaving of the relationship between spiritual development and biological, emotional, and cognitive development, and psychosocial and religio-cultural influences,¹¹⁹ means that spirituality is seen as contributing to growth in other areas,¹²⁰ and developing spirituality is a product of other types of development. In short, the spiritual cannot be fenced off into a separate part of life, but integrally related to the whole person. Fowler's *a priori* definition of faith lends itself to a developmental – constructivist approach to understanding growth. An approach which starts with a theological understanding of faith may lead to a greater recognition of the importance of the content and activity of faith rather than the underlying human developmental structures which support it.¹²¹

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 81.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 111-13.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 151, 60.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 62.

¹¹⁹ Fowler, "Faith Development at 30: Naming the Challenges of Faith in a New Millenium," 405, James W. Fowler, *Faithful Change* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 57. Paul Wink and Michele Dillon, "Spiritual Development across the Adult Life Course: Findings from a Longitudinal Study," *Journal of Adult Development* 9, no. 1 (2002).

¹²⁰ Mark Brennan, "Spirituality and Psychosocial Development in Middle-Age and Older Adults with Vision Loss," *Journal of Adult Development* 9, no. 1 (2002): 44-45.

¹²¹ For an extend argument of the difference see Craig Dykstra, "What Is Faith? An Experiment in the Hypothetical Mode," in *Faith Development and Fowler*, ed. Craig Dykstra and Sharon Parks (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Books, 1986), 45-64.

For Fowler, “a structural change represents a qualitative transformation in the ways faith appropriates the contents of religious or ideological traditions.” Formation may be changing elements within those structures. In this way it is possible also to respond to Regan’s concern:

*Is the goal to move people along the faith development stages? Or to allow each person to live most authentically within her or his present stage?*¹²²

Fowler would answer that ‘movement in stage development...is a **by-product** of teaching the substance and the practices of faith.’¹²³ In theological education it is possible to honour students’ need to ‘live authentically’ whatever stage they may be, and yet if a teacher is aware of the stages and the transition, can help in their formation. If development is a natural human process that simply needs optimum conditions, then these conditions should be part of the training environment. The faith level of communities impacts on the development of persons within that community, and if the community does not question it may discourage the individual who questions.¹²⁴ Parks warns that when the emphasis is on stages the temptation is to concentrate on structures rather than processes of change.¹²⁵ The important place of life crisis and stress in bringing transition is well documented.¹²⁶ Fowler outlines four kinds of endings which may bring this about, namely disengagement, disidentification, disenchantment and disorientation.¹²⁷ Even so Fowler also recognises the need for recapitulation and time to re-evaluate.¹²⁸ Other theorists and practical educationalist talk of the place of space,¹²⁹ pause,¹³⁰ or deep listening.¹³¹ Yet these may inform formational aspects as much as the structural aspects of faith development.

¹²² Jane E. Regan, *Toward an Adult Church: A Vision of Faith Formation* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2002), 55.

¹²³ Fowler, "Faith Development at 30: Naming the Challenges of Faith in a New Millenium," 417 author's emphasis.

¹²⁴ Stokes, *Faith Is a Verb*, 77, 84.

¹²⁵ Sharon Parks, "Imagination and Spirit in Faith Development: A Way Past the Structure-Content Dichotomy," in *Faith Development and Fowler*, ed. Craig Dykstra and Sharon Parks (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Books, 1986), 138.

¹²⁶ Conn, "Women's Spirituality," 316, Craig Dykstra, "Faith Development and Religious Education," in *Faith Development and Fowler*, ed. Craig Dykstra and Sharon Parks (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1986), 264, Fowler, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning," 27, Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 100-01.

¹²⁷ Fowler, *Faithful Change*, 72-3.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 10-11, Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 265, 90-1.

¹²⁹ Dirkx, "Nurturing Soul in Adult Learning," 85, Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 90.

¹³⁰ Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, 113-15.

¹³¹ O'Reilly, *Radical Presence*, 19.

In chapter one I outlined five aspects of formation relating to relationship to God, thinking theologically, communicating the gospel, relationships with others and self-understanding. Here I consider these again as they interact with the characteristics of faith development.

Relationship with God: The structure of faith development means students move in the direction of being more able to consider what a relationship with God means, for that relationship to be more personally meaningful, and to respond to the demands of that commitment. The content of formation guides students' understanding of Jesus Christ and the meaning of his death and resurrection, and of the nature of the triune God and the way God acts in the world, and what commitment to that faith means. For instance, faith increases as increasing understanding of the faithfulness of God is developed. Matthai proffers that the "aim of faith formation is a deepening relationship with God, what some would call 'spirituality' and the faithful witness through word and action that grows out of this relationship."¹³² Scarlett writes of the development of prayer, which changes with faith development, as an example of this development:

Prayer begins as an effort to bend God to our will. It functions first and foremost to change the reality outside of ourselves. It begins as a talking at rather than with God. But with age and development prayer becomes a way to discover and mold ourselves to what is felt to be God's will, to feel connected to God in order to cope with or change troublesome feelings, and to experience closeness to or even union with God for its own sake.¹³³

Faith development structures developed by Fowler do not deal adequately with developing passionate commitment yet this too is an aspect of development. Students develop, for instance, in responding to the love of God with more mature love, to the forgiveness of God with deeper gratitude, all the more mature as a student develops.

Thinking theologically: Students' growing passion and relationship with God is balanced by the capacity to discern theologically sound thinking. Increasing passion without increasing discernment can lead to sectarian fanaticism. Cognitive complexity without passion can lead to

¹³² Sondra Matthaei, "Rethinking Faith Formation," *Religious Education* 99, no. 1 (2004): 57.

¹³³ W. George Scarlett and Lucy Perriello, "The Development of Prayer in Adolescence," in *Religious Development in Childhood and Adolescence*, ed. W. George Scarlett and Fritz K. Oser, *New Directions for Child Development* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991), 66.

sterile theology. Students with developing epistemology can support the ability to replace a mechanistic understanding of God by a far more nuanced image of God. Within theological education simplistic concepts of God can be challenged by both content and experience, as students become aware of paradox, or other ways of thinking about God. Such a change may result in developmental maturity, but can also result in changing the content of frames of reference, which are the transformative learning elements of change.

Communicating the gospel: As students start to claim their faith as their own, as individualized reflective faith, then they communicate their faith with greater clarity. As students develop greater social awareness they will be able to fit what they are communicating with who they are communicating it to, with the realisation that not all think alike. Students will better consider human need and how they are able to meet it in ways previously not possible as they find their own place in society and as they start to think beyond familial and peer boundaries.

Relationships with others: Students will reflect on the nature of their relationships with their developing social identity. In Kegan's terms of the Interpersonal and Institutional self,¹³⁴ a student behaves not to 'be liked' but because she does what she wants to do. The structure of faith development will mean the ability to make better relationships; the content of formation will mean thinking about aspects of how students relate to other people.

Personal understanding: Students will be able to see themselves as separate individuals with their growing cognitive and social complexity, which will increase their ability to individualise their relationship with God as their own, to be the people whom God has created them to be. Personal self-understanding leads students to greater self-acceptance and readiness to explore who they are and who they are becoming.

Development involves increase in complexity in the areas of relationship with God, thinking theologically, communicating the gospel, relating to others and self-understanding. It is also a coming to own who one is. Cognitive development means coming to a point where people can own their ideas, social complexity means that one has one's own relationships, and moral

¹³⁴ Discussion on Kegan's *Evolving Self* on p.98

development means coming to a place where the values are those that one arrives at from one's own perspectives out of a larger world view rather than imposed moral values. In the same way the more developed a student's faith is, the more she owns her faith. To have this requires a sense of confidence and needs to be arrived at with support. It needs the place and space to think through what one thinks and has thought and be ready to change. These too are perspective changes.

Conclusion

Formation and development are inter-related and overlapping concepts. This chapter set out theories of development in the cognitive, social, moral and faith development aspects of life. As the line between the transformation that occurs within transformative learning, and development in constructive developmentalism is blurred, this chapter explored the indistinct boundaries between development and formation. I have distinguished the generic structures of human development from the changes of specific frames of reference and meaning perspectives within those frameworks. In this sense two processes are at work in students: first there may be larger developmental transitions in process, or students may be in a resting and consolidating phase between stage transitions. Second, student's assumptions and perspectives may be undergoing articulation, evaluation, and transformation within a student's developmental phase. It is possible that the cumulative effect of changing assumptions may lead to a change in frame of reference and also to developmental stage change, but this is not necessary.

Within the rubric of transformative learning and theological education it is helpful to have a clear understanding of the developmental constructs which undergird formation. At different stages students will process information differently, relate differently, and express their faith differently. A theological educator can be aware of the cognitive, personal, or faith stage at which a student is functioning, to better help her to consider her assumptions and presuppositions related to that stage.

Theories of cognitive, personal and moral development were presented separately in this chapter. Fowler's faith development theory integrates a person's growing epistemological, social and moral awareness with faith development. For the purpose of this thesis, development is used to

refer to the macro elements of cognitive-epistemological, socio-personal, and faith development and the overlapping structures to which these point.

The formation of students in theological education is related to the internalisation of constructs which are referent to their particular tradition, and to students growing maturity in normal human developmental patterns. Theological education students are developing firm epistemological bases from which to consider theology and context. Epistemological development is often crucial to other areas of development, such as in being able to think through the ways one deals with others, and about the constructs of faith. Formation may have to do with the way a student deals with the authority of Scripture, and the authority of leaders within their faith, as well as their own ability to think through their own faith. Students in theological education are developing their own sense of self, and their own point of independence and interdependence in their relationships. This also impacts on students' relationship with God. Formation may include aspects of relating, such as dealing with conflict. Post-adolescent students' are moving toward an individuative-reflective stage of faith. Formation may focus on theological concepts such as understandings of the person of God, as well as changing understandings of prayer and forgiveness.

In the literature review of the past three chapters I have presented the need for intentional formation within theological education and what hinders it, and how transformative learning is a theory suited to meeting the particular need for formation in theological education. In the third chapter I showed how an understanding of human development and maturity was linked to formation.

An intentional focus on formation within theological education meets the formational goal within theological education, and also works toward a unifying purpose. The need for formation within theological education has been made more acute due to the lack of personal formation that students bring to their studies, the disjunction between rational and extra-rational which finds particular root in a separation of theology and spirituality, and through the fragmentation of the curriculum. The use of reflective method has been a positive response to bringing formation to theological education, and may also bring integration to the curriculum including crossing the rational/extra-rational divide within theological education.

I argued that the principles and practices of transformative learning could fill a gap that exists in the practice of theological education, giving a unity and theoretical whole to the use of the various reflective practices that are employed. Transformative learning can serve as a theoretical basis for this formation. The use of transformative learning serves in formation in directing attention to structures of meaning students hold, the articulation and evaluation of which leads to change at a deeper level than behavioural change. The ways that transformative learning has been adapted and used within educating for spirituality brings an impetus for joining theology and spirituality and more broadly rational ways of thinking with less discursive and more intuitive, imaginative and affective ways of processing. Transformative learning theory also points to some basics of a pedagogy that can be integrated into the theological education environment, and which can help students to be more reflective, and to think about their relationship to God, the ways that they think theologically, the communication of the gospel, the way that they relate to others, and their self-understanding. Transformative learning can be effective in meeting formational goals in theological education. The act of becoming more reflective leads to a more active processing of material, and to integrating the aspects of the curriculum into behavioural outcomes.

I suggest that the use of transformative learning within theological learning is a pedagogical and theoretical basis for enhancing students' development by assisting in the process of formation in students. It also contributes to the crossing over of rational and non discursive types of cognition, and can assist in the integration of a fragmented curriculum. Transformative learning offers a theory which can be applied and researched in order to test its usefulness in responding to the felt need for greater formation in theological education.

I set out to study whether the use of transformative learning in theological education helps students to identify their assumptions, to reassess these in the light of the study undertaken, and to change them where appropriate. Assumptions that students hold on entering theological education would indicate their prior formation. The changes in assumptions would indicate what formational changes were occurring at a meaning structure level.

I was interested in documenting changes in the students' assumptions, particularly theological, epistemic and psychological assumptions. These would also indicate changes in the five

interlocking factors of evangelical formation, namely relationship with God, thinking theologically, communicating the gospel, relating to others and personal understanding.

Further I endeavoured to identify which part of the course programme contributed to changes in assumption and formation. By investigating the place that various phases of the transformative learning theory played in the change of student assumptions, and the effect of faculty mentoring, and other aspects of the programme, it would be possible to see what impact a transformative learning pedagogy had on meeting the formational needs of the students in the theological education environment. As epistemological sophistication seems to be so crucial to the ability to reflect,¹³⁵ my research sought to analyse whether students' epistemologies also change and if so how those changes contributed to the students' ability to integrate their theological understanding and their practical Christian living, and so to their formation.

The following three chapters set out the way these ideas were tested. In the fourth chapter I outline the methodology for testing transformative learning in the theological education environment. I record changes in students' assumptions, and the accompanying formational change, in the fifth chapter. In the sixth chapter the contribution of transformative learning theory to the changes in student assumptions is analysed.

¹³⁵ Merriam, "The Role of Cognitive Development in Mezirow's Transformational Learning Theory."

Four ~ Methodology

In the previous chapters I argued that transformative learning is a pedagogy that meets a need for formation within theological education, and I set out the areas for research in order to test out that thesis. The specific aims were to investigate the formation which occurred in students, by looking at the specific assumptions that students brought to their study and were changed, what elements of transformative learning contributed to this change, and what difference students' epistemological development made to the effectiveness of transformative learning. In this chapter I set out how I carried out my field research in Pakistan. I describe the location of the study at the United Bible Training Centre, Gujranwala. I outline the research process, including a description of the participants in the study. I also explain how I analyse the data, including critical issues of validity and reliability.

The focus of this research was the use of transformative learning in a formative process of theological education. In order to track the change process¹ I collected data throughout the twelve month research period to develop a thick description of the learning process. The data also contained the story of changes in students' assumptions over time. The method involved collecting three 'portrait' interviews as well as regular 'snapshot' reflections during the year, which along with supporting data were analysed to discover what change in students' assumptions had occurred and how the change occurred.

I chose a qualitative methodology because I wanted to extend the understanding of a theory, specifically transformative learning theory, with reference to theological education. The use of qualitative methodologies supports a systematic search for meaning and a desire for greater understanding of the matter under study. As the assumptions that students bring to their study were unknown, a methodology was needed that would allow these to be uncovered and their development traced. For this reason I chose to use semi-structured interviews as the base data gathering instruments because they would give a broad base understanding of assumptions in the

¹ A study by Duerr 2003 indicated that there was a dearth of research data on transformative learning in process, and so the study will also contribute to the data in this way.

area of epistemological, theological and personal assumptions. Second I chose to use regular (weekly) student reflections as a second data gathering methodology to gain insight into the process of change. Thirdly I used supplementary data from teachers in interviews and fortnightly feedback to give a different perspective of the student changes under purview. Participant observation, by teaching classes, observing classes and student interaction would afford me a more nuanced insight into the activities and the students. Combined together into the total study the data would provide a rich description of the data, demonstrating a deep understanding of the situation.

Study Location: United Bible Training Centre, Pakistan

The study was undertaken at the United Bible Training Centre in Gujranwala, Pakistan.² This residential theological school is an interdenominational centre which serves to educate the women of the Christian community in Pakistan through a range of short, medium and long term faith development programmes. During the course of a year around two hundred students attend residential programmes, some running concurrently, each of which may have from six to sixty students registered. The language of instruction is Urdu.

UBTC had many advantages as a place for the study. First, in order to undertake such a study I needed an environment that was closed enough for me to be able to make an intervention in a theological educational programme. I also needed to be able to continue assessing changes in the students so as to attribute the contribution of different aspects of the programme to changes that did or did not occur.

² There is no reason in equivocating about the identity of UBTC as the place for the study as it is the only such place in Pakistan. The anonymity of participants is maintained by the use of pseudonyms. See Appendix // for more information on UBTC.

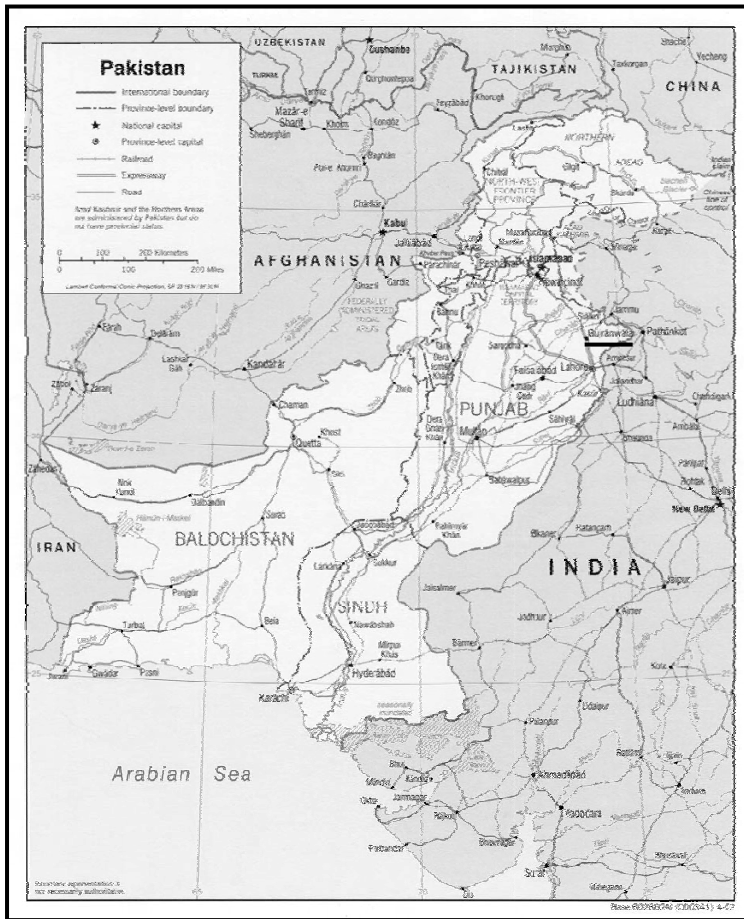


Fig 4.1 Map of Pakistan³

My position as Principal of the Centre from 1990 to 2003 gave me an opening to the Centre and to the Principal, staff and Board members. The ethos at UBTC was one of nurture and development of the whole person in the course of theological education, and in this way it was consonant with the aims of my study. As one staff member commented during the interviews:

UBTC has run from this point of view of how can we help students to grow and how can we help each other to reach right thinking. (Miss W SI)

³ Map of Pakistan, ([cited March 23, 2007]); available from http://www.theodora.com/maps/new9/pakistan_large_map.jpg. My underline for Gujranwala

That comment echoed the general feeling that implementing transformative learning would enhance what was already happening or what the teacher desired to be happening. This is consistent with Hennessey's observation:

It is important to keep in mind that the teaching and learning activities employed within these research projects were consistent with the students' everyday practices and not implemented for the sole purpose of the research per se.⁴

Further, as UBTC is its own accrediting body I was able to make changes in the existing programme with the approval of the staff but without recourse to outside authorities.

Pakistan is an Islamic republic of approximately 165.8 million people.⁵ The Christian community in Pakistan is a minority population of around 2 %, ⁶ and was established over a century ago, although there are historical links to the Mar Thoma church of the early Christian centuries. In this Islamic Republic the Christian community is able to congregate and provide Christian programmes, but it is also affected by the majority religion and culture. It is important for my research to note that while 37 % of Pakistani women aged between 20-24 years of age are deemed to be literate, only approximately 5% remain in schooling to matriculation level,⁷ the minimum level of schooling that the students in the study had attained. A much smaller percentage of women graduate from tertiary education.⁸ The research participant group of Christian women is accordingly not typical of Pakistani society, in religion, education, and gendered society structure. The decision to embark on this research programme with women in tertiary level education in Pakistan introduced additional elements of minority identity and cross-cultural interest to the study.

⁴ Hennessey, "Metacognitive Aspects of Reflective Discourse," 113.

⁵ July 2006 estimate from World Facts US, *Facts About Pakistan* (2007 [cited February 5 2007]); available from <http://worldfacts.us/Pakistan.htm>.

⁶ The figure is always disputed. The 1998 census figure records 1.58%: Govt. of Pakistan, *Population* [website] (Government of Pakistan, 2004 [cited 22 December 2005]); available from http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/fbs/publications/yearbook_2004/population.pdf. 349

⁷ *Ibid.* 350, 355

⁸ Govt. of Pakistan, *Education* [website] (Government of Pakistan, 2004 [cited 22 December 2005]); available from http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/fbs/publications/yearbook_2004/education.pdf. Calculations based on 1998 figures p 131 indicate the fractional percentage of 0.26% women of the total population enroll in arts and science colleges.

Participants

Staff Members

Over the course of the year, ten staff members of the UBTC acted as co-researchers in the study. These teachers used transformative learning processes and methodology in teaching and in their interactions with students. They reported on their own use of the theory and what they perceived to be changes in the students.

Table 4.1 Staff participants in research study

Staff No.	Educational Qualifications	Nationality	Years on Staff	Time at UBTC during 2005
1	BA, MA (Islamic) CT Dip Theol	Pakistani	8	Jan - Dec
2	BA MA (Urdu) MDiv MTheol (Princeton)	Pakistani	5.5	Jan - Dec
3	BA, MA (Islamic) Dip Theol	Pakistani	7.5	Jan - July
4	BA (Mus) BTh, MTh Dip Ed	New Zealander	2.5	Jan - Dec
5.	BA, BEd Dip Theol	Pakistani	5.5	Jan - Dec
6.	BA, BEd Dip Theol	Pakistani	4.5	Jan - Dec
7	BA	Pakistani	1.5	Jan - July
8	BA	Pakistani	1	Jan - Dec
9	FA	Pakistani	.5	June - Dec.
10.	BA, Cert Theol, MTh	English	18 (8 part-time)	Sept - Oct

Key:

CT = Certificate in Teaching (tertiary level diploma)

Cert Theol, Dip Theol, = One and two year ATA accredited theology courses.

FA = Two year tertiary qualification

UBTC runs a two year staff training programme for entry level staff members, who hold a minimum of BA qualification, as well as some theological training at less than graduate level, often a qualification from UBTC's own programme. In fact at the time of the study all the Pakistani staff members had been trained in the UBTC staff training programme, and have completed further theological studies through the Open Theological Seminary (Pakistan), the Gujranwala Theological Seminary, and Princeton Seminary (New Jersey). Two staff members left at the end of the second term of the year's research programme, a senior staff member and a staff trainee. The three most senior Pakistani staff members have had various opportunities for study and ministry outside of Pakistan, which has given them a wider perspective and understanding of both study and ministry.

Student participants

The study focused on three groups of female students. The initial plan to focus on the one year Discipleship Course students was enlarged to include students on the three month Foundations Course of the final term, and three staff.

Discipleship Course (DC): This is a one year (January to December) training for young women with a three level purpose of formation, biblical and theological studies, and preparation for lay ministry (for instance children's work in churches, hospital visiting, student work, and hostel Bible study programmes). For enrolment the students must have a minimum 'Matriculate' level education, the school leaving certificate in Pakistan.⁹ The year long course is intensive, with input from faculty and it also includes a one month field work assignment which gives opportunity for a different range of learning opportunities. The Discipleship Course was chosen because the size of the student body made it possible to obtain quite specific detailed personal information about each student as they went through the programme. The course usually has an enrolment of ten to twelve students, although in the year of this research there were only six enrolled.

⁹ 'Matric' is a government examination gained after approximately twelve years of primary and high school (preparation and kindergarten classes followed by classes one to ten)

Foundations Course (FC): The fourteen week Foundations Course started at the beginning of the third term. The educational entry level requirement for this course is a minimum two years of post high school (college) education. The higher entry qualification means it runs at a slightly more difficult level and is more intensive than the Discipleship Course. The course also seeks to deliver on the same three levels of purpose, namely formation, biblical and theological studies, and ministry skill training. The DC and FC groups take some classes together. Six women from this course were also invited to become participants in the study.

Table 4.2 Age, Education and Family Background of student participants in study

Course	Age	Education	Family background	
			Urban/ rural	Education
DC	24	Matric	Urban	illiterate
DC	22	Matric	Urban	educated
DC	22	Grad(s)	Rural	illiterate
DC	21	Matric	Rural	educated
DC	20	Matric	Rural	educated
DC	25	Matric	Urban	illiterate
TS	25	Grad	Urban	educated
TS	23	Grad	Urban	educated
TS	22	Inter	Urban	educated
FC	20	Grad	Urban	educated
FC	19	Inter	Urban	educated
FC	20	Inter	Urban	illiterate
FC	35	Grad	Rural	illiterate
FC	20	Grad(s)	Urban	educated
FC	21	Grad(s)	Urban	illiterate

Key:

DC = Discipleship Course (one year course)

TS = Staff in Training

FC = Foundations Course (3 month course)

Matric = school leaving matriculate exam

Inter = completed 2 year intermediate college qualification (arts, science, commerce)

Grad = completed 4 year college degree (arts, science, commerce)

(s) = requires completion of a supplementary exam to graduation

Median age = 22

Staff Trainees: Two young women in the staff training programme of the Centre and the hostel in charge (who partly followed the staff training programme) were also invited to become participants in the study. These young women were of similar age and education level to the rest of the participants.

The young women from the three programmes were homogenous in age and education, but they had a variety of family backgrounds in terms of parental education and rural or urban homes (see table 4.2).

Process of research

Ethics Approval

Prior to travelling to Pakistan I submitted my research plan, with copies of the interview schedules, students' reflection guidelines, and staff reflection sheets, to the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, which granted approval. I also gained approval from the Governing Board of the UBTC for the study. The Governing Board chairperson, Mrs Pamela Lall, the Principal Mrs Salma Andrew, and all participating staff members were given participant information sheets in English, and students were given participant information sheets in Urdu; the process of the study was also verbally explained to all the participants with opportunity for them to ask questions. Consent forms were obtained from the chairperson, on behalf of the Governing Board, and from the principal, staff members and all student participants.

Research trips to Pakistan

I spent two six week sessions at the UBTC during 2005. The first session was for six weeks, January 4 to February 14. The second session followed the students' internship and long summer break, from September 8 to October 22, 2005.

Table 4. 3 The Research Year Activities

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Researcher in Pakistan												
UBTC in session	Jan 11-Mar 11			April 4 - June 10					Sept 12 - Dec 9			
Staff Interviews	X									X		
Staff feedback		o	o	o	o	o	o			o	o	o
Staff Focus Gp		O								O		
DC {Interviews	X								X	X		
{reflections		oo	oo	oo	o	oo	oo	oo	oo	oo	oo	oo
FC {Interviews									X	X		
{reflections									oo	oo	oo	oo

Key: X a number of interviews with the specified group
o written reflection or feedback
O Staff focus group

Research programme schedule

Jan 4-7: Staff Training on transformative learning
Staff Interviews

Jan 10 – Dec 9 Transformative learning in the Discipleship Course programme

Jan 11-15 Initial DC students’ interviews

Jan 21 First of weekly reflection sheets

Jan 11- Feb 14: Teaching “Doctrine” class
Participant observation
Ongoing follow up with teachers regarding programme
Observation of class and other activities
Staff focus group

Feb 14 Programme continues, researcher returns to NZ

August Researcher returns to Pakistan, takes part in TEF conference

Sept 8-11 Informal feedback with staff

Sept 12 Term 3 begins

Sept 12 Second group of students (FC) joins programme

Sept 12- Oct 20 Teaching “Team ministry” class (DC group)
Participant observation

September 12-18 Second DC student interviews

Sept 20-25 Initial FC interviews

Oct 4 Second staff focus group

Oct 4 – 12 Second staff interviews

October 11-20 Final DC & FC student interviews

Oct 22-29 Researcher assisting in earthquake area

Oct 30 Leave UBTC, Pakistan

Staff training and participation

The academic year for the Discipleship Course runs from January to December.¹⁰ There are three terms, with a three week break after the first and an eight week break after the second.

The January term began with a four day staff training programme. The first day was a staff retreat, which was a time for staff to experience some of the factors of transformative learning themselves before more specific training about the theory began. The following training session on the theory covered the phases of the transformative learning theory, and included practical time to work on how classes would be affected by transformative learning, for instance looking at intentional crisis possibilities, and starting to identify some general false assumptions students bring to their studies. Further sessions included understanding epistemological development, and socio-spiritual development, and how they might affect student development and formation. On the final day I focused on general teaching practices for a transformative classroom, and worked with the staff on an Urdu translation and description of the theory. In the following week I conducted brief semi-structured staff interviews (Appendix 4 page 300). I held two focus groups with teachers on February 4 2006 and October 4, 2006.

The teaching staff also volunteered their feedback of their experience using transformative learning in fortnightly feedback sheets (Appendix 4). This included the opportunity to talk about their learning progress regarding the theory, and also if they had noted any particular issues with a student, particularly a student with whom they were in a mentoring relationship. These feedback sheets changed over the course of the year to give clearer indications of processes of change, especially by including each of the phases of the process individually.

Student research process

In January at the beginning of the course I spent time with the students outlining the purpose of the study and what their participation would mean. I had informal contact with the students

¹⁰ UBTC Term Dates 2005

Term 1	January 11 - March 11
Term 2	April 4 – June 10
Internship	June 13 – July 8
Term 3	Sept 12 – Dec 9

during meals and tea breaks before the formal interviews began. This helped to establish relationships and develop an environment for clearer communication. In these informal times and during the interviews students took the opportunity to ask me about myself, sometimes mirroring the questions I had asked them. This helped develop rapport and a depth of mutual relationship which is especially important when talking about issues of spirituality,¹¹ and was apparent in positive student responses to the prospect of the interview.

Table 4.4 Types of data from each group

	Interviews [label]	Reflections [label]	Assignments	Devotional journal	Observation	Focus groups
DC	Initial [II]	Weekly (3 terms)	assorted	2 entries each term	Classes & informal	
	Medial [MI]	Label by term [R1,R2,R3]			[CAS]	
	Final [FI]	Final reflection [FR]				
FC	Initial [II]	Weekly [R3]	assorted	3 entries total	Classes & informal	
	Final [FI]	Final reflection [FR]			[CAS]	
Staff	Initial [SI]	Fortnightly [T1 T2 T3]				After 6 weeks [Focus 1]
	Final [SF]					Mid term 3 [Focus 2]

Although I could speak Urdu fluently and was familiar with Pakistani culture, I was also manifestly a foreigner with my own contextual understandings,¹² so the time spent developing

¹¹ Elizabeth Tisdell, "Spirituality and Emancipatory Adult Education in Women Adult Educators for Social Change," in *Qualitative Research in Practice*, ed. Sharan B Merriam and Associates (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2002b), 69. Vaughn Worthen, "Phenomenological Research and the Making of Meaning," in *Qualitative Research in Practice*, ed. Sharan B Merriam and Associates (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2002), 140.

¹² Sharan B Merriam and Mazanah Muhamad, "Insider/Outsider Status: Reflections on Cross-Cultural Interviewing " *Inquiry: Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines* 19 no. 3 (2000), Elizabeth Tisdell, "Researching One's Passions: The Perils and Possibilities," in *Qualitative Research in Practice*, ed. Sharan B Merriam and Associates (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2002c), 90-91.

relationships was important for the research. I was an ‘outsider’ but had many aspects of the insider, including my past history with the institution and relationships with existing staff, and being their teacher. Insider status helped to enhance the students acceptance of me; they could refer to incidents and know I would understand the cultural implications. My ‘outsider’ status led to students feeling free to communicate ideas and feelings, to ask questions, and express doubt more openly than they may have to someone ‘inside.’¹³

Interviews

The first audio-taped semi-structured interviews (Appendix 1) helped establish a base line understanding of students’ assumptions and development in some areas. The interview asked some direct questions and also used discussion of examples and stories to uncover deeply and unconsciously held assumptions. The basic areas of discovery were student identity (asking students to talk about themselves and their families, their identity as Christian women in a male oriented Muslim culture), epistemology (questions about knowledge, learning and difference), and faith issues (images of God, issues of forgiveness, prayer).

The interview included asking students to relate to a diagram of characters on and around a tree (p. 296). Subjects were asked to place themselves in the diagram, and then asked why they chose this particular figure. Belenky notes that the women in their study at the subjective knower level often had difficulty in describing themselves and sometimes used images and metaphors in order to do so.¹⁴ The tree diagram gave students the opportunity to address the idea of self-understanding in a modality other than words. Participants would often look at the diagram for up to a minute before choosing a figure. They could explain quite clearly why they chose the particular character. This first (designated initial interview II) was in January for the DC group and September for the FC group.

The DC group had a second (medial) interview in mid-September after the internship and long summer break. The interview questions were adapted to respond to issues raised in student

¹³ Merriam and Muhamad, "Insider/Outsider Status," 34-43.

¹⁴ Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 82.

feedback. The final interviews for all students were held in the fifth and sixth weeks of term, (October 11-20).

Reflection sheets

Students filled weekly reflection sheets (Appendix 2). I changed these in the second term to reflect opportunities for students to reflect upon past reflections, and to clarify a question which in translation had ended up directing the students' attention to a different aspect than intended. The reflection sheets were photocopied and a copy returned to the student so she would have a record of what she had written. From the second term the final question asked the student to reflect on any item she had written earlier.

Participant observation

Data was gathered in informal interaction and through the teaching of a basic doctrine course (God and Bible), a total of eighteen classes and an exam, over the first five weeks. During the second visit I taught part of a course (five classes) on ministry related factors of team building, leadership, and conflict. I also gathered data from observing in classes taught by other teachers. Additionally, teachers gave me copies of assignments which showed aspects of assumption change. The students also proffered poems, a selection of pages from their devotional journal, and other work they had done which they self-selected as showing their own thinking and development.

Outside of morning worship and classes the environment at UBTC allows for student-faculty interaction at morning tea, meals, sports, and other informal times. On Friday evening staff and students met together for prayer in the half hour before dinner. Informal and semi-formal times of spending time with students gave further opportunities for participation and observation.

This variety of data collected from spoken interviews, written feedback, and observed learning and interaction, gave opportunity for rich thick description of the assumptions students held and how they were changed.

Data analysis

I translated and transcribed the interview tapes from Urdu to English, and made translations of the student reflection sheets, and the students' final reflection exercise. I also translated staff feedback sheets where needed. Reflection sheets and staff feedback sheets were scanned and e-mailed to me from February to July and in November and December. I later obtained hard copies of this data. I did not translate the extra material in the form of assignments, student journals, or other work students had volunteered but I took notes from it where applicable. The analysis was thus made from English copies of interviews, reflections and feedback sheets. My own observations and notes were made in English.

The data analysis was aided by the use of the N6 qualitative data programme. Initially I coded the data along the parameters of the question areas. A partial analysis was completed prior to the second visit. When all the data had been gathered coding was continued with categories generated according to the suggestions of the data. These were in two broad groups regarding 'what changed' (changes in assumptions) and 'how it changed' (process of change) although the two often intersected. At that stage further analysis was conducted by focussing on one student at a time, including her own responses and any other comments made about her by teachers and fellow students. Then each group, the Discipleship Course and Foundations Course students, were looked at as separate entities, and finally all students together. Coded responses were then sifted and changed to develop common themes. Portions of other documents such as assignments and student journals they have volunteered, were then noted, to add depth to the findings.

I also coded teacher responses regarding changes in assumptions and processes, and analysed them to find commonalities from a 'transformative teaching' perspective.

As the South Asian earthquake of Oct. 8, 2005 had made such a profound impact on the context and the students, responses regarding that event were analysed as an instance of a shared crisis which gave rise to a variety of thinking around a number of buried assumptions.

Critical issues: validity and reliability

The value of a research study lies in the findings having application to situations outside of the particular research situation. Validity and reliability (or generalisability), the hallmarks of research, are enhanced by paying attention to the components of the study, and the manner of collection, analysis and interpretation of the data.¹⁵

Internal validity

In order to give some certainty to the hope that the data captured the situation, rather than merely reflect my own bias, I included strategies of triangulation, member checks, long term observation, peer examination, and articulation of researcher bias. Triangulation was provided by the quantity of data from different perspectives: those of students, teachers and my own personal observations. The diverse media including data collected from spoken interviews, written reflection, and observed behaviour, also contributed to give a more holistic understanding.

The research findings (earlier drafts of chapters five and six) were also read and discussed with a staff member visiting New Zealand from Pakistan. This was a way to establish a member check to ensure an ongoing restraint that participants' understandings, rather than the researcher's, were collected. Staying for two separate instances of approximately six weeks gave opportunity to repeatedly observe and reinforce, or confirm or otherwise, findings (long term observation).

Peer examination to respond to findings also served to check the plausibility of the work. This included attending a conference of theological educators from all over Pakistan in August 2005 where I presented tentative research analysis. A member of the UBTC staff also participated in this conference and contributed her understanding of the research process to that date, which added to the internal validity. My supervisors read and compared the raw data and written case study to corroborate the validity of my analysis. Finally by making my own assumptions regarding theological education clear the researcher's biases can be tracked and checked.¹⁶

¹⁵ Sharan B. Merriam, *Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach*, First ed. (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1988), 165.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 166-70, Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Application in Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 204.

Further, my own close identification with the Centre in the past initially made it difficult for me to deal with material that reflected negatively on the students, staff or Centre activities as I analysed the data. By bringing that awareness to consciousness I could check that I was dealing with the data with integrity.

Reliability

In qualitative study due to the variable nature of the research it may not be possible to replicate the study or the results in the same way. What is uncovered as an outcome of the study is true in that time and place however abstractions can be made by being clear on the circumstances of the study, and readers can extrapolate and adapt for their own situations. This study was carried out in a particular context, namely among young Christian women in Pakistan, studying at a Bible school. The study related to theological education but used a theory from adult education, which also creates limits and possibilities for both fields.¹⁷ What is learned is geared to be useful for theological education; yet there will be interpretations that will be useful in building theory in transformative learning also. Also, although the study was undertaken among women, it does not mean either that the findings will be true for all women, or that findings will be restricted to be so only for women.¹⁸ In this case issues of generalisability are enhanced by use of methodologies mentioned above, and especially the provision of thick rich description, will help readers discern whether findings can be applicable to theological situations in mixed groups, in situations outside of Pakistan, and in non-theological education settings.

However, the purpose of the research is to investigate the use of transformative learning in the theological education setting and it is to this that the details of the study are oriented. In the following two chapters I turn to the major two aspects of the findings, what changes in assumptions occurred and how those changes came about.

¹⁷ Marcia and Associates Mentkowski, *Learning That Lasts: Integrating Learning, Development, and Performance in College and Beyond* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), xviii.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, xix.

Five ~ Changes in Student Assumptions

Oh Miss-Ji – your questions! (Nabila FI)

Nabila's laughing lament during one of her interviews indicates how the interviews, which were originally simply intended to be data gathering instruments, in fact enabled students to articulate their assumptions and move along the transformative process. The interviews, along with the weekly reflections, observations, and other data collected helped to build a picture of the shifting nature of students' assumptions.

I review assumptions in terms of the three major areas of interest: epistemological assumptions, assumptions regarding the self or psychological assumptions, and theological assumptions, with the acknowledgement that they overlap and interweave. Before that I consider some general assumptions regarding the nature of theological education. The next chapter addresses the processes of change.

Transformative learning affirms change to be at the level of frame of reference, habit of mind, or point of view. This change is in the "tectonic plates of one's assumptive clusters," and less than this dimension of change should not properly be called transformative learning.¹ While much of the change noted could be classified at a meaning scheme level rather than the deeper meaning perspective or frame of reference level,² yet such change is not negligible, and it is as these incremental changes integrate that a deeper level of perspective change becomes viable. This is illustrated by a student who had attended a course four years earlier, and who wonders at how her perspectives are changing:

I expect that I would learn well – it seems that what I learned four years ago... when I sit in the same classes again it all seems new, I understand new concepts. Those ideas I had settled on, now they are changing – they are breaking! (Mumtaz II)

¹ Stephen Brookfield, "Transformative Learning as Ideology Critique," in *Learning and Transformation*, ed. J Mezirow and Associates (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2000), 139.

² See page 46 for discussion on structures of meaning.

Assumptions regarding the purpose of theological education

At the beginning of the courses, in January and September for DC and FC respectively,³ the students were asked about their hopes and expectations for the course, and at the end of the course they were asked to evaluate how much these had been fulfilled. In as much as their answers took into account the kind of place UBTC was, these answers reflected their assumptions about the purpose of theological education. The three main objectives advertised for the courses were 'biblical thinking' 'Christ likeness' and 'Ministry skills.' These phrases were not necessarily reflected in the student responses, although the responses fall into three approximately equivalent groups. The first area relates to studying and knowing the faith, frequently expressed as being able to answer the questions of Muslim friends and teachers:

But in 10th class I read a poem of Illama Iqbal in which he said: without religion there is nothing. When I studied this poem then I felt that really without my religion I cannot have any place in society. My religion is my identity. Often people ask me questions but I have no answers (Sorroya FR)

When I was at school and I did not know the Bible so well, just a little bit, then I had a friend and she started to tell me - you believe in three gods - and I didn't know but had seen that picture and I said 'yes' - I was stunned and said yes. Then she started to tell me about her faith, and it seemed good to me but I thought first of all that I had to sort this out, so I wanted to know about my own faith first, and get more information about that first and fill that gap in my knowledge. To see if there is a problem in it. (Farhat II)

The second major area of response was students communicating their faith to others:

Since childhood I have heard that Jesus is our saviour and God's Son and...I was interested in why do we celebrate Easter? I found out that he came alive – for us gave his life, and then came alive again, on the third day. So if he has done so much for us then why not do something for God? So that is in my mind, that Lord Jesus Christ took so much suffering for us even though he was without sin. We were the sinners for whom he suffered, so then we should... take this love within ourselves and spread this God's love to others. Also I was interested to do something for God – that was my aim that if only I could do something like that. And God be thanked that I am here and I will definitely do something or other. (Rubina II)

A number of students talked about this expectation in terms of emulating those they had seen preaching and teaching.

³ DC the Discipleship Course, FC the Foundations Course

Student Assumptions

This desire grew in me: pastors go on stage and preach the Word and I thought, why can't I be like them? (Razia II)

The third area of understanding regarding formation as the purpose of theological education was also seen in a few cases:

But I hope that I could be a 'whole' person when we go out (Sorraya II)

Somewhat unsurprisingly this range of initial responses reflects the diversity surrounding the debate about the purposes of theological education outlined in the first chapter. However as the year progressed that changed. In the second interview in September students expected formation to be a part of the ongoing learning process:

There are still lots of faults which I want to right - and I pray that God will bring more change into my life. That is I want more changes in my life in this term. (Rubina MI)

By the end of the year students were united in assessing the purpose at least partly as related to knowing themselves and being changed through the study and reflection process:

Before it was just to know, now to act on it. I myself have to change; (Naheed R3)

..but [I] should have planned for spiritual maturity and development. (Nageen FR)

Students gave few clues as to how this change in assumption occurred. Early in the year students discussed in homiletics class the link between the message of the Bible and everyday life. Nabila argued that by using a good introduction, listeners “will be ready to change themselves.” Nabila’s response indicates that a month into the course the students are convinced that preaching should result in some level of formation (CAS). After the first month Rubina also voiced an expectation of change:

In one month I have learned the Word so well, and maybe sitting at home my thinking and my emotions would not have changed but at UBTC God has extensively changed my ideas and my emotions - I think that I will really change in this year. (Rubina R1)

For a few students there was resistance to, or surprise about, the emphasis on formation:

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Then every day we are told that we need to work on our character, to get rid of sin - and that seems really strange to me because we don't sin every day... (Zarish FI)

Zarish is an example of what Klimoski refers to when he said that students tend not to come to theological education seeking formation, especially when formation brings pain and raises issues.⁴ In contrast to Zarish, other students showed appreciation of linking what they learned with their own formation:

When we study in classes then every day in every class there is something new to learn. I thought that if we are learning what is the point of it all if there is no change? Because we have always been learning since the beginning, we learned everything but never felt that we had to act on any of it. So that is why - there seems to be a point to learning. We used to learn, and gather information, but there was no benefit. (Naheed MI)

Yet another student saw the whole year as a series of challenges:

If I look at the whole year in one glance, what kind of year it was, I think that it was a year of thinking and being disturbed - I kept thinking and kept being disturbed at this thing and that thing also being in me. And I kept turning away from him and then coming close to him. A year of having fellowship with God and knowing him closely. (Tahira FI).⁵

Elements of the transformative learning process can be extracted from students' comments. For some it began with a 'positive crisis' like Naheed's, or a negative reaction like Zarish's. A positive point of disequilibrium probably led more easily to an assimilation of the new way of looking at the purpose of theological education. A minority of students initially resisted, but as time passed the effect of others' viewpoints and the positive effect on herself led to a revision of assumption and the acting upon it. In her final reflection Zarish said:

So finally I think there are two reasons for my coming here: (first) to know myself personally, where I am and what my relationship with God is like. (Zarish FR)

It is possible to hear echoes of Woods in Zarish's thought: the "aim of theological education is not to form Christians, but to form the habit of critical reflection on one's formation."⁶ One of the questions that arises from students' expectation of change is, how much of the debate regarding

⁴ Victor Klimoski, "Evolving Dynamics of Formation," in *Practical Wisdom on Theological Teaching and Learning* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 36-7.

⁵ Students universally use masculine pronouns or verb forms for God and this is reflected in the transcripts.

⁶ Wood, "Theological Education and Education for Church Leadership," 310.

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the purpose of theological education transpires from the kind of theological education the authors in the debate actually experienced, and how has that shaped their own notions of the purpose of theological education? The change in position of the students due to the kind of theological education they experienced is surely a pointer to the importance of a student's own experience of formation.

Before looking in more depth at the areas of student change, I present the first of two contrasting individual case studies. Saima is a good example of how formation occurs when a student has a more limited epistemology. It is possible to see the development of her epistemology and how that interacts with her personal growth and the slow maturing of her theological thinking, and again how that understanding impacts her personal growth. A later case study will present a student with a more sophisticated epistemology.

Individual Case Study: Saima

Saima came from a village on city outskirts; her family was educated and had several church links. Saima came into contact with UBTC when studying a computer course nearby, and when she saw previous students involved in leading Bible studies she wanted to come and study herself. In Saima's first interview she talked about her hopes for the course, which relate to a purpose of formation:

I have great hope in God that having studied that the weaknesses I have they would be set aside – that God would bring changes in me having done this course. I expect that God would do this, that I would change having come here. (Saima II)

Epistemology

Saima had a simple epistemology within the pre-reflective level: knowledge was externally sourced through experts.

I will trust what the teacher has said, whatever she teaches. What I thought, that may be wrong and what the other teachers, that will be right. What the teachers teach, that will always be right, won't it? (Saima II)

Knowledge comes from reading books and some from God when we ask him – if God gives us a good mind then we can gain understanding. Some people don't have a very sharp mind and they can't obtain knowledge. But God has given some people a good mind that can gain knowledge and then pass it onto others. (Saima II)

After two terms of study then Saima said:

People get [knowledge] from their own effort and from God, from God's help. Also from people's own efforts. ...The more people try and work hard, the more knowledge they can get.... as they study more then they know more...

[Knowledge comes] from God, and from the mind, we have to use our minds. (Saima MI)

While Saima talks about the part the mind plays, it is more in terms of accumulating knowledge that is acquired from others, than constructing knowledge on her own account. Similarly in the final interview:

We get knowledge ourselves, and we get more when we study. When we just sit around and don't even study then we don't understand anything. But our knowledge grows according to how much we

study, because then we learn new things. (Saima FI)

In spite of this, Saima appreciated a teacher who drew out knowledge from her, rather than one who lectured:

The questions that make us think, ...I like them more because then there is more growth and we learn so much and our minds also ask questions - about things that we have never thought, then thinking about the questions it is drawn out from our minds.(Saima FI)

Her position is clarified in a practical example. When asked about two conflicting pieces of writing Saima cannot see the difference, another aspect of pre-reflective epistemology. In a wonderful piece of circular argumentation she accepted the 'expert' when what was written was new to her:

I am in agreement with the big book, that Joseph was married before.
WHY?

Because he did marry twice
HOW DO YOU KNOW?

From reading this book - before I did not know. (Saima FI)

Saima relied on an expert, and believed something new rather than being ready to assess and think about something she had not heard before. This was also brought out in the way that Saima filled the weekly reflection sheet. In these the 'challenge' was usually either what she learned, but never why that should be a challenge, or the amount of difficulty of her study:

The biggest challenge in the last week is that I have learned so many new things in class, from which I came to realise that truly God's word is very profound and before I didn't know anything about the Bible (Saima R1)

This pattern of response did not change over the year. Saima never articulated times when something she had learned had given her pause for thought. Further, while she said that the reflection form is good for growth and giving thoughtful responses, in actuality what she wrote lacked in depth. The lack of depth may be partly due to her poor literacy skills, but even more to her inability to reflect deeply on what was going on in her life.

While Saima remained in a pre-reflective epistemology, during the year she did move slightly from seeing the origin of knowledge in books and experts, to a position that some knowledge is generated

by thinking. She said at the end of the course:

I think more: think about what I am like. I know my weaknesses and strengths. I have learned how to think. I didn't know how to think, how to use my mind (Saima FR)

Before I did everything without thinking or understanding. Now I have started to think, that everything first of all I read it with concentration, first think about it and understand it, and then do it. If anyone talks to us, then think and understand before answering (Saima FI)

Saima's epistemological assumptions, that knowledge comes from God and from experts, and that she must accumulate knowledge, barely changed.

Self-concept and identity issues

Minority identity

Saima was aware of some of the difficulties that women face in Pakistan, largely in having a circumscribed life, and that she herself may sometimes wish she were not a woman. She gained confidence during the year, and in her second interview remarked that she could stand and talk to people, which she did not have the confidence to do at the beginning of the year. Saima was unable to articulate what the effect of belonging to the minority Christian community may have had on her identity. She acknowledged that Christians are sometime not treated well, but said "That is God's will, I am a Christian." (Saima II)

Articulating her own attributes

Saima found it difficult to articulate anything about herself early in the year. When asked about herself, what she thought about, she simply said:

What do I think about when I am at home? Mainly about work, housework! I am always busy in housework and that is what I think about. (Saima II)

Then she added two comments that relate to her relationships and anger:

The only thing I want is that I would be someone who never hurt another – that I would always make others happy. I don't want anyone to be upset because of me. If I ever say anything nasty to anyone, or say something in anger then I really regret it afterwards. That is something good about

me. If I fight with my mother then I regret it after, if I fight with my brother then I am sorry afterwards. Those are the kind of good qualities in me.

I get very angry – and we shouldn't get angry because anger is not good. (Saima II)

In her second interview when she has gained confidence, gained her voice, she talked about what she thought of herself at the beginning of the year:

Before I didn't really like myself, there were lots of faults, lots of weaknesses and bad points. But now having come here, because I have come here, there has been a little change in me and I now like myself. (Saima MI)

In her second interview when asked how a friend would describe her she replied in a positive, although circumspect, way:

They would say nice things because since I have come I have never done anything to anyone that would make them angry with me (Saima MI)

By her third interview Saima described herself positively in terms of wanting to be happy and to be in relationship with others:

Being happy - before I preferred to be alone, but now I prefer to stay among people. I like being around the girls, and that I would make my relationships stronger, and share everything with them well, and learn from them more. So now I like being happy - not being sad and depressed, that does not appeal. (Saima FI)

Anger

As mentioned above, Saima was a student who knew she had a problem with anger. Saima's simpler epistemology can be considered regarding the difference in changing the assumptions about self that contribute to patterns of anger. Saima did not remark on her anger during the first term, but during the second term reflection sheets she started to deal with her anger, explaining her readiness to do so being due to fellowship with other students. In her second interview she talked about how seeing others relate together has helped her:

Yes - I used to get very angry. When I came here I saw everyone's relationships with each other and I thought that I have to control myself and live in relationship with everyone. If anyone says anything to me, then I have to control my self and not say anything bad to anyone – put up with it and control my emotions. (Saima MI)

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Because there was lots of anger in me, which I had maybe never been able to control. And I could never tolerate anything anyone said. Even if someone spoke to me lovingly then I replied in anger. I was never a happy girl, but I am thankful to God that having come here that when I saw others' fellowship, saw their love in the way they spoke to each other, then I really started to think about myself. What kind of girl am I? How am I such an angry person? Can I control my anger? The happiest thing for me is that I turned myself over to the Lord and I challenged (myself) that in so many days I would work on my anger and especially I prayed for myself a lot, that the Lord would give me the ability to not be angry but rather present myself with love and forbearance. For this I asked wisdom from God, but now thank God I do not get so angry and can tolerate others and I feel that really God has brought changes in my life, and has worked. (Saima FR)

Her mentor also noted that she had discussed her anger:

Mentee Saima raised the type of anger that she had written about. Highly significant in the way her simply becoming aware of it and the new concept that she is able to think about it. This new freedom to think, analyse and be self aware will be interesting to watch. (Miss Z T2)

When I asked her about her problem with anger, knowing that others had complained about her, she felt that:

Yes, I get angry but I don't say anything that will really hurt someone, angry but I have never said anything that anyone would get very upset by it. (Saima MI)

Saima said that she had learned to control her anger and expected that others would also see that. Saima still struggled, however, writing in her reflections, "My anger has decreased but I want to totally stop being angry," (R3). Saima said that her family saw change in her but she could not say what had changed, except that she no longer fought:

For example before I used to fight a lot, with everyone at home. Now when I go home instead of fighting with everyone I even explain to my parents from the Bible, and tell them to pray. So just as I am, they too should be like this. (Saima MI)

In her final interview she talked more about how she had dealt with her anger. She changed because she saw a difference between herself and others, and then, as she articulated it:

Before I really thought about myself a lot - I got very angry, I couldn't tolerate anybody, but then I started to think about myself and I prayed to the Lord in my heart, Lord change me. In the way that the other girls have fellowship amongst each other, and build relationships, I want to be like that. So then I - what is happening these days with me - is that I am praying for myself more and more. For my mind that God would make my mind wider so that I would be able to learn the Bible

really well. Just as I pray, because earlier I did not know what I was really like, what I am. (Saima FI)

There was a change in the way Saima dealt with her anger. There are elements of challenge, articulation of assumption, and critical self reflection, yet at the same time God was still 'the expert.' Even though Saima could in some measure analyse the changes in herself, ultimately change was attributed to prayer and the work of God. Saima with her less complex epistemology did not reflect on why she may have been as she was, or where the patterns of response may have come from, and then change those assumptions, but rather saw a goal and modelled her change toward it.

Theological issues

Saima came on the course with an understanding of God and some inkling of basic Christian doctrines, but they are accumulated ideas which are neither integrated with each other, nor with how they impact on her way of living. Her basic concept of God is rather amorphous:

I thought more that day, I am not alone, God is with me all the time (Saima R3)

When I am upset about something then it is from God and I know now that passing along the thorny paths I will know God better. (Saima R3)

Saima saw God as saviour, and wrote in her journal that 'whatever a believer wants God gives.' Yet at the same time she said God 'watches and punishes.' For a level of Kohlbergian morality Saima is one who behaved to escape the ever watchful eyes of a punishing God. By the second interview she still had not clarified her concept: God is 'good,' loves people and helps them in ways more than people can help them. In her final interview her notion of God had been affected by the earthquake: God is a merciful God, because she, all the people at UBTC, and her family had escaped. She does not take into account all the destruction that had occurred. This is simply explained as God's will.

Jesus

Saima understood Jesus is God, and she discriminated between Father and Son. There is, however, an undercurrent of confusion, as if she knows this is something she can 'get wrong' and so she tried to get it right. She was flummoxed by the notion of Jesus' humanity. The initial interview occurred

in early January, but even to relate Jesus' humanity to the recently celebrated Christmas was not helpful, and although by her second interview she had completed a relevant doctrine course she still couldn't sort it out. After a number of supporting questions she concluded: "I can't say." In her final interview she explained:

Jesus became a human, the Son became human. From this time that he came into the world he is human and divine. (Saima FI)

Saima was clear that Jesus died on the cross for her sins, although she couldn't explain much more than that. In her initial interview, 'Christian' meant born in a Christian family, and having salvation meant "saved from sin." In her subsequent interviews 'Christian' was someone who had faith.

In terms of Christian practices or disciplines, in contradistinction to her earlier routine "I did not pray, read the Bible, or go to church..." (II), as she outlined her holiday activities in her second interview she said that she regularly prayed, read the Bible and went to church.

Forgiveness

In the Najma story,⁷ Saima in her first interview believed that Najma was beyond the pale and could not be forgiven. She had some doubt that God could forgive Najma, or that Najma's relationship with God could be restored, but was totally clear that Najma's father would not forgive her. By the second interview she said that forgiveness and restoration was possible, and in the third interview said that Najma's family should treat Najma's husband well. This coincided with Saima's own self-description regarding forgiveness:

Before I did not forgive people, I would be very angry and it was very difficult for me to forgive someone. But since I came here I have learned how to forgive, that God forgives everyone so I have learned to forgive, whether it is a little mistake or a big thing, even if it is our enemy we have to forgive her too. (Saima FI)

In spite of this, Saima never mentioned wrangles with other students, although other students often mentioned her as the other party in fights. This may be due to the lack of depth her reflection sheets as much as her acknowledgement of her own anger and forgiveness. Saima never talked about a

⁷ See Appendix 1 (page 294): a story about a Christian girl who elopes with a Muslim boy.

problem with forgiving someone or a personal tangle, but in the final interview she mentioned her new ability to forgive. When asked how the change occurred, she was not able to outline any strategy of change:

From learning here - and I brought this thinking into my practical life, and that I forgive and I hope when I go from here too that I will bring these things into my life and forgive people and not keep anger in my heart toward anyone. Whatever anyone says to me I will put up with it and forgive them. (Saima FI)

Prayer

For Saima the initial and basic requirement of prayer is what she called a 'pure heart.'

So I am sure that if we pray with a pure heart then God hears. (Saima II)

Very often the challenges she mentioned in her reflections are 'solved' by prayer:

What has challenged me is Sunday School work, and chapel too – I thought about it a lot but I prayed with my whole heart to my Lord and the teachers also helped me (Saima R1)

In her second interview she was slightly perplexed because while she has prayed 'with a pure heart' for her sick mother who then recovered, praying for her brother the same way had not resulted in his healing. Saima started to become aware that there is more complexity to prayer, and was ready to be persevering in prayer, aware that there might be a long term requirement.

I get God's help. If I pray with a pure heart then God hears. That is we get an answer to prayer - maybe not right away but we do get an answer. (Saima MI)

In her second interview Saima reported praying for her relationship with God, and for spending time with God. By her final interview she reported praying for God's guidance and leadership, and interestingly,

I pray more than anything for myself, that God would make my mind broader, and I could think more. (Saima FI)

⁸ For the use of the labyrinth see p. 216

So Saima's prayers moved from prayer for tangible 'things' to more intangible elements of relationship and her own growth. She also mentioned the labyrinth and the ease of praying in it.⁸

...a new experience was walking in the circle in the grounds, and I prayed and talked to the Lord and forgot all my other thoughts and just focussed my attention on God. (Saima F3)

The earthquake also began a time of special prayer for Saima, as she responded in praying for the whole country and those affected.

Faith

Saima talked glibly and without context about 'weak' and 'strong' faith. In the final interview strong faith meant being able to live her faith, not to be afraid of jibes and negative responses, and to be able to talk about her faith with others. She talked about learning in the context of her faith growing, but did not make a link with what had caused growth.

When we look at the progress made by Saima over the year, with a simple epistemology, it is change that occurred without reflective thought. While at times it might seem that Saima had articulated her assumptions, I suspect that is through the careful questioning of teachers and others, and that Saima herself did not realise these are assumptions, or even that there are a variety of assumptions that she might have had, and that might have changed. For Saima, change regarding how she thinks, and regarding other issues about to be explored, like knowledge, is divinely mediated:

It happened mainly because I prayed that I would change. (Saima MI)

Saima's fundamental assumptions epistemologically, personally, and theologically could be summed as 'knowledge is from God,' 'God changed me,' and 'God answers prayer' and these do not appear to have changed substantially over the course of the year. However Saima has changed, epistemologically, personally and in her faith and theological assumptions. Mezirow defines a transformative experience as a change in perspective, through a rational process of evaluation. While Saima changed it was not in these terms. I propose that because of her simple epistemology the change is more in terms of increasing knowledge, than in terms of being able to

do anything with the knowledge, and behaviour change based on modelling rather than inner reflection. The transformative learning experience was useful for Saima; at the very least it has brought her into contact with ways of thinking and being that in years to come with greater maturity could help her. It was less helpful for her than it may have been for other students with more ability to self-reflect. However it is useful to look at her development in depth to notice another way of formation for students at this level of epistemological complexity, and to show in contrast to a later case study how epistemological complexity can make a substantial difference to the process of formation for a student in a transformative learning environment. An account of epistemology for all the students follows.

Epistemological Assumptions

In discussing transformative learning Kegan argues that epistemological change is tandem to any other change:

At the heart of a form is a way of knowing ... (frame of reference)...; thus genuinely transformational learning is always to some extent an epistemological change rather than merely a change in behavioural repertoire or an increase in the quantity or fund of knowledge.⁹

One of the questions which I brought into the study was regarding how epistemologies change and how that would affect the other levels of study. I did not formally evaluate the epistemological position of the students in interviews, but some questions made it possible to be aware of how they were thinking and arguing and to place them approximately within Kitchener and King's three main levels regarding the certainty of knowledge, the process of its acquisition and the type of evidence to assess it.¹⁰ In the pre-reflective level (stages 1-3) knowledge is concrete and bestowed by experts. The existence of abstractions is acknowledged in the quasi reflective levels (stages 4-5) but reasoning is fairly idiosyncratic. The true complexity of knowledge and reasoning is only approached at the reflective level (stages 6-7). In my research context the emphasis on expert authority is reinforced by the hierarchical Pakistani society, where elders are not questioned, and where the educational system favours rote learning. There was a

⁹ Kegan, "What "Form" Transforms?," 48.

¹⁰ King and Kitchener, *Developing Reflective Judgment*, 148.

Student Assumptions

noticeable change in students becoming aware of the complexity of many issues, of their own ability to generate knowledge, and to challenge their teachers. Students who were present for the whole year had more opportunity to be challenged and supported in this growth, and their progress was more noticeable. That the teaching staff were very aware of epistemological change is seen in comments:

[Razia's] thinking is more linear rather than random. (Focus II)

[Rubina has] ability to distinguish between wrong and right teaching in some areas and concern regarding wrong teaching (Focus II)

It is impossible to know whether these changes were noticed because teaching staff had become sensitised to the notion of epistemological complexity, or whether in fact this way of teaching helped students to develop more complex epistemologies.

In the Pakistani context there are two specific problems which work against developing complex epistemologies. The first is the rote learning educational system which reinforces the notion that knowledge is external. My experience in teacher training and assessment in Pakistani schools leads me to believe that many teachers in primary and secondary schools have themselves not developed far beyond a dualistic understanding of knowledge as something external, to be learnt and handed on.¹¹ This does not provide an environment for students themselves to develop a more complex epistemology. Perhaps this is not so much a problem but an opportunity where students entering theological education may be especially ready to move into more complexity.

The second factor is that in Pakistan religious faith is a given and although society is becoming more secular, Western scepticism of traditional expressions of faith has not taken hold. Some of the first level of thinking regarding even the existence of God is not the cultural imperative it may be in the West. However for Christian students in theological education a different cognitive inducement exists: the sustainability of their own theological position amidst a majority Muslim culture. Students develop the ability to cognitively affirm their faith, not only from a community

¹¹ This is similar to the situation as outlined by Kanu, "Tensions and Dilemmas of Cross-Cultural Transfer of Knowledge: Post-Structural/Postcolonial Reflections on an Innovative Teacher Education in Pakistan," 498. The Pakistan government is working on literacy, but in a context of low literacy then whoever has gained minimal qualifications may teach, hence more simple epistemologies abound.

or experience based foundation. Helping students to deal with uncertainty in a way that encourages their epistemological growth is a further challenge for theological educators.

Pre-reflective epistemologies

There were two or three students who, like Saima, started at and remained in a pre-reflective epistemology although they changed within it. For these students knowledge is certain, it is acquired from experts and these experts are thus guarantors of the 'evidence.' Student interviews revealed their understanding that information originates from books and teachers and their teachers will not make mistakes.

Like Saima, Razia also struggled at this level. In the initial interview she was totally unable to respond to questions about knowledge and deciding what is right and correct, although she could say of her teachers:

No, I can't disagree...If they say the right things then I don't need to say anything... (Razia II)

All through the first interview there are long silences as she thinks, is prompted, and often declines to give an answer. In the second interview she takes much more part in the conversation:

HOW DOES KNOWLEDGE ORIGINATE? WHERE DOES KNOWLEDGE COME FROM?

Writers write it.

SO FOR THOSE WHO WRITE IT, WHERE DOES IT COME FROM - HOW DO THEY KNOW WHAT TO WRITE?

From their mind

OK - HOW DOES IT GET TO THEIR MINDS?

Well, their ability, their mind when they do work - and God is also a way of learning it, and different kinds of thinking are from God

SO SOME FROM GOD?

And some from themselves (Razia MI)

This displays an epic change first in her own confidence as she has found her voice and second she has started to understand the complexity of knowledge. Her growth is seen in her final interview, starting with the question about the origin of knowledge:

From our mind.

Student Assumptions

It comes from our minds, and in our thinking, if we are reading a lesson, just as here we are gaining Christian teaching, then it doesn't just come as we learn, but we absolutely need to engage our mind and thinking. Whatever we do we have to do it with our mind, that yes we do this, do that this way - so we need intelligence for that.

SO HOW EXPERT ARE YOUR TEACHERS? CAN YOU DISAGREE WITH THEM?

No - we can't disagree with them because whatever they know, as much as they know the Word of Christ, as an example, so they know Christ word so much and we don't know it so much.

BUT IF YOUR MIND IS GOOD THEN YOU CAN KNOW?

Yes, and if there is something we do not understand, whether I have it wrong or - I'm not saying that a teacher will get it wrong, if there is a mistake if something is not understood, we can tell them too because we have a mind as well and just as their mind, so is ours. (Razia FI)

While Razia still sees a teacher as expert and hesitates to hint a teacher may have said something wrong, she is starting to display a confidence in her own thinking ability. When it came to the practical reading project on Jesus' family,¹² she wanted to retell the information but could not distinguish the fundamental conflict in the information from the two sources. When I explained to her the differences her comment was:

The Bible tells us what is right. (Razia FI)

Even when the differences were pointed out she was unable to deal with the difference. This is typical of a pre-reflective epistemology that does not see difference, or explains any difference away.

Razia can see that she herself has changed, although not really why:

Yes because before I did not think so deeply. When I came in the first term, you took this interview with me but I didn't understand anything - where can I get the ideas to make her understand? ...

VERY GOOD - IT IS A JOY TO SEE YOU HAVE GROWN. SO HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

I thank God, God did it.

BUT HOW?

God - just as our teachers teach us, if we don't pay attention then that will be to our harm, and God has made our intelligence so big, we have to use our minds so that we can think, so go deeply, that how is this... (Razia FI)

¹² See Appendix 1 page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Student Assumptions

Razia's final reflection, which other students did by relating various changes in themselves they noticed and why they may have occurred, was easily summarized as simply "I was like that but now I am like this because I know and have accepted Christ." As with Saima, in Razia this lack of ability to reflect deeply does not mean no change has occurred, but it is difficult to monitor whether assumptions have changed.

Hamida, a student in the FC group who entered the study for the final three months, seemed to straddle the pre-reflective and quasi-reflective levels. She saw that the texts about Jesus family were different, although had no way of starting to think about how to clarify that. She talked about doing an assignment and finding a reference book puzzling:

It does upset me – because when we read books like this and other books that are in the library, then I said that when we learn from books, and then we - there is some authority - you see when we are doing assignments - ... and I could not understand [prominent Pakistani theologian]'s book. So when Miss R taught us I had made some notes verse by verse, and I preferred those. Because he just made such confusion, one point he did not make clear and then he gave more references about it. So when we don't understand something then how can we understand more passages? So I read it two or three times and could not understand a word of it. I am still stuck in the middle of this essay - some has been done, some is good, and some I have to still do better. Some books are like this, which we don't understand (Hamida FI)

Hamida wanted clear answers. She was concerned because there were more books, and more knowledge, than could be covered in the course. During her last interview she repeatedly asked for affirmation regarding her answers: for instance at the end of talking about the pages on Jesus' family,

So Miss did I do it right? (Hamida FI)

Even more so at the end when the tape had been turned off, she anxiously asked me if she had given the right answers. It only occurred to me later that my careful assurance that 'there are no right or wrong answers, I wanted to learn how you think' would not be reassuring to someone with a dualistic epistemological framework. Yet this student generally did well in her assignments and exams. I was left to ponder how much her questioning was her lack of epistemological complexity, and how much this was due to her strong desire for acceptance and her low self-esteem.

Quasi-reflective epistemology

Twelve or thirteen students functioned at the quasi-reflective level, which as young women in their early twenties is consonant with age related development.¹³ The students at this level showed some movement within that level as well, possibly showing a change from 4th to 5th stage of the reflective judgement model. The base line position is often that knowledge is ‘from God.’ Naheed explained that knowledge comes from books, from minds, and:

OK - BUT THE KNOWLEDGE IN BOOKS WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

From their minds
AND INTO THEIR MINDS?

God put it there. God made us and put intelligence in our minds and from intelligence comes knowledge. (Naheed II)

In her final interview she said the same thing, but added:

I have no experience in getting knowledge directly like that. (Naheed FI)

Then as we talked about a good teacher eliciting knowledge from students, she laughed as she realised knowledge comes ‘from inside us,’ it is constructed. This is the position that Sorraya has come to realise for herself as well, as she put it so clearly:

Intellectually I have realised that not only do I get information from books and other people to use it, but knowledge also comes from within me. I have to use my brain. (Sorraya FR)

Some of these students started from a position of trusting ‘experts’ to have all the information, but over the year moved to a place where they started to want to research options. Even though they wanted to ‘research,’ however, ultimately what they preferred generally agreed with their previously held knowledge, “what seems right to me, in my mind,” a response that indicates they are still in the quasi reflective stage of epistemology. For instance, for Farhat the preferred epistemological solution is:

If neither of these sources of information agree with one another, and I think a third thing, then I will prefer what I already think. (Farhat FI)

¹³ See p. 93 for a discussion on age related epistemological development.

Student Assumptions

Research often meant asking teachers, reading books, and seeing where the most agreed. However a majority decision did not necessarily sit easily when they were induced to think about their own position as a religious minority in Pakistan: did it mean Christians as a group were wrong if what the majority affirmed was ‘right’? These students still had to move to a position where they could make a best judgement based on objective evidence. This is brought out in the way that this (quasi-reflective) group dealt with the texts about Jesus’ family. For these students the difference in the texts was usually only detected when brought to their attention. When they had seen it, the students could deliver arguments on their chosen position. Tahira made her decision on the texts principally on what she understood the Bible to say, but supported it with other arguments from her understanding of historicity and argumentation. Another student also searched for other information:

I will look at the background. I will look at the Bible, and at [Bible Dictionary]. Then I will see what is right, if he was older or younger. (Sorraya FI)

Farhat seemed to fit in this second group, yet even when the discrepancies in the two books were shown to her, she tried to excuse those, which was more of a pre-reflective response. Yet of all the students she was one who yearned to dig out the answers for herself:

I have started to dig into every thing. (Farhat FI)

My thinking has got as broad as it has complicated. As many new things as there are, it is hard to get rid of just as many old ideas...otherwise they get mixed up (Farhat FI).

These students came to a position where they were learning to assemble evidence in order to make decisions. This impacted on how they dealt with the theological knowledge they were learning, and the personal knowledge they were coming to have about themselves. It also helped them evaluating the assumptions they were starting to articulate. This is crucial in making the most of the reflective opportunities the course afforded them.

Reflective Epistemology

At least one student seemed to move from the second into the third level of epistemological complexity during the year, or at least to move between the two. At the beginning of the year

Student Assumptions

Mumtaz wanted evidence and proof, but the final decision rested on an idiosyncratic ‘according to my understanding.’

WHEN LEARNING ABOUT SOMETHING YOU WANT TO KNOW DO YOU RELY ON EXPERTS? IF NOT WHO OR WHAT DO YOU RELY ON?

Go to experts, and from experience...

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN THE EXPERTS DISAGREE?

I will learn from both.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT IS RIGHT AND TRUE?

Maybe at that time the situation, what they say and what their knowledge is – somehow or other I will make a judgement that this one is right and this one is not...

HOW?

This kind of knowledge, intelligently, by what I understand, that what that person is saying according to my understanding, I will accept that one.

BUT IF YOUR THINKING IS ALREADY WRONG, THEN YOU WILL ACCEPT THE WRONG ONE! IF YOU DON'T KNOW AND GO TO THEM – THEN WHAT SEEMS RIGHT – WHY WILL IT SEEM RIGHT? WHAT DO YOU NEED TO ACCEPT ONE AS RIGHT?

Maybe the one that I agree with, it will fill the requirements that I am looking for.

WILL THERE ALWAYS BE A RIGHT ANSWER – CAN BOTH BE RIGHT?

It is possible.

HOW?

They don't agree with each other but it can be right...If they don't agree then the answer can't be right...

No – it seems to me it can't be possible

SO HOW EXPERT ARE YOUR TEACHERS?

Becoming experts.

CAN YOU DISAGREE WITH THEM?

Some things – the ones that aren't right, that don't agree with my thoughts but even so I may disagree. (Mumtaz II)

Part of her readiness to assess the material was shown in her readiness to see that teachers are also learning, or as she kindly put it, ‘becoming experts.’ In the second interview in September she had moved on:

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN THE EXPERTS DISAGREE? IF THERE ARE TWO BOOKS WITH DIFFERENT IDEAS AND NOT IN AGREEMENT. WHAT WILL YOU DO?

I don't know what I will do - I will pray, but I will ask someone, maybe ask different people

WILL THERE BE A VOTE? EVEN IF YOU ASK PEOPLE - THEY MIGHT AGREE WITH ONE OR THE OTHER?

I don't know - I will think myself... and I will think and look at what is better. Maybe what I think is better won't actually be better...

Student Assumptions

SO HOW WILL YOU KNOW?

That is very difficult – (Mumtaz MI)

Mumtaz was starting to transcend her idiosyncratic ‘own understanding’ and searching for something to replace it with. In the third interview she gave a clear understanding that knowledge was constructed, and evidence carefully weighed. She talked about how her thinking was changing, maybe in a way she herself did not yet understand. She realised that she needed to sift through ideas, and she discussed a strategy of writing them down so that she gathered them together and then sorted them out:

SO WHY IS THAT USEFUL?

Well from that I can know my own ideas, that from one matter there is not just one thing but other things too. I know my own thinking, that in my mind are more ideas. There are more ideas in different places and I get them together. Get all my ideas together which is useful.

SO WHEN YOU HAVE WRITTEN THEM WHAT DO YOU DO?

I choose them and arrive at a conclusion - not with everything but with some things I have applied this... write lots of things, then choose something, then see what is the final conclusion, what comes out of it. That happens from writing more. (Mumtaz FI)

In the Jesus’ family project she saw clearly the difference in the texts and gave reasons for her preference. The situation was made more complex because the text the students mainly disagreed with was written by a highly respected church leader.

I made this decision that I am more in disagreement with this one, but then I looked at the author and read it twice more. Can I really disagree with this person? Was what I was thinking not right and this book correct? But to a certain extent it seemed that I had to disagree with one of them and so I disagreed with [the well respected leader]. (Mumtaz FI)

In the Pakistani context of great respect and reverence for leaders this showed remarkable confidence in her own reasoning and logical processes.

A Christianised epistemology

For many of the students in discussion during the interviews there was a fall back expert position: God or the Bible. In the ‘family project’ question, what was right was ‘what agreed with the Bible.’ When I objected that both writers were trying to be true to what they understood of the Bible it often led to confusion. Further discussion often led to the question “Do you feel that your

understanding of the Bible is true?" Students could not always distinguish between 'what the Bible says' and 'their own understanding.' In the centre's evangelical context they were being taught that God is the source of truth and it is discerned through the Bible, but for many this had not yet led to the realisation that this did not release them from hard thinking. There existed a kind of 'Christianised epistemology:' I will pray and God will tell me.

The particular context where the Bible was the primary text for all they were studying, and where it was given a special authoritative role, complicated the issue when then they were asked questions teasing out their epistemology. There were no concrete examples but conceptually students talked about deciding what was right and true for non-biblical problems:

If it is something apart from the Bible - like we often looked at economic theories, someone thinks this, and someone thinks that, then I would look and see what I think and if I need to then look further, go to teachers, and look at others opinions as to what they think. If it seems there are some strong arguments then fine, otherwise I would leave it like that and think about it more and more - at some time or other it will sort out.

SO WHAT ARE STRONG ARGUMENTS?

Proof is like something that I believe, that is right according to what I believe.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Just as - well if someone said to me that they saw my mother somewhere and I knew that she had gone to the bazaar then so it would be possible, that much I know. But if I know that she has been home all day then why should I believe that person? Why - ok you saw her fine but why when I knew she wasn't there? So I think what does my mind say about this - if it seems right then I will agree and if not then not.

SO IN AGREEMENT WITH YOUR OTHER KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THIS?

Yes, in agreement with other knowledge about this. (Nageen FI)

Epistemological development

Given that from personal observation in class and the interview data a clear movement toward more complex epistemology is shown, it is important to try to trace some of the possible reasons for this change. Teaching method was the instigator of how the students learned to think in a more complex way.¹⁴ Sitting observing in a class early in the year I noted the students were able to confer, ask each other, and draw each others attention to different points when they were doing some work in groups, when three weeks earlier I had had to teach them how to work together in groups. Small group work was helping them to think with more complexity, because students

¹⁴ In chapter six I will discuss more broadly the effect of teacher practice on development.

Student Assumptions

heard a variety of opinions and needed to weigh these up, and often had work that did not have a 'right answer' but rather required them to decide on a 'best response.' Students were learning to discriminate between fact and opinion, and to evaluate conflicting information. I wrote at the time:

Much may not be "transformative" but teaching in such a way that epistemological complexity increases leads to opportunities for greater ability to reflect and respond when transformative opportunities come. (CAS)

Even so a few days after that I observed in another class that the teacher was very patiently asking and re-asking, guiding and directing students, especially weaker ones, to think more deeply (CAS). In that class they discussed the best way to present the parable of the sower for a Sunday School group.¹⁵ In the gospel account Jesus tells the entire parable first and then explains the various parts later. The conviction that 'the Bible is right' meant that the students were unable to think it could be possible to present each section of the parable alongside the explanation. In the final term the students, individually and as a group, had become very creative in presenting Scripture, after repeated practical opportunities during the year. One student leading the teenage girls' group on Friday afternoons presented a drama rather than simply reading the passage, another parable. The use of drama and creative presentations in practical opportunities showed the students' readiness to understand the message and presenting it, rather than being tied to one way of understanding and responding.

Students unanimously preferred the pedagogical method of a teacher who asked questions and drew knowledge out of them, the model encouraged at UBTC, over a teacher who delivered notes and information.

Before in school life or college life we studied, we just sat and the teacher told us and went off again. They never saw what a student thought; because when you are afraid you can't speak. Maybe you wanted to say something but couldn't because you were never given a chance. But if a student is given this kind of importance, and doubtless a teacher still has her place, but if her emotions and thoughts are evaluated and given an opportunity then she is so happy - just as in class we discuss and whatever we think, and if a good point comes into our mind then we are really happy, because we have thought that ourselves. That happens in group discussion and

¹⁵ Ref Mark 4.2-20

Student Assumptions

discussing with the teachers, and they say 'you think yourself' then that really makes the mind work. For this then in the future, the mind learns to work, and that is very good. (Hamida FI)

Initially a pedagogy which questioned and involved students left some feeling conflicted and irritated:

It is quite difficult. But it is ok - difficult because just as we never get to finish thinking to the end of anything - we start thinking about something and it keeps going round and around all day but never get to the end of it. I feel that we want to arrive somewhere but we don't... (Zarish FI)

One of the teachers noted at the beginning and end of the term:

FC: at present a little frustrated that I set them up, in questioning what they thought they knew – but are not being given answers... (Miss Z T3)

At the beginning of this semester the students found it very frightening that I wasn't giving answers, kind of like 'well this teacher is not giving us answers she is just putting us into the deep end and leaving us' and they voiced that. That is quite interesting because now as we are dealing with some of the issues that were coming up right at the beginning there is a freedom to be left with no answers and they are now willing to accept that knowing that we have said we will come back to it, knowing that I have kept track but I have also said to them to keep track so they have got things that are sitting so that the knowledge that that process is happening has been as important as the process itself because it has allowed people to think (Miss Z T3)

The place of the weekly reflection sheet will also be discussed in chapter six,¹⁶ and here it is sufficient to note that this was something to which students referred that made them stop and think. Sorting through the systematic thinking that it asked of the students helped them:

Now I think, very hard, that if I have thought about this, and mainly the form has helped me to think about this, as to how to think about it. Maybe before I might have thought something and did not know how to keep thinking. But filling the form, just as the questions are written then it helps me to think. (Iqbal FI)

Epistemologically students learned over the period of the course that knowledge was not delivered from teacher to student, but students needed to work at gathering, sorting, verifying and constructing knowledge, and have the confidence to realise that they can do this. Epistemological complexity was fundamental to any changes in their theological and psychological assumptions.

¹⁶ A section on the value of the reflective sheet is on page 298

Student Assumptions

Students who came on the course were mainly clustered in a quasi-reflective epistemology. Although the purpose of looking at student epistemologies was chiefly to try to correlate that to other kinds of reflection and assumption change, I found that a pedagogical method which stimulated them to research and even more to come to positions for themselves helped develop their epistemology. These students came from an educational and socio-cultural background which did not set out to foster thinking for oneself, and gained voice and confidence.

Before looking at students' theological and psychological assumptions, I present another individual case study of Tahira, a more reflective student. Tahira's more complex epistemology gave rise to a greater readiness to be aware of her own assumptions, and to engage in a struggle to articulate and evaluate them.

Individual Case Study: Tahira

Tahira presented at the beginning of the year as a personable and confident young woman. Her theological ideas were well developed and she could think and reason well. However her own personal reporting showed a lack of confidence, of self-esteem, and inability to get on with other people. Tahira came with a very clear formational motivation, as expressed in her first interview:

Miss I am sure that when we are close to God then we definitely change. But when we accept him our habits don't change all at once but slowly we do change. And that happens if we are trained. In me there are the kind of habits that I want to change and so I feel I need to change them. Living in a village, at home, I don't change then I had to come to such a place where I would learn and change. (Tahira II)

Her acknowledgment that change requires time and training predisposed her for the transformational component of the course. This attitude is also expressed when she considered how Christ was an example of what he taught, how he lived and prayed, and how she wanted to see in her own life that she does what she says she will do:

[Jesus] told others to forgive but first he forgave. I have started looking for things like this in my life. Things I only said - and I find so many things like this. I have started working on them so that I can have the same attitude as Christ. But I know - but I know I won't be like that in one day. But with prayer I will keep on trying. (Tahira R2)

At the beginning of the final term she was slightly despairing that change that she had wanted has not occurred:

WHAT DO YOU HOPE FOR IN THIS TERM?

I am not strong yet, and I have to be stronger. I want to learn more and whatever things still need to change in me, I want that to happen.

WHY DO YOU SAY NOT STRONG, IN WHAT AREAS?

I learn something, and it seems to me I will apply it and maintain it but it doesn't happen.

YOU MEAN WHEN YOU HAVE APPLIED IT THEN IT WILL HAVE STUCK?

When I will be strong, then what I learn I will do – that is strength. To learn once and then leave it when it gets difficult, that is not strength. (Tahira MI)

Epistemology

Tahira displayed a confidence in her own ability to think and reason from the beginning, but it

increases over the year. In her initial interview Tahira expressed her idea that knowledge comes

when we intend to learn then we learn and that is how we find out. We learn from those who know ...and from research, and from 'proof'. (Tahira II)

Tahira showed a willingness to keep at something until she reached a point where it sat right with her, although at the same time she knew there were experts and people that she would want to ask. Her teachers were such experts, and while she doubted she would disagree with them it was (just) possible. Eight months later she has disagreed with her teachers.

If this is something that I have learned or heard about before, then I will talk to them. If they convince me then I learn that new idea, sometimes they agree that what I am saying is right. (Tahira MI)

In her requirement to be convinced is the need not just for expert authority but reasons and evidence. Her responses to the questions about knowledge are similar, and she continues to have confidence in her own ability to think:

If I am learning a new thing and there are two options, I will pray, do some research, and try to see if I can agree with one of these options. (Tahira MI)

When Tahira was faced with options, she made her decision principally on what she understood the Bible to say, but supported it with other arguments. Her ability to reason, to see knowledge as constructed, and to be able to separate out fact and opinion, along with the limitations in her reasoning ability, placed her in a quasi-reflective epistemology.

Identity

Tahira's confidence in her own identity flowers over the year. In her final reflection she wrote:

Before coming I did not know myself, I thought of myself as an incomplete person, who was very weak. I came in great weakness. This girl knew all her weaknesses but did not know one positive thing about herself. She thought about herself negatively. (Tahira FR)

Tahira described how she changed in various ways. During her third interview she traced the change to knowing herself more deeply, and to a recognition that God loved her, so she could be confident

in herself:

Before I thought that I can't do anything, I just stay in the background. No-one loves me or likes me – and I thought about myself like this, I am like this and a background person. In these days ... during mentoring I have known myself even more deeply. In my QT and spending time personally with God, I realize that God loves me.¹⁷ Before I knew that God loves everybody but now I know personally that God loves me. I thought about the first term retreat and the letter I wrote (as though God was writing to me) 'my dear one' and I remembered that, and Miss Z reminded me too. So I started to feel that God loves me: so why do I stay at a distance? Why do I feel I am inferior? Why am I a victim of low self-esteem? So I gained the confidence to believe that God loves me, I am lovable. Before I didn't talk much and I thought that what I said was not important. Who knows what others think about me? But a confidence grew in me that – whatever anyone says God says I am lovable. (Tahira FI)

Tahira shows elements of the transformative learning process in this example: she articulated her assumptions about herself (she thought she was inferior), evaluated them (but God loves me) looked at other options (so I am lovable), revised her idea which led to action (confidence). She also talked about tracing back to the roots of the situation, a family problem:

I started to think about myself, and in classes I thought about myself, and the biggest thing is that God was working in me about how I could know myself... Filling the reflection sheet I saw I had to get to the bottom of this, and then I could find the solution to the problem. First I just wanted to finish this, to cover it over but it would not be hidden, but stayed inside. So looking for the reason for it I went back ... I went into my childhood, to think about what had happened to me. (Tahira FI)

Family

Tahira's relationship with her family was one of the items that she mentioned as a challenge in her reflection sheets and it became an area of major change. She described her family as 'rural, backward' in the lack of freedom that she has to do what she wants, as a young woman and as a Christian. She compared her home environment with UBTC:

...at home there is not an atmosphere like this, and in our house there is not this kind of friendship – I can't quite explain it, maybe I don't get answers or responses with such love. (Tahira R1)

During the holidays it seemed really hard to accept my home environment. Everyone looked different to me – their habits, their thinking, everything was different and living among them seemed difficult too. I had been living in a spiritual environment and then went home. When people talk about the Bible, there is time to think about God. There is nothing like that at home, I was upset from the arguments and the little problems, and it affected my spirit. I wondered why it seemed so

¹⁷ QT for "Quiet Time," a common term for personal devotional time.

difficult to live in the very place where I had been brought up? (Tahira R3)

There were two major areas of change that arose regarding her family. The first was how Tahira started to articulate assumptions about how her family has shaped her, leading on to critical reflection on her response to that, ultimately leading to change in her thinking and behaviour. Perhaps this is why she said in her initial interview that she could not change in her village, at home. She needed to move away from the place that had formed her.

Fear was a problem for me: I quickly became afraid of people. In one class I learned that I had learned that from my family: when they fought I used to get so frightened and didn't talk to anyone. (Tahira R3)

In a class about conflict we thought about how we responded to conflict in our home, and where had I learned my responses from? So I was thinking about my home, that everyone gets angry all at once. I do that too. (Tahira R3)

Also, before we did not talk to anyone else. I have told you before that the family situation is quite harsh and that we girls aren't given permission to go out, or to talk to anyone outside the family, that is difficult. (Tahira FI)

The second area of change is how Tahira started to understand not just herself, but also to understand her family members. This arose from an epistemological advance in understanding how others can think differently from the way she thought: her assumptions about why they acted and did things were different from theirs. When she understood this she could act differently toward them.

In youth class I always said that our parents don't understand us – I thought that no-one understands me. But in this class I discovered that our parents are doing what they learned from their elders and teaching it to us. No-one guided me in my youth. (Tahira R3)

She learned to understand her mother, when her mother acted harshly:

It seems to me my thinking has changed. I didn't use to think in this way. Before I didn't think about my mother's emotions: she told us off, that is what I said, she tells us off, she doesn't listen to us, but in these days I have thought about my mother - what does she think? why does she do that? I reached a new understanding about her. (Tahira MI)

Tahira's family had said she would never change; Tahira reported in her final interview that now they think she has changed and they treat her differently:

When I went home this time, while before no-one listened to my advice, now they ask me, listen to

Student Assumptions

my opinions and accept them. (Tahira FI)

Before I used to speak when I was angry, but now I am quiet.

Before I used to help others less, and thought about myself but now I try to help others.

My older sister used to tease me until I got angry and now I don't get angry and she said now you don't take the bait. My older sister who is married she also fought with me as a joke, but she was happy and said that – you don't fight with me now. (Tahira MI)

In her final term she wrote about her family:

I am thankful for my parents and the situations which have been difficult for me. I am learning what God has taught me and is teaching me through those circumstances. I am thankful to God that he has strengthened me in different ways in bringing me through those situations. (Tahira R3)

Relationships among students:

Tahira struggled with her relationships, valuing her independence and not doing so well in working with others:

I can't accept other people.... to work in a group is difficult (Tahira MI)

Yet Tahira also worked hard for good relationships within the student group:

The group of girls, that we are – we could not agree in some matter and really argued amongst ourselves on this tiny insignificant issue, and then become susceptible to wrong impressions about each other. I tried really hard, but it is just not possible. I want to bring them all close to each other, but I can't do it. (Tahira R1)

A course on team work in the third term helped her to think through how she related and how she could work better with her fellow students.

I was thinking about all these things, when one girl gave her opinion, that you don't speak pleasantly. This really made me think about how I treated others. Am I encouraging and a source of comfort? Or of discouragement? I looked at my attitude, if it seemed harsh, and when was that so? I realised that when I was upset or under work pressure then I spoke less happily – so in this way I looked at my attitude and tried to improve it, so my behaviour wouldn't be a source of trouble to others, and I could be one with others. (Tahira R3)

At the end of the year Tahira reflected:

I was always upset, I thought about myself so negatively, and about others, which had dangerous results. I was depressed and angry, always complaining. I also easily took on false understandings which soured relationships, and sometimes broke them. When my thinking changed, then my response, attitude and my sadness ended. (Tahira FR)

An example of a change in assumptions came from when she had to prepare a character study, and chose to look at the gospel account of the initial response of Joseph to hearing the news about Mary being pregnant. She used this to reflect about her own propensity to let relationships founder, her learned response to not sorting out misunderstandings, and her ability to forgive:

I ... kept my distance from others. If any misunderstanding arose, then I made up all kinds of thoughts about it. But then one time I had to prepare a study about Joseph' character (NT) for hostel fellowship. ...I was angry with lots of people at that time – I saw that if I didn't understand someone's actions, then I attributed a negative reason to it, and so a misunderstanding occurred. Now if I don't know the reason for something, then I meet the person and clear it up, and if I can't meet [the person] then I try not to quickly jump to negative thoughts. (Tahira FR)

Theological Assumptions

Tahira came to UBTC with a very clear understanding of fundamental evangelical theological positions. Change occurred less regarding theological concepts, and more in the outworking of practical aspects of her Christian faith. Tahira's image of God changed as she understood God at work in the vicissitudes of her life:

I thought that God had put me in those circumstances and there was so much complaining in my life, but through these circumstances I understood these as God's blessing, God put me in those circumstances, to teach me, make me stronger, and prepare me for future circumstances. So in this way as I have thought my thinking has changed about God's work, and God, and understood how God works. (Tahira FI)

In response to the Najma saga in her first interview, Tahira responded from her own similar village experience, alluding to the pain and shame families feel. Yet in contrast to most of her fellow students Tahira said:

The girl has done a terrible thing to her parents but they should forgive her. Because people make mistakes, but if they - if she is really ashamed then they should forgive her. (Tahira II)

In the second term Tahira started to acknowledge her own practical problems regarding forgiveness,

relating back again to her disrupted family relationships. In her reflections and later in an interview she talked about hearing a retelling of the parable of the prodigal son with the emphasis on the older brother who stayed home:

He did not accept his younger brother, or forgive him. I learned that we have to forgive others, and accept them. And that is difficult because being human sometimes we just can't forgive or accept someone... (Tahira R2)

In her second interview she expanded on this:

(The elder son) ...for appearances sake he did everything along with his father. But inside he was not humble. I learned from this that I might talk to some people but inside I have not forgiven them.

Those that before I could not talk to, I then could talk with them and go to them. It is different to say and to forgive from the heart. Before I used to forgive because the Bible said to forgive - I said, I have forgiven you but when I read about the prodigal son I felt that I don't forgive and then I forgave from the heart. (Tahira MI)

She continued to think about it as she prepared a study:

My study next week is about forgiveness, and I will say that God has forgiven us for so much sin and so why can't we forgive others. We can't judge others, if they are sinners or how far from God they are, we don't know what they are in God's sight. (Tahira FI)

Tahira traced part of the cause of her difficulty in relating to her inability to forgive herself, and then to not forgive others.

I can now forgive myself and one effect is that now I can quickly forgive others. And my anger quickly cools. These days it has also happened that I have started to quickly forget issues - before I stayed angry for a long time but not now. (Tahira F3)

Her staff mentor wrote:

Tahira - a new area of thinking is developing, if she is frustrated with others, then looking at herself she considered whether she is hard on herself. When she mucks up can she forgive herself, if this is difficult then it is difficult to do to others (specks of dust and planks). (Miss Z T3)

Faith

Examples of faith from classes urge Tahira on in her own spiritual faith and personal growth. She

talked about prayer and how her faith grew through answered prayer, but not in the almost magical way some of the others talk about. Answered prayer regarding various family problems left her ready to keep praying about 'the impossible'.

My faith in God has grown, now I have trust in his grace and I believe that he can do the impossible, the confidence that he can do anything. I prayed that my older brother, who was against my coming here, would come to graduation and God heard my prayer and now he is coming and I have a strange peace in my heart, and the things I was worried about are no longer worries because God can do the impossible. (Tahira F3)

While throughout the year Tahira mentioned the challenge of exemplars of faith from her biblical studies, toward the end of the year she said that the notion of growing in faith was new to her, but something that she worked on:

Before I didn't know about maturity – I knew about faith, but growing in faith, and relationship, and growth, and sanctification by dying to self, and changing bit by bit, I did not know all these things
SO IT IS A KNOWING THING?

Knowing and doing.

SO WHAT HAPPENED THAT YOUR FAITH GREW – HAVE YOU GROWN IN FAITH? HOW?

Yes I am stronger. Some experiences...as in Qalandarabad there was no-one to help, no support. The work was difficult and how could it be done well? I didn't know. Then I learned that it is God who does it. Then in the last interview I also mentioned ...[family problem] ... – how prayers are answered, so thinking about and understanding all these events, my faith got stronger; how God stays close. (Tahira FI)

For Tahira, with a quasi-reflective epistemology, the opportunities afforded by transformative learning helped her in her epistemological development, personal growth, and theological cogitations. Tahira was by nature a reflective person, and so this teaching style was especially helpful for her, in guiding her how to be more reflective and giving her the structure within which to do so, seen from her earliest reflections:

It seemed hard to learn new things – and to act upon them too is hard...Learning new things that are different to older ones. I thought about it because I thought – I learned this before, so how come it is different now? What you have learned first becomes a habit and it is difficult to change habits.
(Tahira R1)

Tahira learned how to seek out the roots of those habits of thinking and behaving, changing her assumptions and perspectives as she did so.

The case study of Tahira's change in assumptions, and so her formation, is clearly different to Saima's experience. Tahira's readiness to change personally was also aided by her epistemological ability to reflect and bring change into her life. In the next section, I review the personal and psychological assumptions that the students held, and the changes in those assumptions.

Personal change: psychological assumptions

Who am I? I never have time to think about this, who I am. (Zarish FI)

When students talked about their expectations for the course they did not generally expect formation. Yet for all students the time at UBTC became one where they learned to know themselves.

For students in a pre-reflective epistemology where knowledge is seen as external then even knowledge about oneself is that which comes from others.¹⁸ This makes it difficult for such women to think of themselves as developing. When some students were asked to describe themselves in the initial interview, they were silent and unable to articulate anything, or spoke in terms of what other people said about them. In the second interview I asked them how their friends would describe them, and some found that difficult. Belenky notes that affirmation of the self by their mother or other women in authority is an aid in helping women transition to a more complex epistemology from that of received knowledge.¹⁹ Certainly the environment at UBTC, where mentoring augmented teaching methods which often asked students to relate teaching to themselves, would have aided students' growth in their self-knowledge.

One area I particularly wanted to explore was that of minority identity. I was interested to know what episodes had shaped their identity as Christian women in a male dominated Muslim society and how that could change in the course of their studies.

¹⁸Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 48-51.

¹⁹Ibid., 60-62.

Christian community identity

Most of the young women in the study had lived large parts of their student lives as minority group members in their student contexts. This contributed to the reason many gave as wanting to come to study in order to be able to answer questions asked of them by majority community members. Although it is not stated, these answers are possibly as much for themselves working through the struggle of developing their own minority identity. As previously explained, 'Christian' is as much community identity as faith identity in Pakistan. Here I briefly describe the community identity students hold, and how they deal with this developing identity.

Some of the students' identity is related to external understandings of Christian. One student recalled herself as the little girl who was held up as an exemplar of how neat and tidy children were to come to school - until a new teacher came and proclaimed to the class that "Christians are dirty."

When I was little my mother always used to send me to school clean and tidy. My teacher when I was little made me stand in front of class and said how clean and smart she was and that the children should come to school looking like that. But then teachers changed, and the new one did not know that I was a Christian, and she said to the class, 'don't you know that Christians are dirty: their ears are full of dirt, when we prepare for prayer then we wash our ears and our hands and this and that.' Then one day some talk was going on and someone said that I was a Christian, and she asked me if I was a Christian and I said yes, and then she was ashamed she had said this. At this time I tried to tell her - Miss that we are not and she was a teacher and I did not know how to tell her but afterwards she was very surprised. (Sorraya II)

Another student recounted being new at college and as initiation her fellow students got her to order some food to share, however when the food came they refused to eat it. While talking and waiting for the food to come they had discovered she was a Christian, and they would not share food dishes or utensils with her. (Farhat II)

A further aspect of this minority Christian identity is being thought less able. Iqbal wanted her sisters to do well at college to disprove the commonly held rubric that "[Muslim] people think that Christians mentally are not so good." (Iqbal II) There are many such stories that negatively

informed students' primary community identity as Christian: dirty, stupid, worthless.²⁰ Such incidents leave them angry:

When it happened we were angry; aren't we also human? (Zarish II)

Another student described looking at courses for higher education, which left her with a feeling of hopelessness:

Sometime I think that if I - there are courses in the paper, advertisements, and I look at them and wonder what I will study so I can get a job. I have done BA and after that if I do masters, but still...our thinking is that we can't get that good a job from a professional point of view. Muslim people think we will do this and that, but we can only think that if we get that then how will I do that and who will support us? Who can help us get to that position? (Naheed FI)

There was also a sense of shame, inferiority, and fear, which led to some not being able to acknowledge their own inclusion in the Christian community:

I used to be afraid of telling anyone that I was a Christian, because I wondered then how they would treat me when I went to the academy. (Iqbal II)

I did not tell people I was a Christian – even at college I did not tell others. If anyone asked that kind of question, then I would not know how to answer and it was difficult. But slowly my identity changed, and as I matured I was not so afraid of these things and I could answer. Very difficult to build your identity – it takes time and it is frightening. (Mumtaz II)

These are young women who feel very deeply the stigma of being an 'out-caste' group. This complicated the issue of faith identity development. Students developed confidence in their own person, and integrated community identity into their faith identity. Faith identity is discussed at the end of the chapter.

Female Identity

As young women the students had also been enculturated not to speak, not to put themselves forward, not to go out alone, but rather to live quiet secluded lives of subjection to the males under whose authority they live.

²⁰ The majority of the Christian community are descendants of those converted from outcaste 'chura' sweeper class around the turn of the 19th century and this class identity adheres generally to the entire Christian community. Additionally Christians do not do ritual washing before prayer.

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Being a young woman... I shouldn't have any preferences of my own: as I am told, this is how I should be. If I don't do that then I am a bad girl. Then the second thing is that I can't speak frankly: what I think - it seems to me that nobody else can accept that thought. So I don't speak to anybody, because then I think that people will think that she is not a good girl - and then it is hard to live in the culture. So I feel, being a girl, very oppressed. (Farhat FI)

Tahira accepted this but also argued that this restriction could make young women so complacent that then they did not do what they could:

But there are some women, who have restricted themselves by not working or studying. They themselves don't try to get out, then their family becomes an excuse - they are told one time and they say 'ok'. Maybe they don't even want to come out. We invite them to come and be part of our Christmas programme and they will say – if I get permission from home, or I am studying, or they make some excuse or other. They don't want to get ahead; and if they do then the family may get stricter or may relax a bit, they have put this burden on themselves. (Tahira II)

Not all the students were aware of how this shaped their identity, but Nageen commented that:

We have also lived in this environment since we were born and so there are lots of things in our mind, which do not leave it. (Nageen FI)

She went on to depict what it meant to be a woman:

So I feel that as a woman, and the way I was brought up, it was more inward, less pointed to the external world, so I am a bit shy. I can't go out and open myself up. (Nageen FI)

Often the students claimed they had a good position in the home but not outside. The distinction between home and outside is an element of the whole society that lets women be one thing at home but something else when they cross the threshold to leave.

There was also an extra consideration for Christian girls to comport themselves well because of the perception that “Christian girls do not have a good character” (Sorraya II) because “Christian girls tag after handsome boys.” (Zarish II)

Students were subject to these pressures on them, to be and behave as the surrounding society demanded. During their time at UBTC they were also influenced by a staff of articulate, confident Christian Pakistani women who modelled for them a wider range of possible responses to the restrictions of female life in Pakistan.

I have taken some time to present this, as it is beyond the normal parameters of a Western reader. In talking about formation, it is important to know the context in which this is taking place. Of course other factors also impinged on the young women's formation.

Family and Identity formation

I have already written of how Tahira came to recognize how much her own family had shaped her. If Tahira and other students saw how their families had shaped them negatively, Mumtaz saw how her family has added to her formation in some very positive ways, especially by the end of the year when she has been thinking about such concepts.

It seems that family is very important on formation of identity - if you don't get these things from your family, then I would be very different if my parents did not support me. My childhood would have been very different. I would not have been able to present my arguments to them. My family has made a great impact on my identity, their confidence, and their listening to me and giving me the opportunities that I could learn - UBTC and other places where they have trusted me and sent me, and when I have returned ready to hear all about it from me. (Mumtaz FI)

Iqbal saw her importance and identity in a different way:

God has given me the responsibility for service, when I have realized my importance as a woman, and how I can work as a woman, and can come forward to work and people will accept it. So living here I have realized that being a Christian, and in a Christian family what is the place of women. (Iqbal II)

This is reinforced within her own family, as she quoted her mother placing on her the responsibility of her family's spiritual care.

My mother said: "We are sending you for this course and you can get Christian teaching. I want there to be a watcher over the family and you can do that guarding." I am not worthy of this privilege but she says I want that through you the rest of the children would grow in Christ and make spiritual progress. (Iqbal FI)

Like Tahira, she also found that family members listened to her in a way they did not before she came for her study.

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For two young women especially family relationships impacted on ongoing marriage arrangements. One student noted that in her family a girl is not consulted about these matters and she will have to bow to what the family says, even though:

I don't want to get married yet. I want to be able to stand on my own feet. (Saima MI)

During the year she mentioned a number of times what for her is a revelation:

I learned that when we are looking for a life partner then we need to pray about it, to leave it to God's will and not that we just do what we want, because what God will do is better. I really liked that and I learned it, it was new to me. (Saima MI)

In a very simple way Saima was building her own identity in relation to this issue. Another student was locked in a sometimes bitter battle with her family because she had had the temerity to reject a marriage proposal:

I thought that if this had been in my family for my brother, then his refusal would have been quickly accepted. But while I have refused it I have had to struggle. (Mumtaz MI)

To some extent the students' very presence on the course showed that they have broken bounds. Saima said:

I was stubborn with my mother; I said this is what I am going to do! (Saima II)

Identity formation

Time and again students comment on the opportunities to build their identity while at UBTC, whether that be in class, through the reflection sheets or simply in the time of the interview itself:

So it was interesting - sometimes it is very difficult to recognise yourself but here I started to recognise myself. (Iqbal FI)

Initially this is difficult – there is a sea of assumptions that seems to say that one should not think about oneself, not dwell on one's positives, don't call yourself Pretty Polly. (Nageen FR).

There are lots of faults in me - yes, strengths too and having come here I have recognized them, but I have recognized faults as well. Now I think that people can't be either perfect or so bad that there is no help for them, but that I am ok. (Sorraya FI)

Mumtaz comments that:

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I think UBTC is better than home for recognising your own personality. (MI)

What the students came to recognise in themselves varied widely. It included valuing their own gifts and skills, recognising areas of weakness, and identifying aspects of how they related to God and to others.

But I have also had the chance to know my own life, how I walk with God and what kind of weaknesses there are in me. I am pleased about this. (Zarish R3)

I have started to think more about myself: what are my faults and good points? What do I really think about myself? And what do other people think about me? I wrote a question for myself: who am I? and now who am I meant to be? (Nageen R3)

Many of the young women who came on the course were initially unable to describe themselves, and if they did then it was in negative terms:

I am full of faults (Razia II),

I can tell you my faults more - I don't have good points (Iqbal FI)

However by the end of the course these students wrote about strengths and weaknesses and how they have been developed.

In the last month a lot has happened: from coming here and from learning the work a lot of my faults have been removed and I have gained a reasonable amount of control over my habits. (Zarish R3)

The process of change included challenges (the reflection sheet and in class and in mentoring), an opportunity for critical reflection, for seeing others and their strengths and weaknesses, and to make assessments of themselves (revised assumptions) and striving for new behaviour.

Specific areas of growth included a growing understanding of how to build and develop relationships and the control of anger.

Building relationships

Developing one's identity has ramifications for the kind of relationships that students were able to maintain. In the discussion regarding formation in the first chapter, the aspect of relationships

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with others was part of formational development, leading to appropriate interdependent relationships, and the ability to work and to relax with others. This linking of relationship and formation, in contradistinction to a Fowler-esque understanding tied largely to cognitive development, resonates with an understanding of women's faith development which finds it embedded in relationship.

If we want to understand spiritual development, we must learn how a person changes in her behaviour toward others: what kinds of relationships she enters into and how these relationships create more understanding, interconnection, and empathy. ²¹

Relationships were a key area of challenge and growth for the students, and acted as a marker for response within spiritual growth. Many students commented on how they had learned to build relationships at UBTC. Saima with her simple epistemology recognised a change had occurred:

I have seen how I have utterly changed: before I was very angry. Especially about having fellowship with other people, I have learned how to build relationships with others. (Saima R2)

Tahira talked more specifically about problems and how she has learned to deal with them.

I have made progress in spending time with others and building relationships. I can now work better in a team than before, and am recognising myself - and when I see a weakness in myself then I have learned to pray about it. (Tahira R3)

I learned that I quickly get sad and through knowing these things I can work better on them. I didn't know them before so I could not work on them. But now I am trying to make relationships stronger and not to quick-temperedly break relationships and am practicing on my friends – and praying. (Tahira R3)

Parveen sits between Saima and Tahira in terms of her own self-understanding. Parveen noticed how family restrictions had shaped her attitude to people and relationships. When she went on her internship then she had to learn how to make relationships in a new and different environment. Here is her account in her reflection sheet from the time she was on internship, and as she talked about it later in her second interview. She also recorded talking to her fellow student, more socially adept, about how to do this:

WHAT HAS CHALLENGED YOU MOST?

²¹ Ray and McFadden, "Alternatives to the Heroic Journey," 203.

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I never liked living among people when I came to [Internship Hospital] and had to live in the middle of so many people so I got very upset. I was very distressed - and I got angry.

WHAT HELPED YOU TO CONSIDER THIS ISSUE?

I am very poor at making relationships with people. I thought ‘what I will do when there are people everywhere?’ Every day I prayed to God: teach me to make friends. I was very distressed, why am I so weak? (Parveen R2)

When I first came I could not make relationships with other people. Because I came from home and there we lived in a limited environment just me and my uncle's daughter and we were friends and didn't think we needed anyone else. So maybe that is why that when I came here I didn't think I needed anyone. So very slowly in chapels and classes especially discipleship class, we learned what a disciple's relationships should be like so slowly I learned how to make friendships. So when we had to go on fieldwork I was particularly worried because I thought that I have to go and live among a new bunch of people and how will I make friendships with them, I don't know how to.

So I talked to Tahira about it and said to her 'Tahira in the way that you can talk to people I want to be able to - so tell me how to talk to people.' She said it isn't something to learn it is something to do, it is making relationships. ...And when I thought that Tahira's relationships there would be good, mine wouldn't be, but you can also ask Tahira that my relationships with other people were the ones that were good and people took to me, I made more friends. So from this I see that everything happens from prayer - I prayed to God and this ability was born inside me. So the thing I was afraid of God worked in me so that it changed. (Parveen MI)

Apart from the simple “I prayed and God did it” it is also clear that Parveen has learned something about herself and the way that she related to people. The change in the way that students related to each other over the year, and the development of relational skills, worked hand in hand with what they perceived to be their Christian development. In her final reflection Parveen wrote:

God wanted to teach me that others are important, to reach out [to them].

At UBTC I learned not just about the spiritual but emotional - I am now successful in making relationships. And relationships are important for ministry. I loved God but did not think that people were important, but I learned that when God had made people important then who am I to despise others? (Parveen FR)

The last comment of Parveen's was a recurring one among many students. In developmental terms, students were moving into a world that is peopled by ‘others’ who are as important as they are. It may also reflect the culture which largely protects young women from relationships outside the home. This was reflected in the responses to questions early in the interview regarding important friendships: many students name mothers and sisters, or if they talk of

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friendships they were part of a school culture that is no longer part of their lives, and the friendships have not been maintained.

Students also talked about dependent relationships, or relationships that had fundamental elements of what they could get. On the other hand, other students talk about being independent, and wanting to be apart from people. These show students at Kegan's Interpersonal balance and the later more independent Institutional balance.²² So Hamida, a more mature and independent student wrote:

I preferred solitude, and didn't like others being around. But being here and working together is good, and when I share a problem I get peace and comfort. (Hamida R3)

While her mentor commented:

The biggest learning I see in Hamida is in her learning to see that other people are important...this is affecting (positively) her relationships with others and her ability to look outside herself. [Miss Z T3]

Developmental and formational growth were occurring. There were normal changes in the way these students related as they moved through interpersonal and institutional phases, seen when Naheed realised how she now accepts people out of a broader fundamental concept:

My thinking was negative and now has become positive. I didn't use to accept people easily and I wanted that everyone I met should think like I do, her ways, her habits be like mine, and if it was different then I could not accept her. I have seen that when we go different places then we have to meet up with lots of different people. It is good to accept them, and so my thinking has broadened that I can accept people as they are. (Naheed FI)

There were also some formational issues seen in fundamental assumptions that affected the day to day relating and relationship building that also surfaced and were dealt with.

That day these words affected me, that I have started to ask God for a new heart. After this my study with the girls' fellowship was on the vineyard and workers where the first workers and the last workers get the same pay. I have heard it lots but the master gave the same and this was my problem weakness, those who I love more, I want as much from them and then to get it I am jealous, competitive and greedy to others. And the meaning of the tale was that I remembered my

²² Refer to p. 98 for personal development

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greed and competitiveness. I am glad that I had first said to God, give me a new heart and then was blessed by this tale. (Nabila R3)

In a more specifically personal way Naheed talked about what she had learned:

Sharing my things: if anyone took my things I hated it, even though I did it myself but not when it was my things being used. I didn't like one thing being used. If someone needed something, I gave it to them. Now I have seen a special change: it does not seem bad but happily give my things to others to use... My friend needed a sweater, and I gave mine - because I am not like that any more. In my heart I have learned to think of others. This is because things no longer seem important. When others seem important then things do not seem important. I am pleased that I have started to love everyone, and no longer think of material things as important. (Naheed R3)

Dealing with negative emotions and responses is a part of building relationships. Students often made reference to their own growth around the issues of anger and forgiveness, key to forging deeper relationships.

Anger

Nearly all the students talked about dealing with anger, with two exceptions. Anger is a pervasive problem that tends not to be tackled in the family. Some students reflected on their family patterns and how that has affected their own anger management problems.

Anger was manifest chiefly in what students said to one another:

See when I am angry I just say whatever comes to my mind whether that will hurt someone or not. But now I think before I talk. (Razia MI)

Some tried to explain anger as a result of a joke gone wrong, and in this case, as so often with Rubina, Satan is a convenient scapegoat:

I fought with my class-fellow - I was joking but she was serious and she said such strange and odd things to me that I got very upset. That I was joking and she said such useless things to me, so I was angry with her for three or four days. Satan was working in me, but today I forgave her. (Rubina R2)

Student Assumptions

In the first case study above Saima attributed change to God and prayer, and she is not alone in this ultimate analysis of change. Another student who shared with her a pre-reflective epistemology said:

Because inside me is a little bit that I can't tolerate anything - I am quick tempered. And then in temper something or other happens and I am asking for prayer for this and I believe that it will change. (Razia FI)

Other students were more reflective in the way that they thought about their anger and how to deal with it. While prayer plays a part it is not the almost magical panacea that Saima and Razia displayed. Students' increasing ability to reflect helped them to explore the roots of their anger, and to be more self-aware in redressing the problem. Nabila recognised anger in herself, and how it sometimes occurred through jealousy: when she wanted attention and saw that attention given to someone else, her jealousy was expressed in anger. Having recognized where it came from, Nabila tried to control it:

Sometimes when a teacher gives a lecture then if – and I am talking - so you know – because I feel so inferior, if the teachers is standing there in front of me, if they don't look at me and I feel they are ignoring me, then I can get angry with the other girls, maybe they are more important, be jealous but not now, because they are just like me, they are my sisters, they too have come here. (Nabila MI)

A few weeks later she wrote:

Last month I was concerned about controlling anger. This month I have tried that we [students] could clear up the misunderstandings that exist between us. Before when I had something against someone I would be cross but now I have seen a change: I don't see the negatives in the others. (Nabila R3)

Rubina and Tahira are a contrast: while both learned to control their anger, Tahira's change was related to her self-image, while for Rubina the change related to being more accepting of others:

I have seen a change; I have grown more tolerant. Before I could never put up with anyone and got angry quickly. But now I can tolerate things and quickly calm my anger and turn from it and get right, but before that was too difficult. (Tahira R2)

I used to get very angry, but now I get angry less often and I have stopped caring about what other people say. My friends used to think wrong thing about me, and say things too. But now I don't get angry - they have their own ideas and I have mine and I pray for them (Rubina R3)

Student Assumptions

From a developmental point of view, Rubina has possibly moved to a more independent sphere in order to establish her own identity. Tahira has moved toward more interdependence.

Zarish is somewhat less reflective. The biggest problem Zarish talks about is her anger; in fact the entire content of her self-description is discussion of her anger. She got angry in different contexts and it was obviously something that others had commented on as detracting from any future ministry. She also talked about anger in a family context, yet also justifying her anger in that she said:

I get angry but don't sin against anyone, don't want to hurt anyone. (Zarish FI)

However as Zarish considered her family and her younger sisters she showed that she was aware that “maybe lots of times I really hurt them.” She was also learning that there were other ways of dealing with the problems that make her angry:

Often when I am angry then I don't talk to them for an hour, so they will realize they are wrong. But there are other ways of getting people to realize that they are wrong. (Zarish FI)

In her first interview Sorraya could talk little about herself or her own identity but mentioned a problem with anger and inability to apologise. By the time of the second interview she had also become aware of how her anger and unwillingness to apologise had developed due to her home environment. Sorraya learned “to deal with people” rather than argue, and learned to forgive.

Well, a weakness is that I get angry very quickly - I don't listen to someone quietly. That has happened because at home we are always tense and this is the habit at home. So I am always tense that no-one understands me or we don't understand each other. So there is a lot of argumentation inside me and I have more or less stopped talking at home. And if anyone says anything wrong to me, or shouts at me then that is how I answer them. So there was so much negativity in me, and it was getting worse. So now I have learned how to control this and put a stop to it. (Sorraya FI)

Parveen saw how her anger affected not just her relationships with others but also her own spirituality:

I saw that I was far from Jesus because of my passions and I did not do all that Jesus wanted me to do. My anger takes control of me. (Parveen R3)

Student Assumptions

When thinking about a fight with Saima she wrote:

I thought that when I don't forgive someone, then how can I be a disciple of Christ? I seemed bad to myself, I did not think myself worthy of this, I cannot sit in chapel. I will control myself - my emotions, my anger; I will ask for forgiveness and forgive. (Parveen R3)

Anger as a topic was not part of the research interview inventory. It was chosen by the students as something in their own personal character that they identified needed to be worked on. Possibly this was due to being in such a different living situation, and outside of their family hierarchies where they endured their elders' anger and expressed their own to those who were younger than them:

But I am angry with those younger than me, but I can't say anything to those older than me - even when they are wrong I stay silent. (Tahira R3)

Students agreed that anger was 'wrong,' yet none teased out further what the underlying assumptions might be. They thought that in anger they might hurt another; although usually denied they did, as they had 'good female' self-concepts²³ which meant they would never want to hurt anyone. It is hard to say if an assumption has changed, and what it might be, although a behaviour definitely has.

In these personal aspects all the students changed in similar ways behaviourally, even though the ability to reflect and analyse is different. Maybe for more far reaching change, like Tahira's understanding of her family, a more complex epistemology is needed.

Data collected shed most light on formation of student identity, female identity, and relationship building. The development of student identities in relation to those around them was facilitated by their growing understanding of what it meant to build relationships. I suspect that thinking about relationships helped students to reflect on their own and others' identities, with direct results in both the development of their own identity and a growing ability to build meaningful relationships. The impact on faith identity is covered in the section on theological assumptions.

²³ Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 17-18.

Looking at a student's reflection sheets over the months gives a number of snapshots during the year of a student in various ways of thinking. It is clear that change has occurred, and that self-reflection has contributed to this change. How that change occurred is considered in the next chapter.

Theological Assumptions

Ideas and assumptions about faith are built from our earliest interactions with our home environment, from our culture, our religious and spiritual experience as well as what we are explicitly taught in religious education. Part of the task of theological education is helping the student untangle this web of assumptions, requiring the student to be able to identify why they might be thinking in such ways so they can evaluate the ideas they have and adjust them if they find it necessary. Religious practices are built on theological assumptions, so a change in practice regarding for instance prayer or forgiveness rests on a clear change of assumptions about God and self. The areas where assumptions were studied include more strictly conceptual areas such as images of God, Jesus, and the nature of salvation; and practical outcomes of these such as prayer and forgiveness.

Images of God

It was not always easy for students to talk about their concept or image of God, especially in the initial interview.

WHAT IS YOUR IMAGE OF GOD?

Good, holy.

AND?

[long silence] Read the Bible so you'll know ...

NO YOU TELL ME.

[long silence] Holy

WHAT IS GOD LIKE? LIKE A PERSON?

No...

[long silence] God is holy. (Razia II)

Student Assumptions

While this attempt to tease out any kind of response was difficult, Razia does not resort to a physical ‘old man’ description that children might have. When Iqbal is asked the same question she first gave a physical description of God.

When I pray then I think of God as sitting on a throne, and there are clouds, I don't see any face but it seems someone is sitting there. (Iqbal (II))

However Iqbal is also ready to expand into conceptual ideas. In her final interview Nabila admitted to bringing a physical idea of God with her –

Before I thought that God was an old man, tired, and sat on a chair and people came to him. I thought he was like a person, like us, had emotions like us, and now I know that people are mortal but God is immortal. We are made in his image, he is pained, he does feel, as people do - and I thought that I don't know how much longer he's got, maybe he will die. I had these kinds of ideas. (Nabila FI)

Naheed laughingly described a childhood misunderstanding of God: she thought God lived in a room where luggage was stored, because of the assonance between ‘heaven’ (*asmaan*) and ‘luggage’ (*samaan*) and she wondered where God could be. When she arrived at UBTC she knew God ‘as a conceptual thing’ rather than the physical idea she had before, but this concept was unclear. She struggled with how to relate to God when she did not really understand what God could be like.

For others the question about their concept of God unleashed long and sometimes emotional responses. In her initial interview Zarish became tearful when asked about her image of God: God was the one who has loved her, and she had felt a great absence of love in her life. Zarish talked of miracles and a visible manifestation that she had had which showed her God’s love. The impact on her in a world where she felt unloved, where she felt she had no place and no esteem, is that God had esteemed her and given her ‘a place,’ ‘a name.’ Her initial interview was full of long stories as Zarish expressed how God had changed her life. In her second interview she was far more quiet, and found it hard to enunciate anything regarding a concept of God, but what she did say still related to ‘the one who cares for me, who loves me, who gives a feeling of being close.’

Student Assumptions

Judgement as an aspect of God's action and person was an area where transformative learning precepts of struggle and change can be seen. There was no specific question in the interview, but for students it was often an underlying issue in different ways. For Saima, aspects of a Kohlbergian pre-conventional morality appeared in her first interview, although it applied more to others than herself:

If we keep on sinning then first he watches and then he will punish us. God loves all people – he doesn't just love one person but some people just don't know God's love and they totally reject his words and do not obey his orders. Later they regret it, but the ones who do what he wants and who understand his word, God loves them and makes them his servants. But those who don't they regret that later. (Saima II)

In later interviews, where there may have been opportunity to reiterate this, she talked instead of God's mercy and forgiveness. In contrast Mumtaz grappled seriously with issues of judgement especially after the earthquake:

God could have controlled it, the land, so that it did not happen - so such - to have that concept - why did so many people die in such a way - I think these things about God and my ideas upset me - I don't want to think about it more. Then it seems to me I am thinking wrong things about God - why did God let that happen? they were such little children? - and then for some to be disabled, to lose their little hands... (Mumtaz R3)

Mumtaz was willing to realise that the issue was unresolved, possibly until she had the emotional and mental resources to attack the complex question more. This is much more demanding than simply dismissing it, or leaving it to 'God the expert':

It is God's will, those who died and were injured, God knows better than us, what is God's mercy about those who died and were injured. We don't know anything and can only pray, and can't do anything more. (Saima FI)

Already in her life Nageen had had a major change in her concept of God: when her father left and the family broke up then she started to think of God as Father and found that reassuring in many ways as she grappled with life without her father. As she came to UBTC that image was stretched. She described how at first it was difficult to move on from the idea and type of relationship that she had developed with God around the idea of fatherhood.

Student Assumptions

But I never thought about how else I could think about God, and I never felt the need to think about him in other ways. (Nageen II)

We studied Matthew ... Jesus as a king, and I wondered how I could also acknowledge him as king. So having thought about it I concluded that Jesus be a king in my heart. So after looking at various references I thought that I can't just stop at God as Father but in other ways too. So I have started to think about him as king, in the same way that I have thought about him as father. There were lots of different concepts but they had no order, and now having come here I have come to order them so I can tell others. (Nageen II)

And in her final interview:

God's person I just took as far as I needed and now I have started to know him, how much he is involved in my life. Maybe I didn't know him much in childhood, and even now I don't know him very well but more than before. (Nageen FI)

She recognised that God deals differently with different people, and developed a broader understanding of God.

This happened during Exodus and New Testament Survey classes, but thinking about their relationship with God during doctrine class then we saw how God works in different ways in human personality. If we let him, then in the way that Moses let God use him God worked in his life and with Paul it was like that too. (Nageen R3)

God's love, and being in a relationship of loving care with God, was an important area of faith for the students.

I thought that God had chosen me because of my gifts, and my abilities. But in the last retreat I learned that I was a sinner from the start. Weak too. But even so God had grace on me and made me worthy to bow before him otherwise I could not do so. That I could even say this, my thinking has changed. My pride is broken. That I have been found righteous by Christ's blood. And through his grace I am worthy to talk to and cry out to God. His love is beyond my ability to talk about. (Rubina FR)

For Sorraya this was very special as she saw the difference between a God who she had no relationship with, and one with whom she was developing a relationship. Initially her answers were: "We can't understand God," and "We absolutely cannot understand God. I don't understand anything either;" yet at the end of her three month course said:

I am aware of this change in myself, that I can now feel I have a relationship with God, have it; I give him every difficult thing, because he's my father who gives me everything. (Sorraya R3)

Trinitarian understandings

The responses above also show how in some way responses were sometimes ‘theological’ and sometimes very personal stories. One of the most specifically theological issues relates to ideas about the trinity. The teachers were surprised how many students held a form of modalism:

I have not heard someone say so clearly before that before ‘I understood God was first and then [became] Jesus and then Holy Spirit.’ You read about it as a theory but to see someone articulate it and to have it as a very clearly held understanding and then to be following their diaries (where it is coming out most) as to ‘I used to think this.’ (Miss Z T3)

When Parveen had an assignment on the trinity she had written to her minister, who replied defending a modalistic understanding. So she had to deal with new teaching and a clash between the ‘experts:’ her theologically untrained, male pastor and her theologically articulate, female teachers. It became an epistemological struggle as well as a theological one, and, in a sense, a relational one too, as the teachers walked a line between showing respect to her minister while arguing against the position he espoused. Parveen had to resubmit her assignment, which she did with well reasoned orthodox answers: but she continued to struggle over the year. Others studied the issue intently:

So far I understand that God exists from before the foundation of the world, but when did Jesus start to exist: when he took on human flesh? And the spirit came after Jesus went to heaven. But during one class my thinking was shown to be wrong: and that is a challenge for me (Farhat R3)

I thought that there was just God and then there was Jesus and then the spirit. I had all of them very separate. Now I have a better understanding. Rather, when we were given work on it, I made points about God and the Son and the Holy Spirit. For me to search that out and work it out has been for me a good experience. And because I have searched it out for myself I can now remember the passages. Otherwise I would have said I don't know if I understand the Bible or not. (Farhat FI)

The above is a good example of Farhat’s epistemology but also in transformative learning terms it shows how she came to change her position. It started with a challenge in class, when she realised that something she had thought was wrong. Then she articulated what she understood about the person of God. Critical reflection happened during a time of research, where she notes that she went beyond any class assignment but ‘searched it out for myself’ to resolve the conflict. Finally she presented the new understanding in her assignment.

Student Assumptions

The final step in transformative learning is putting something into action. This phase of transformative learning could be seen in a change in students' use of a common name for God in the church in Pakistan as 'Jesus-Father.' This occurred in students' initial interviews

People can be unfaithful but Father-Jesus won't be. (Nabila II)

and conversations, but as the year progressed the title died out. Students learned to discriminate in their understanding of the persons of the Trinity.

So they were using 'Father Jesus' but now that has changed, because maybe they have studied a lot of doctrine (FOCUS I Miss W)

For Farhat an important area was how God spoke to people in the First Testament, for instance Job, Ezekiel, and she then wants it for herself: she wants to hear God and to know how to recognize God's voice. Her problem with developing her lessons for Sunday School teaching is related to this, because she reasons that if she had prayed about it and thought she had it right, then how could it still be wrong:

What does God want? Didn't he lead me properly? Did I not choose right? Is my faith not right? (Farhat R3)

She thinks that if she prays, then God should answer, then her work should be right and if it is not then the problem is with God and not with her hearing or understanding or her work itself. Rather than thinking about the underlying assumptions of prayer and how she understands the way it may be answered, she directs the problem back to God. Part of this may be related to an epistemological position of knowing God's will, she needs to hear God dispatch it to her as the expert to the one who needs to know, rather than see it as a relationship where the sensitivity to knowledge of the divine will grows as people grow in that relationship.

Other changes regarding the nature of God over the year relate to a wide range of themes and personal issues in the students' lives. One specific area of change is a gendered concept of God.

God and gender

Student Assumptions

Some students talk about their expanding concept of God being beyond gender. A gendered understanding of God partly arises from a psycholinguistic perspective in the use of masculine pronouns (verb forms in Urdu) for God. This has repercussions on a psychological perspective in a culture which devalues women, and popularly (not formally) understands men to be created in the image of God, and women a secondary image, thus 'theologically' defined as second class.

Mumtaz used her broader concept of God as she thought about the involvement of women in ministry and in how she might argue about that with men. It freed her thinking. She started to think about God's love as a mother's love as well as a father's love. In her second interview she extended this idea to God's knowing as a mother knows: without being told but understanding her children, caring and keeping them safe.

So I have changed in that I used to think of his love as a father's love but not as a mother's love. Now I can consider this concept that God can be like a mother - I can think it and can also feel it. (Mumtaz MI)

God is someone who is concerned - like a mother knows everything - like I would not tell my mother but she would know anyway about me; what I need, what I am like. God is like that, like a mother who knows her children and can cover them and know them. So for me that is what God is like - I am safe in his hands. (Mumtaz MI)

A broader concept of God added an extra dimension to her relationship to God, that of being cared for. It also impinged on her understanding that women can also be involved in ministry:

I think that men cannot yet really agree that women are also made in God's image. I have learned that this year - and this is one big thing that God is neither male nor female. If every man could understand this, that God is not a man like them, that he is neither male nor female, then they would accept that women are also made in God's image. And in this way God can also use women. (Mumtaz MI)

Two specific areas where students' image of God impacted on their practical lives are prayer and forgiveness. These are considered in some detail below.

Prayer

The major change regarding prayer in most students was a shift from prayer as presentation of need to prayer as a way of relating to God.

Student Assumptions

Yes - before I prayed like a list, from the beginning to the end... I prayed fast fast fast - and fulfilled the duty of prayer, but now I have changed quite a lot. Often I also pray in quiet - before I wondered what the point was in being silent in prayer, listen to who? - but now being silent in prayer ... I like that. (Naheed FI)

I used to think about something, and say God give me this, give me that, and now I think how much do I need that, now I don't pray give me that, now I pray that God would take the desire from me because I don't need that thing. (Iqbal FI)

In her second interview Iqbal realised how much she had changed:

But now it seems that prayer is not just asking but talking to God, thinking about yourself, asking God who I am, where I am. Now my style or attitude of prayer has changed. (Iqbal FI)

The idea of prayer as a two way relationship is something that was repeated in student responses.

Now I don't do it like that, I think about what I am asking for, and in the way that you have a relationship with someone, how you feel as you hold the relationship, telling your own things, listening to the other - that is how I pray now. (Naheed FI)

So I listen to him too, feel what he wants to say maybe via the Word or by people, every day some thought or other we receive, and recognize what it is that God wants to say to us. (Iqbal FI)

Prayer was often presented initially as a kind of cure-all panacea,

I pray because first whatever I ask then God gives me. (Zarish FI)

This is especially effective if done 'with a pure heart' and 'with crying.' So when Saima has problems in preparing Sunday School and chapel these problems are solved by prayer:

One time it happened in [high school] hostel that we had to [apply for state exams], and my papers had not arrived from home. I prayed and I was very worried, and [the superintendent] said that your admission will not be sent so you won't be able to sit the exams. I cried so much, and for 1 – 2 days I prayed with a pure heart and then the next day my mother arrived with the documents. So I am sure that if we pray with a pure heart then God hears. (Saima II)

Thinking about this thing, that sometimes when our prayers are not accepted then we say all kinds of things. But my prayer being heard meant that I was even closer to God... (Zarish II)

For Zarish the initial assumption that 'prayers are accepted' meant that God acquiesced in whatever she requested. When prayer is accompanied by crying then prayer was seen as even

more effective. This might relate to the way that girls and women in Pakistan find tears are often an effective way of getting their will.

Razia acknowledged changing her thinking considerably about prayer:

Before I thought that when I prayed then God did not hear me.
WHAT WAS GOD LIKE?

I thought that God did not hear me and so I would not pray. Sometimes when detrimental things happened then that was God's work. But I did not know. Here I learned that that is God's will and whatever happens it is according to God's plan. (Razia FI)

Later in the interview Razia expanded:

Before I did not know God much, or was not close to him. Here at UBTC I have learned how we can draw close to him and how he does not reject our prayers. He hears, and as much progress I think I have made, it has been at UBTC. And now I pray and am blessed by God. (Razia FI)

When students talked about prayer in the interviews, they were talking mainly about their personal prayer experiences. Students also prayed in pairs and triplets, and in larger groups. While their participation in these opportunities developed over the year, they do not reflect on this in the same way.

The DC group's attributed change in thinking about prayer partly to their participation in a TEE²⁴ class called 'Talking with God' but the FC group did not have this course and yet they too are aware of substantial change. This shift reflected changes in their concept of God and their understanding of their relationship with God.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness was a practical issue for many students. Interpersonal relationships were marred with a lack of forgiveness and many students echoed Parveen's comment:

I cannot forgive anyone. (Parveen FI)

²⁴ Theological Education by Extension, in Pakistan called the Open Theological Seminary.

Student Assumptions

One student talked of a relationship issue where lack of forgiveness had burdened her for years. During the year she worked through the episode in order to forgive the people involved in it (Mumtaz FI). In the weekly reflection sheets others mentioned the little battles that break out when living in close proximity to one another:

I fought with Razia, about making tea, and I was so upset that I could not concentrate even in chapel. I was thinking that how can I ask her to forgive me – I did not have the courage that I should ask for forgiveness – why shouldn't she ask? At the end I put this unsettled feeling aside and made peace with her and thinking that in order to live happily first we have to be at peace. (Nabila R1)

Students' new understanding of forgiveness rested in a new understanding of God's forgiveness on which their being forgiven and then forgiving others rested.

When God, when we have sinned so much, forgives us, then we must forgive others. Sometimes I think that since the beginning of the world there has been so much sin and God could just finish it off. We don't know how much pain we give to God, and we don't know what happens and how much suffering - and if one can forgive then we should. (Nabila MI)

As noted earlier with Tahira, students discussed the difference between merely formally saying words of forgiveness and really forgiving 'from the heart.'

So forgiveness is the most difficult thing to do - but when you do, you feel such a thing that you have had a burden lifted off you. And then forgiveness is good for you and for the other, that such a burden is lifted that no good had remained in your heart toward that person, and when you have forgiven then it disappears from our mind and then it is not even good to be reminded of that thing. So try to forget it and try to forgive someone before much time has passed. (Nageen FI)

I forgive from the heart and sometimes I don't. Because sometimes I have been really hurt from something. Then I think about it, in my mind it goes round and round, how can I - you know - forgive. It goes round and round inside. But I do forgive everyone. And show myself loving. Here I have learned that just as Christ loved everyone so we have to love everyone. (Razia FI)

Students realised that forgiveness was not a form of words but something that originated in a heart attitude. If God's forgiveness of them is something more than a form, then their own forgiveness of others should be as well. Students noticed that when they forgave 'from the heart' it made a difference to how they felt and thought about the other person, and to how they reacted and built relationships with others. Students' theological concepts were impacting on their relationships.

Student Assumptions

More conceptually, connotations about when to forgive and what true forgiveness is, was teased out in a variety of stories, principally a 'saga' I constructed about a Christian girl Najma who elopes with a Muslim boy, and in each subsequent interview showing Najma wanting to be more involved in the Christian community. In the initial interview the DC students were particularly fierce in discussing whether Najma could be forgiven. Most of them felt that Najma could be forgiven by God only with difficulty, and absolutely not by her father.

Such a family should understand their daughter has done such a big thing – you know running away with and marrying a Muslim – really they should just leave her – she has corrupted the name of Christianity, and in God's eyes and the parents' eyes she is bad. Not in God's eyes as God forgives everyone but in the parents' eyes she has done very badly. Her parents, her mother should not have any relationship with her so that she could get the lesson of what she has done – alone, then she would be punished for what she has done
HOW LONG SHOULD THIS PUNISHMENT BE FOR?

As long as she lives – maybe the one she has married he might change, that is possible. (Rubina II)

Rubina is scarcely different in the second interview:

If her parents forgive her then the relationship can be restored. Parents do not want their children to do something wrong and then be reconciled and not punish. It can't happen - parents punish and always keep the relationship broken. That is too much. (Rubina MI)

However by the third interview, when in the saga Najma is attending church again, Rubina says:

There should be good relationships because she has come back. Then for the daughter's sake they should accept [the husband]. If he has forgiven his daughter then he must surely for the joy of his daughter accept him and love him. (Rubina FI)

The FC students had much less difficulty with the idea of forgiveness in this story. A few saw the situation differently, and blamed the parents at least in part for the elopement. Naheed thinks that forgiveness needs to be proffered with some idea of righting wrong:

If they are not really sorry ... they will never accept that they have done wrong. (Naheed II)

Naheed is relating ideas of punishment and restoration to the concept of forgiveness. These ideas were teased out in the final interview in a story about an embezzling church treasurer (a not

infrequent occurrence). Naheed related what had happened in two actual situations she was acquainted with:

That is right – yes forgiven, but maybe they are not worthy to do this job. If they have done it once they can do it again. (Naheed FI)

Other students who did not mention encountering this situation generally thought that if the money was returned then forgiveness meant the treasurer being restored to his position. Students showed concern as to why the man had taken the money:

Look at why he did it, if great need then forgive him and put him back in his position – even if from greed if he confesses then put back in position. First [the people in the church] should not be angry but rather look at what his need was, that he used God's money. If he has a big problem then they should help him and put that money together to help him. If he has used it wrongly they should forgive him and one time give him a chance.

If now he says that I don't want to do this task then he will seem even more guilty. He will think that they have not forgiven me even though he will think about their love, that they have given me another chance. And also he needs to show his faith and confess his sin. (Parveen FI)

If they forgive him and do not return him to his position as treasurer then I do not think that he has been forgiven. Truly he has broken their trust, but if he regrets it and asks for forgiveness, then he should be fully forgiven. (Tahira FI)

Gilligan writes that women have an ethic of care and this personal level influences their thinking regarding morality.²⁵ In this instance the young women's concern with the treasurer and his need highlights this rather than a concern for justice and retribution. However on a practical level students may have responded differently were they more personally involved in the situation, as Naheed's responses show. The students' readiness to forgive a major embezzler in a hypothetical situation contrasts with their own difficulty forgiving others in small personal issues. This highlights the care that needs to be taken when research is done to understand concept development, such as moral development and religious development theory built up from responses to hypothetical situations.²⁶

²⁵ Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*.

²⁶ I note that Gilligan did research with pregnant women regarding their own decision making regarding abortions, and Woods writes on the differences between real life and hypothetical situations in research on moral development theory. Ibid, Woods, "Gender Differences in Moral Development and Acquisition: A Review of Kohlberg's and Gilligan's Models of Justice and Care.."

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Forgiveness in the students' personal and practical lives did become a reality as they integrated learning and practice. What might happen in larger spheres outside of the safe UBTC environment is an avenue for further research.

Ministry

Many students came on the course wanting to prepare for some kind of ministry. Others did not have that so clearly in mind, but were challenged by the practical opportunities and the environment which assumed that students would continue to serve either in their churches along with their career, or as part of their own future career in ministry.

Students gained confidence and ability in ministry, partly due to their own better biblical and theological knowledge, partly due to practical opportunities, and partly due to reflection about ministry, about how they have done and what they want to do, so that their ideas become more streamlined.

In Rukhsana I see a new desire to learn practical tips on ministry... she wanted to train for her "women's" class and was actively absorbing the feedback given - with the motivation in her mind of upcoming fieldwork placement. (Miss Z T2)

A common theme in all feedback is motivation - the desire and need to have info/skills for another task. This is encouraging as students are seeing the relationship between what they are learning and its practical application. (Miss Z T2)

Students also became aware that ministry is not simply passing on information which they are trying to acquire, nor is it simply developing a skill set for communication. The students started to appreciate how formation interacts with any service they do. They were concerned when during their internship they worked with people who did not seem to be committed to the ministry they were visiting. They were aware of problems in the team and tried to improve their team work because of the ramifications in ministry.

I want to do ministry, I came to learn, but I didn't know there would be so much practical when I came, but here I specially want to note that here work is done on character. Maybe I only wanted to learn the Bible but I have found that here my character was being built. The first thing if I go home or do ministry among people, only give them knowledge but to act upon it, how can they do that? That I have learned that when I want to do service then if I can't be practical then it is of

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no use. I want that when I leave here I would do ministry not just give teaching but action too - I would and those who listen also. (Nabila FI)

So in terms of the whole ministry and UBTC preparing the whole person that side is showing development as well. And that is great progress from just preparing a message and presenting it which is all that some of them can think of first, but now think outside that and be aware that these factors affect what you are presenting. (Miss Z T3)

Another aspect regarding the area of ministry was that students talked about gaining enthusiasm for ministry. Before they had a view to do something ministry related but this desire had become something more integral, and more related to their whole formation and relationship with God and others.

To have a burden and passion for ministry. (Parveen FR)

Partly this was related to their own thinking about the future. Some students talked about their families and how they had not wanted to leave them to come to UBTC, and what a ministry position might mean in terms of leaving families. They became ready to think about being involved in ministry that was not in the same location as their home.

Service - when I was coming here the hardest thing was that I would be far from my family, and that is still very hard even till today. But in these last few days I was homesick and when at night I was sitting and silent in God's presence and I don't know what happened - but I cried, cried a lot. I saw God's kindness how he cares for us ...here too people do care, the staff care, the students care, but still there is a sadness. So when I was sitting in silence before God, not saying anything, just crying, God's kindness looked after me. So now I am moving towards this, it seems to me I can do service, whereas in the last few weeks it just seemed so difficult. (Iqbal FI)

Many students talked of ministry in context of marriage, and as marriage is a given for girls in Pakistan, then what they wanted was a partner who would also engage with them in ministry.

I want the kind of person who is involved in ministry so we could both be involved in ministry together. (Nabila)

It is hard to know but I am praying - for my life partner, and that God would do some work with me, and someone that I can do ministry with. There is a Punjabi proverb that my parents would find someone who would love me and I would be a successful wife and daughter. But my aim is to have someone who would be involved in service. I am praying that God would also give me opportunity for ministry. (Zarish II)

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Students also had to grapple with their own and wider family expectations, that being educated they would get a ‘good job,’ that is a job with a good salary and good prospects. A career in Christian service is not considered positively in Pakistan.

So I want that God would give me an opportunity for ministry, that I would do that. In the past I wanted to study and then get a job with a good posting. So that we would all be happy at home. Now I hope that God would...– because humanity is nothing by themselves, their thinking is nothing – whatever they do is from being prepared, and whatever Jesus Christ gives me to do I will do it. (Parveen MI)

Being young women brings practical and cultural restrictions and students argued from various biblical positions that they were free to minister, but in their own context the constraints made it harder and meant they have to be more careful. The question of service helped students come to a new understanding of themselves in terms of their own identity and what that meant for ministry opportunities.

Relationships with the majority community

Related to their thinking about ministry is how the students changed their thinking regarding the majority community. The students have endured discrimination, and generally the Christian community has a ghetto-type mentality, and keep to themselves very much. During the year the students rethought this relationship. Parveen grappled with this ambivalence, mentioning when Muslim people visited the house:

I loved God but did not think that people were important. ...When those people were in my house then I did not want to meet them, I hated them. But it seems to me that God has prepared me for them. In the Bible, Jn 3. 16 [it says] that God loved the entire world. Now I will love those people like that. I did not have any special idea about Muslim people. But now I know that they too are Jesus’ lost sheep, they are also our brothers and sisters who are lost. But one day they will be with me, now I do not hate them any more. (Parveen R2)

I thought about this because working among non Christian people and telling them God's word and some listen but those who do not accept it and say very strange things - so I thought that these people who say such things about God and Christ Jesus are not ready to understand but even so God reveals himself to them. And [God] uses them to understand the mysteries of the word to live their lives. (Rubina R2)

Two events impacted on this area of students’ identity. For the DC students it was the time on internship and close contact with Muslim people, some of whom wanted prayer or to talk about

issues of faith or the Bible. The contact in their internship helped bring about a change in the students' thinking about the Muslim community, and a confidence not only to acknowledge their own faith but to talk to others about that faith.

For all students the highly destructive South Asian earthquake of October 2005, when the victims were almost entirely Muslim, meant they were challenged to rethink their identity as Pakistani. They were grieved at the loss, spurred on to address it in practical ways but also felt a spiritual imperative. This is addressed in more detail later.²⁷

Faith

The issue of faith could not be addressed until various aspects such as cognitive and psychological as well as theological issues, had been raised. When students were asked about their faith, what it meant to them, and how it might have changed, their responses were varied. Some students talked in terms of gaining or growing in relationship with God. Several students talked about how they now acted or behaved in accordance with that faith, rather than simply knowing about their faith. For others a cognitive change encompassed a broader range of understanding theological issues. For several students the answer lay in a more rounded or accepting self-identity.

I expected most students would be starting from within a 'synthetic-conventional' stage, according to their age and experience. They also came from a church and religious environment which would not encourage the questioning that might help them develop. During their course at UBTC elements of developing toward a more individuative-reflective faith can be seen. I found that for these students relationship was an important aspect of the patterns discussed by Slee in women's developing faith, and many found a sense of awakening in the integration of learning theology and personally applying it to their lives. The alienation aspect was less visible, although some were unable to articulate much about their faith at all. Possibly due to a much lower

²⁷ See the section on the earthquake page 243.

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average age and resulting lack of experience the alienation aspect was not so apparent.²⁸ Initially many are surprised by the idea that faith might change:

Before I had never thought that growing in faith is something - how does it happen, never - but now I am worried because I have been like this for so long and I have wasted so much time.
(Nageen FI)

Some students mention their faith being weaker or stronger without a context or reason to try to understand why that might be. Often it is linked to a problem which is prayed for and resolved, resulting in 'stronger faith.' The following are from separate occasions, as week after week Razia wrote:

Last month my faith in God got much stronger which changed my life. But I am very thankful to God who strengthened my faith. (Razia R3)

Last month my faith got stronger which changed my life. (Razia R3)

Last month I had faith in God too, but my faith has got stronger because whenever I learn things about Christ my faith gets stronger. (Razia R3)

Parveen saw that her faith has developed from a simplistic faith image:

What I asked God he would do - I thought God was like a machine I could press the button - but it is not like that. (Parveen FR)

For Parveen stronger faith was cognitive: she understood and was able to answer questions confidently about what she believes. Stronger faith also meant her behaviour was different because of her faith, although in a tender kind of morality where God is watching. This included 'this strange brokenness' that she felt when she infringed by doing or not doing what she thinks God wants:

Before when I was in school then the students and others and in tuitions and college and others asked me what my creed was, "who do you believe in – you have three Gods" and I was confused myself, why did I not know when they ask me these things. But they asked me according to their own ideas and I did not know about these things. But now I know that I believe in a living God and now I can answer their questions and I believe in a living God, and my faith had changed. I think that if I would be alone and want to do something secretly then my faith would be that God still sees me; I am not alone and God is watching, so in this way too. When I think about my life

²⁸ Slee, *Women's Faith Development*, 81-107, 09-34, 35-61.

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and some wrong idea comes that I should do that, then what is inside, a strange brokenness that I should not do that, not do things like that, that is not according to the Bible. So I think that that is part of my faith having changed. (Parveen FI)

Farhat wanted her faith to result in personal change. In her devotional diary she wrote a list of behaviours she wanted to change, and checked herself off every day regarding what she had and hadn't done.

[Have I gained] maturity in faith? I think about that person who came, that I had accepted Christ but I still did wrong things, and didn't walk with him, and if I did such things and if God could not accept me then I could not be perfect. So then what is in the middle? So regarding this I should try, as much as I can - I know what I shouldn't do that is against God and so about this I would think that I will not do this today, and won't do it - and then the response to this is that these all relate to my faith and whether it is weak or whatever. (Farhat FI)

For others faith change related to their self-identity and self-confidence:

When I came there was a question in my mind, and I discussed it too. I have a big complex about myself. Maybe I am not beautiful, but I have received a good answer to this: the teachers have guided me about this well too. It seemed so good to me - that this bad habit and what was inside me, that has come out. That really appeals to me. (Zarish II)

Very [important] - so much that my faith is just as much - and it will grow, but if it went backward then my work and my personality would also go backwards. I would think about myself differently and maybe not have that faith and confidence in myself, and those things would not be apparent. It would make a big difference. (Mumtaz FI)

Mumtaz also expressed dissatisfaction in her relationship with God. She did not feel she was making progress, and that she was taking things easy or expecting she was involved in ministry then she would not need to do anything extra in developing the relationship. For her, a stronger faith was one that was ready to stand when people questioned and opposed.

While relationships might link to faith it was when relationships went wrong that faith was challenged:

It has been a challenge putting up with someone's attitude in the last week. Because from my own side I have really tried a lot to show love but it doesn't seem to make a difference - this person has stayed just the same. I said to myself don't give up, keep praying. In the end God showed me the reason why this person was acting like this toward me. Now I am trying to rid myself of this thing from inside me, which caused her attitude toward me to be so harsh.

WHAT HELPED YOU TO CONSIDER THIS?

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This person's attitude taught me that in making relationships our way of living also impacts - but I am thinking about it some more. Truly in such a situation how does one take a step forward, how does one strengthen in faith? How did I change my attitude - I can't do this myself until God strengthens me for it. (Asifa R1)

This brief summary of student responses regarding faith shows how rounded a concept it is. For some it is a relationship with Christ:

For me it is very important that I am a Christian girl. Because it is clear that without Christ we can't reach God - I can't reach God, and when I accepted him then he is the way and it is my boast that he has saved me. He has chosen me and taken me to God. So in this way it is important and I really like it, that I have peace and am thankful to God that I am a Christian. (Sorraya FI)

For me it is important that I thank God that I am a Christian and that Christian love is in me. Not that I am a Christian and don't recognize him or don't read his word or don't recognize his love, but I can recognize it, that is very important for me. (Hamida FI)

The most important thing for me is that I am a Christian. Because I have salvation and eternal life and the joy of that, and I am thankful that, and have hope that, I will always be with God. (Naheed FI)

The totality of responses and discussion showed faith to be something that encompassed students' thinking, relationships and their very own selves.

Summary: Student transformations

Mezirow expects transformation to result in a

*reformulation of a meaning perspective to allow a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative understanding of one's experience. Learning includes acting on these insights.*²⁹

This chapter considered the 'transformation' of students in the areas of epistemology, personal self-understanding and theological assumptions, along with an understanding of the purpose of theological education. Assumption changes were made more feasible as epistemological complexity developed. Two case studies of students who functioned at very different levels of

²⁹ Mezirow, "How Critical Reflection Triggers Transformative Learning," xvi.

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epistemological complexity showed a range of epistemological, personal and theological assumption changes.

When I looked at the assumptions students held regarding the purpose of theological education, I found that students' assumptions changed from expecting to learn how to answer questions about faith or to communicate faith, to an awareness of the importance of formation as a central aspect of theological education. The expectation of formation changed because the course itself had a formational purpose and students were encouraged to think this way about the purpose of their studies. As students sat in class, talked, walked and participated in various activities, they responded to the formational purpose. This understanding is crucial to the remainder of the study, as students expected their theological study, and the environment in which it occurred, to be formational.

When I use the term formation here I am talking about a change of assumptions in each of the areas of relationship with God, relationships with others, thinking theologically, communicating the gospel, and self-understanding that were outlined in chapter one.

Epistemologically all students in at least some respects have developed in their ability to think theologically. The few students who worked at a pre-reflective or Received Knower level of cognitive complexity have expanded their assumptions to include constructivist understandings of knowledge, understanding that 'experts' may not have all the answers and that with application they too can arrive at some conclusions themselves. Students at a pre-reflective level had difficulty in reflecting at the level required, easily attributing change to forces beyond them. At the same time, however, they did gain voice, showing confidence in giving answers, and being ready to give reasons for why they thought the way they did.

Students who functioned in a quasi-reflective level of epistemology came to include understanding the complexity of knowledge. While many were idiosyncratic in arguing for a particular position, they were able to marshal arguments. There was a greater ability to reflect, and self-reflect, over the course of the year, and these students found reflection to be a source of their own learning. The weekly reflection sheet, group work where students had to deal with a

variety of options, and the questioning, reflective learning environment contributed to the development of epistemology.

Developing epistemological complexity and keeping an authoritative role for Scriptures adds to the complexity of the development task. Within the evangelical tradition the Bible is held as an authoritative text,³⁰ and the final arbiter of what is right. Yet biblical interpretation is done with all the hermeneutical skills and contextual understanding that can be brought to the task. A tension is held between respect for the text and the way it is interpreted for doctrine and morality, and the understandings of context and reason. The tension is held as students learned to question their own interpretation and understanding of the text.

The personal self-understanding of all the students underwent transformation at a fundamental level of learning to become reflective about their own attitudes and responses to what they learned and experienced. For students to think about themselves in a reflective manner was a novel experience, and one which was used to effect in building their identities and relationships. One particular area of the students' identity development was to distinguish between their 'Christian' community identity within the larger Muslim society in Pakistan, and understanding their 'Christian' identity as a faith identity, as they grew in their own personal relationship with Christ. In a similar way students developed in their understanding of themselves as young women in a patriarchal environment, as they gained confidence in their own identity which was matched with a development of acceptance within their family circle with their own development of voice. Students with more complex epistemology could see how their family influences had shaped them, as they started to understand influences on their own development.

At the beginning of the course when students were asked to talk about themselves, talked mainly about their weaknesses. At the end of the year they talked about what they were doing to change aspects of themselves they wished to be different. At the beginning of the course they might have wanted to change but at the end could consider what they might do to bring about change. This is partly a result of epistemology and confidence, even being able to have the confidence to take charge of who they are and who they want to be. In reflecting on two particular areas of building

³⁰ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* 12-14.

relationships and dealing with anger students showed awareness of change and some awareness of how that change occurred.

Many students came expecting to accumulate theological information, but beyond expectation their theological ideas have also become more integrative of their own living and thinking. More than simply having 'learned theology' many have learned to think theologically, and this has meant changing some of the ideas that they brought with them. The areas of theological thinking that I paid particular attention to were concepts of God, forgiveness, prayer, and Christian identity. Students became aware of limitations in their concept of God and broadened these, not simply as concepts but in ways that they also related to God. This change in relationship is visible in how students changed in their understanding of prayer becoming a means of relationship with God than a way of obtaining what they wanted or needed. There was also a change in the way students prayed for their own needs, becoming less material and more related to their own person and relationships, and to the needs of the wider world around them. The changes in prayer reflected their own self-knowledge and reflection. Another practical area was students' readiness to forgive, seen in their response to a hypothetical situation and in the way they dealt with relationships and misunderstandings with other students. Students' assumptions about the majority community, influenced by the prejudicial treatment they experience as a minority community, also underwent change as their vision of God at work in the world changed. These practical areas were more easily articulated and more vulnerable to challenge and change, or to that change becoming traceable, than more conceptual ideas. Students became aware of where their theological thinking did not match their action, which led to the kind of formational outcome desired both in theological education and transformative learning.

The expansion of an assumption regarding theological education to be formative interacted with a personal assumption that engendered self-reflection, which in turn gave the impetus for integrating theological assumptions into the personal. All of these assumption changes were made more feasible as epistemological complexity developed. The way students changed varied, related to the level of reflectiveness a student might have. For students with a simple epistemology change occurred more as a result of modelling others' behaviour than as an

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outcome of reflection on assumptions. Changes in one area often impacted on thinking and behaviour in another area.

Transformative learning explains change as starting with an activating event, leading to articulation of assumption, reflection, others' points of view, dialogue, revision of assumption leading to changed action. In the next chapter I investigate how the various aspects of transformative learning, and the general environment, contributed to change.

Six ~ Teaching Transformatively

To bring change you have to change your thinking - then action can start to change. It is easy to change thinking, but it takes a long time to change action. (Naheed FR)

The research year was a year in which not only were the students learning, but the teachers were also learning and experimenting with teaching transformatively. In this chapter I consider another of my initial questions concerning transformative learning, asking “What aspects of the programme are most helpful in contributing to the changes?” The teachers at UBTC actively put into practice the principles and processes of transformative learning theory which lead to changes in student assumptions (see ch. 2). In this chapter I analyse the formal teaching programme and the informal activities and environment, and how they effected the changes (especially assumption changes) that I have presented in the previous chapter. First the transformative learning process is presented as separate phases, with the rider that this is a simplification of what is actually occurring. The impact of the South Asian earthquake of October 8, 2005, is explored as a special case of crisis leading to a variety of examined assumptions. I also consider the effect of the wider issues of student-teacher interaction, and the learning environment.

In the following section I consider how the activating event and recursive aspects of the transformative learning process influenced the changes in students’ assumptions. Data for understanding the teaching learning process came from students and teachers. The staff feedback sheet refers to the aspects of the process, the challenge or crisis, the opportunity for students to articulate their assumptions, and then stages in self-reflection and evaluation. The student reflection sheets were opportunities for the student to mention a challenge and reflect on it for her own growth.

I begin with examples 6.1 and 6.2, a staff feedback sheet and a student reflection which relate to the same class. These related examples allow us to get a clear picture of what was happening in the classroom with both the teacher and the student, and cover many of the influential factors in the process. In the staff feedback sheet Miss Z refers to an exegetical class in a course on the first epistle of Peter. This staff feedback sheet is followed by a weekly reflection sheet of a student

who refers to this class, talking about how it had been a challenge for her and how she continued to think about it and the impact on her thinking about ministry. The teacher was using a passage about suffering, and referred to an incident which had occurred in the weekend prior to the class when a number of church related buildings were burned by a group of Muslims, in a small town called Sangla Hill about 100 kilometres from Gujranwala. There is a Christian girls' hostel in Sangla Hill which was known to some of the students, and this relationship helped create an even closer connection to the anxiety the students were already feeling about the incident. The teacher was surprised by the students' response and used that to help students investigate their own assumptions and responses to this kind of attack. This highlights the awareness that what is planned by a teacher may be changed when unexpected and shared student assumptions come to light which need closer examination. The Staff Feedback Sheet is presented first.

Example 6.1 Staff feedback sheet on responding to persecution

Q. 2A CRISIS OR CHALLENGE

1 Peter 1. 20-25: looks at Jesus' response to suffering

Context: Sangla Hill, 3 churches burned on Saturday, 2 pastor's houses, 1 girls' school

Accusation [against Christians] – set fire to building in which 2 holy books were burnt

Underneath – personal enmity re gambling debts (apparently)

Q. 2b ARTICULATED ASSUMPTIONS

After looking at 1 Peter 1. 20-25 I asked students how they would respond if they were in Sangla Hill. To my great surprise all but one were very specific about how they would retaliate – wanting to get even (but not more than even) – burn their madrassah's, get others to help, beat them etc. – we must retaliate.

Q. 2C CRITICALLY SELF-REFLECT?

After individually voicing and discussing their responses I asked “When is it right to burn someone's property, to beat them, to kill them” each individually answered “Never.” I presented a tension

a) each said we would retaliate

b) each said we can not burn, beat, etc.

both cannot be true – students explored this.

Q. 2D OTHER POINTS OF VIEW?

Listened to each other. Then we returned to 1 Peter again, considering its application to our example.

Q. 2E DISCOURSE

Listening

Discussing

Bible study

Q. 2F REVISION OF ASSUMPTIONS

Students revisited Sangla Hill situation and presented a new response, from which they were able to pray for all involved (in this light).

Q. 2G CHANGE IN ACTION

This was then taken down to the personal level of daily responses.

A few days later... progressing through ch 2-4 students are now visibly owning this teaching and praying and thinking differently PTL.

Q. 3 PROCESSES DIFFICULT

Flexibility here was crucial. I had 15 minutes allowed for this passage but when I realised some big false assumptions were there I needed to cancel the rest of the planned class to explore this area. My initial teaching on the material had not been appropriate to the assumptions which appeared so the lesson had to be revised. (Miss Z T3)

What follows is a student reflection relating to the lesson above.

Example 6.2 Student reflection sheet on responding to persecution

Q1 WHAT CHALLENGED YOU MOST THIS WEEK?

In Miss Z's class if someone hit us or hurt us then would we forgive them or take revenge or rather even want blessing for them - revenge is God's work.

Q2 HOW HAVE YOU THOUGHT MORE?

I was thinking about this but it is hard to put up with it all.

Q2A WHAT CHANGE HAS OCCURRED?

It is the first time in my life that I have doubted, how much could I endure this - how far do I follow Jesus example in my life, how much I am fashioned after him? - I want to be strong for God. (I am trying)

Q4 HAVE YOU CREATED SOMETHING?

Yes, in the 'praise' book there is a song (the destination is far and the road is hard, but whatever the troubles in life etc I won't leave you)

Q3 WHAT LEAVES YOU UNCOMFORTABLE ?

To be ready for service - because understanding ministry and being ready for it are not two separate things. I want God to prepare me and make it clear.

Q5 ANY CHANGE RELATING TO LAST MONTH'S REFLECTIONS

Yes, I want every step I take to be in God's will. Paul's idea, what I am trying to do I don't but what I don't want to do that is what I do. I think that enemies are strong but I am weak - they can attack me even in the day and make me weak - I want to be strong. (Parveen R3)

Putting theory into practice: the phases of transformative learning

The transformative learning process begins with an activating event, some kind of challenge or crisis which provokes uneasiness and a readiness to consider underlying assumptions. The activating event is followed by the articulation of assumptions, critical self-evaluation, looking at other possibilities or ways of viewing the situation, engaging in discourse with others, leading to a change of assumptions and behaviour. Not all of these processes are observable in each transformation, and different elements came to the fore in different settings. I have used a range of examples and quotes to elaborate how change occurred in students' assumptions in the following sections.

The activating event

Over the year the students mentioned facing challenges from a variety of areas. Every week there was a range of aspects that had challenged the students, and activated critical reflection. The reported activating event or challenge for students tended to come not from challenges that teachers had planned for their classes, but as a result of students' own personal theological or psychological position and related to their own epistemology. In no week did all students nominate one particular entity as having challenged them, although many nominated the earthquake. Rarely did even two students mention the same thing as being the area of challenge that week. This underlines the idiosyncratic nature of the assumptions held. Further there is a relationship between the unexpectedness or severity of the trigger event, and the readiness to examine the discomfort that may ensue as a result.¹

In the following sections I consider the range of challenges that arose for the students. These activating events arose from class, from practical work, from retreats and chapels, from issues coming out of relationships, and issues unrelated to the programme.

¹ Page 54 discusses the nature of activating events and the readiness of a person to respond.

Activating event in the class situation

There were a variety of challenges in the class situation, and while teachers planned ‘crises’ by intentionally teaching in a way that might challenge the students, there were also challenges that intrinsically or implicitly arose from the class content for various students. Staff presented challenge in various ways. Sometimes an actual situation, as in example 6.1 above, made a pertinent starting point. Other teachers created their own hypothetical situation which would challenge students to think about their own responses. Sometimes teachers knew that the nature of the material itself could level a challenge for a particular student given her background.

... because I knew something about Nabila’s story, when I prepared Joseph then I did put some stress on that so that she would also recognise that this also happened to me. (Miss W Focus I)

When we heard about Joseph’s character in class, how his brothers had treated him then I remembered how my own brothers had treated me, and I was really hurt and upset – I don’t want to remember it but keep on recalling it. (Nabila R1)

Sometimes teachers merged something that created a tension in one class with ongoing teaching through a series of classes, and noticed the impact on their students. Miss V presented an advertising poster for a healing crusade at the beginning of her New Testament Survey (NTS) course to start students thinking about their understanding of the person of Jesus:

In NTS reading the gospels they started to think about the person of Christ in a new way. In the way that the ... advertisement presents Jesus simply as a healer, or miracle worker. But much more than that, they have seen Jesus as King and Saviour. And in Luke's gospel they have seen how all types - downtrodden, ignored people - understood and this was an encouragement. (Miss V T3)

[Challenged by...] the different aspects of Christ's character which I learned while working on my NTS assignment. During the research and writing of the assignment I kept thinking about them. In nearly every thought and work my thoughts have revolved around the various sides of Christ's character. In different books and in the Bible my thinking has grown. (Nageen R3)

In the synoptic gospels I saw Jesus Christ's personality in different perspectives, Jesus as servant, he did not see anyone as special or ordinary - Jesus can do it so I can ask for strength to do it too. Because I too am in God's family. (Parveen R3)

In Miss V's class - we always thought of Jesus as a healer, but not as the king of our hearts. I often thought that there is no one who understands me but Christ came for those who are in distress and he understands me. (Tahira R3)

The above examples from a number of students mention something planned by the teacher for the class situation over a number of subsequent days. Students report only ‘what challenged you most’ every week, and teachers usually only report one challenge every two weeks, so that what students report may not be what teachers planned. Further, there were other avenues for students to work on challenges, such as journals for a class. For instance Farhat on 28th Sept wrote in her journal for the Gospel of John about being challenged regarding hidden sin in her life regarding a lesson from the Gospel of John Chapter 4. Then on Sept 30th her reflection sheet challenge relates to her Sunday school work.

The degree of concordance in a trigger event between a staff feedback sheet and a student reflection in examples 6.1 and 6.2 above is a useful indicator of how the classes worked, although such reporting is infrequent. Although I knew about the idiosyncratic nature of the challenges, I had asked teachers to report what they had planned and how they had challenged students, not necessarily what students had been challenged by. In example 6.1 Miss Z became aware that she had not supposed students would be so ready to take retaliatory action, and made the most of the opportunity to help students evaluate their assumptions about retaliation. A student then reported it became an opportunity for rethinking responses to the kind of oppression and attack that the Christian community sustains from time to time in Pakistan.

Activating event through ministry skills training

Another area of challenge related to the practical work students did for the ‘professional skills’ they needed to acquire. Discipleship Course students taught six 30 minute Bible lessons (“Sunday School”) in the first term at a Christian primary school nearby, and led one morning chapel service at UBTC. During the second term students taught at a regular weekly Sunday School on a local church compound, led at least two morning chapel services, led small group studies for groups of UBTC students present on short (three week) courses and finished the term with a month long practical internship attached either to the chaplaincy programme at mission hospitals, or in church based situations, in cities outside of Gujranwala. In their final term the DC students continued to lead morning chapel, took weekly evening Bible study in a nearby girls' hostel, and planned and led a weekly meeting for local teenage girls. The Foundation Course students also led morning chapel services, took Bible lessons in the nearby Christian primary school, led Bible

studies for another group of students attending a three week course at UBTC, and participated in the hostel and teenage girl programmes that the DC students arranged. Those who had been involved in some sort of teaching before found that at UBTC there were higher expectations regarding preparation and performance than had previously pertained in other locations.

We always have this problem with Sunday School: they think it is easy but it is not. A few days earlier I heard someone say that before this I thought it was easy to take chapel but now it is hard! (FOCUS I)

Having to present something in front of others is in itself some kind of challenge.

I had to take chapel and it was very difficult to prepare – first as it was the first time, and there was a lot of fear in my heart but I accepted the challenge. (Nabila R1)

Last week I had to do a presentation in the matric class - I wanted to do it really well, and I could not understand, I really thought about it, and prayed that I would know God's will. (Parveen R2)

Learning to think about Sunday School as more than a simple retelling of Bible stories but doing so with a formative purpose was an enormous challenge to the students, even those who came with some experience of teaching children. In the first few weeks of preparation and teaching Sunday School most students make comments:

(Sunday School preparation)... and I thought about it such a lot, but thank God the preparation went well and so I explained it all to the children too. (Saima R1)

In our Sunday School preparation, which I just could not do but I saw it as a challenge, even though it seemed so difficult to me that I was angry – I did not want to say something to [a teacher], but my heart was pumping so much I thought that I will leave it and go home but I prayed - God you are there. (Parveen R1)

Sunday School work because I can't work out an objective (Tahira R1)

The challenge was in Sunday School prep, especially finding a purpose. First I prayed, and then read the passage. And then prayed again then one or two thoughts came into my mind. Then I wrote them as objectives for the children and then I was satisfied... but when beside this purpose a large cross appears that this is not right, then I do get rather down. ... So then I started praying all over again, searching for something new that was also in the story - but again a big cross! Then I understood that I am just not right. Now my thoughts will be - there is a struggle in my mind and heart - the first one is right, or the next - the next one is wrong, the first is right... (Farhat R3)

This was also difficult for the teachers helping the students:

Teaching transformatively

It has been rather a challenge in Sunday School that they be able to think of an objective for the class. And I don't know what else to do to make it even easier for them. So – like this is it easy for us that we can go this way and teach this way, but now they understand how we need to focus on everything; there is an important thing that we need to point out. This has been for them difficult, and a challenge – in the way that they struggle.

SO HOW HAVE THEIR ASSUMPTIONS CHANGED BY THIS? WHAT ASSUMPTIONS HAVE BEEN CHANGED – WHEN THEY SEE IT IS DIFFICULT?

This assumption has changed now that before they thought that it is so easy, we can do it, teaching children, taking Sunday School is not so difficult. Now they are really working hard and taking on the responsibility that children are people, and we have to take the class in such a way as to help them. It is a struggle for them – and for them to realise that salvation is important. From their faces it seems that for them, understanding the process of Sunday School, and thinking to this standard is difficult. But in group discussion, detailed talking, at least they think that teaching at the level of the children is important, Sunday School is important and a special responsibility of the teacher. (Miss U SI)

The assumptions underlying the challenge of the preparation, which reoccurs with other practical work, relate to the nature of the text, the nature of teaching, and to the nature of the people they teach. So the changes impact on many related classes:

Change is still happening – especially through doing practical things. So from teaching Sunday School there is a difference in the homiletics class. (Miss Y T1)

Linking the learning in to critical events this week has been helpful... The first chapel experience for students was a motivator for them in Bible Study (BS) methods. The recognition of the need for context became obvious through their preparation. Now the students are thinking we want to learn this 'cos we need it (rather than because it is a subject). By linking my teaching in this even the students' interaction with the material has become more personalised. (Miss Z T1)

During the course students start to look at the assumptions they brought to the course regarding their own ideas about Sunday School:

Miss U: For Sunday School I am thinking that I need to ask them too, that when we went to Sunday School, those who have studied in Sunday School, or who have taught it, what are their ideas, what kind of place is Sunday School? There were questions like this, from which they had to evaluate themselves and think – so I used questions. (FOCUS I)

In another class (see example 6.3) a teacher traces through step by step how she taught to help students develop their own thinking about the person of a teacher of children, and how they had re-evaluated not just their own thinking about that position but what their parents' own thinking may have been and how that impacted on them and on their church.

Example 6.3 Teaching thinking through ministry skills

Q. 1 STUDENT ASSUMPTIONS

Teaching about a Sunday School teacher's character, the students said that in church parents do not respect a Sunday School teacher - they do so much and yet get no return. Then at the end of the class we could know that before God a teacher is very important.

They are happy that they are teachers in Sunday School and a little bit happy and content that a teacher is not unimportant, in fact very important.

Q. 2 THINK ABOUT YOUR OWN TEACHING: HOW HAVE YOU FOUND TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING PROCESSES HAVE HELPED YOU TO HELP STUDENTS?

By including them more, their own concepts seem important and they listen hard.

Q. 2B ARTICULATE ASSUMPTIONS

By using questions, they show what they think

Q. 2C CRITICALLY SELF-REFLECT?

We looked in the Bible to see if what we (students) thought was what the Bible said.

Q. 2D OTHER POINTS OF VIEW?

They compared their own ideas with others.

Q. 2E DISCOURSE

Wrote on the board and whatever they thought said freely

Q. 2F REVISION OF ASSUMPTIONS

A Sunday School teacher is not unimportant; we read Dan 3.12 and Jn 8.26 and other passages.

Then some other objectives (re why Sunday School should be taught) were taught in the class, and they started to think, that what their parents should have thought about them

That their parents should believe their objectives - but maybe like the students they have also never been taught. They have started to think that now when they teach that they will surely do this.
(Miss T T3)

Challenges that arose in practical work touch on the three main domains of assumption that were considered in chapter five, epistemological, personal, and theological. Epistemologically, students realised that they were not simply re-telling stories or passing on information, they were teaching other people, and needed to think about these peoples' needs, and they were teaching subject matter that had to be understood and adapted to each particular situation. Theologically, students considered their own understanding of the material and be ready to be challenged personally as they taught. Personally, it became a challenge for the students in terms of what they thought about themselves. Through the sheer difficulty of the work they had to come to a new acceptance of themselves as people involved in ministry and what that might mean.

Activating event arising through retreats, chapels, or devotionals

Teaching that operated in the extra-rational domain occurred more often during retreats, chapels or devotional activities. These were usually specifically geared to challenging the students in their personal spiritual growth. These were often opportunities to move into areas where emotion and imagination were more easily invoked as partners in the learning process, making greater connection and integration of what is being learned and the person doing the learning. The importance of incorporating emotion and imagination is mentioned frequently by those who research in these areas.

Emotions are vital to thought and to learning. Emotions increase the strength of memories and help to recall the context of an experience, rendering it meaningful. ²

*Emotions, thought and memory are closely interrelated and cannot be separated.*³

*I argue that personally significant and meaningful learning is fundamentally grounded in and is derived from the adults' emotional, imaginative connection with the self and with the broader social world. ...The process of meaning making, however, is essentially imaginative and extra rational, rather than merely reflective and rational.*⁴

This is the background for students' responses that showed a level of integration that was far deeper than a simple cognitive one, but included emotion and meaning for their lives:

This was the first time in my life to learn like this and to immediately make connection with my life - I felt a change in my life right away. (Naheed R3 – after a retreat)

A morning chapel where thinking about covenant and personal relationship was paired with moving to different places within the chapel itself, and time for thinking and responding personally, found a place in staff and student feedback.

Today's chapel brought me face to face with where my walk with God is – in physically moving I identified physically and therefore in my thinking where I am at, and where I am not. This has

² Hill, "The Brain and Consciousness: Sources of Information for Understanding Adult Learning," 76.

³ Ibid.: 79.

⁴ Dirkx, "The Power of Feelings: Emotion, Imagination, and the Construction of Meaning in Adult Learning," 64.

left in my mind the challenge of how I develop and sustain my personal walk with God. (Miss Z T3)

No, no big change is apparent yet. Doubtless I have started to understand that there is no more good and faithful friend than Jesus, and now I just trust him, and want him to talk with me. In this way God's word about the new covenant was something full of hope. [Related to Friday 30/9 chapel] (Farhat R3)

Day retreats were held four times during the year when classes were cancelled and a particular objective or theme was followed through. Although the format varied, a retreat day usually would have some suggested Bible reading for students to use at the beginning of the day in their own devotional time, and would start with a communal time of worship, followed by a session introducing some teaching on the theme of the day. There would also be small group discussion, and blocks of time for students to be alone to reflect on issues, usually with some guidelines or questions. Resources for creative responses with paint or play dough or card would also be available. The final session of the day included an opportunity for students to relay to others anything special they may have learned during the day, either using what they may have created or written, or simply recounting it. The final session sometimes included a special way of responding to God regarding what students and staff had learned, for instance putting something on an 'altar,' or burning a representation of something they wanted to put behind them. Students always referred to these days as special times of growth.

The retreats that occurred during this year helped me to become more mature. Now I see myself as God's daughter, beloved daughter, who works all things together for my good. Now I've forgiven these people from my heart - but this all happened with God's help and I am very thankful to him. That for years I was a prisoner and have found freedom from this thing. (Mumtaz R3)

In the other classes people teach us, but a retreat day is one spent with God - it was a good experience. I could know about myself, what God is like and what does he want of me. (Parveen R3)

This was a new and unique experience for me, and different to my thinking. Because I had thought how is it possible that one could feel God close to one? It was very strange for me. (Hamida R3)

Activities which required a physical response from the students often encouraged a greater degree of reflection and self-evaluation, as in the morning chapel around the theme of covenant mentioned above. In one of these retreats the theme of the day was maturity. At the beginning of the day the students were challenged to place themselves (a folded slip of paper with their name

concealed inside) on a flannel board of a road with Jesus standing at the end of the road. Placing themselves on the road confronted the students with ideas about their own growth and spiritual movement:

The challenge is walking with Jesus. I realised that I am not taking Jesus with me but he is taking me with him. I realised that I knew all along that this is what walking with Jesus is. To learn his word, accept it and in prayer have fellowship with him. But that day I realised that I learned how to walk with Jesus; I also have to obey his commands. (Rubina R3)

Where am I on my journey with God? Thinking about this and putting my name on the felt board, assessing myself, I felt that my relationship with God was very weak - how can I strengthen it? (Mumtaz R3)

Another of the tasks during the retreat on maturity was for each participant to identify obstacles in their own path to maturity. In the afternoon of the retreat day the students were introduced to the medieval labyrinth concept, which brought forth a linking of struggle, crisis, and emotion. We used a labyrinth drawn on the grass in the garden. One who got lost in the turns⁵ used that as a picture of the confusion in her own life in her journey toward Jesus (CAS). Many talked about taking the obstacles into the labyrinth with them and emerging feeling ‘very light’ or ‘light and happy.’

Because I had thought that maybe I will just pray and return. But when God touched my shoulders and I felt that my burden had been lifted - it was a great change for me. (Hamida R3)

Seeing the labyrinth from afar it did not seem special, but walking through it there were a number of challenges in my mind. I took two obstacles with me into the labyrinth - but as I went there were a number of small other hindrances which I also had to get rid of. I was surprised that these tiny little things stop us from growing. I have not totally eradicated them yet but am slowly trying. (Mumtaz R3)

I wanted to keep walking in the labyrinth and pray - because you think more doing this, and no one disturbs you: turn turn turn going ahead- and I am thinking about getting clear of these obstacles and



Fig 6.1 The classical labyrinth

⁵ Spatial puzzles, mazes and drawing books (which road does the mouse take to get the cheese) are not a normal part of childhood in Pakistan and the labyrinth was a puzzle for some of the students. Labyrinth diagram from *Classical Labyrinth* ([cited February 8, 2005); available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Labyrinth_2_%28from_Nordisk_familjebok%29.png.

with prayer and putting God in front of me now I am thinking about my relationships - how much do I want from others? (Iqbal R3)

Dirkx, who has studied the interface of learning and image, draws attention to how the use of symbol and emotion can help students to consider aspects of themselves that are often closed to such introspection:

*Emotionally charged images, evoked through the contexts of adult learning, provide the opportunity for a more profound access to the world by inviting a deeper understanding of ourselves in relationship with it.*⁶

For example the use of symbol in the form of the cross, was a motivator both personally...

This week drawing a picture I learned that when I go to Christ, it has to be with all my heart. Cleansing my heart and doing God's will. I made a cross and I was going along the path to it. I am ready to go along it with my whole heart (Tahira R2)

...and corporately – as narrated by a student:

In the first term [we had to teach] Sunday School, and in the second term Sunday School also and we did not want to do it... We lost courage, and said we have done it now we don't want to do it. But when Miss U found out then she said yes we do have to do it, we will learn more if we do it again. She and Miss T came to us. And they brought a cross with them and put it at the front... We thought that we can't do it, Sunday School, but God be thanked that when ... Miss U and Miss T came and put the cross before us and we thought about what Jesus has done and we thought, can't we stay up late at night for him? So we changed, and thought that when Jesus is with us then work is easy. (Rubina MI)

This was affirmed by one of the teachers:

In this last week there has been significant 'de-motivation' - students have been rubbing each other the wrong way and alongside this not wanting to study, losing initiative in getting work checked etc (2nd semester-it is). Staff met and discussed the situation and prayed. From this Miss U felt to challenge the students with bringing their problems and issues to the foot of the cross - and took a cross to their study room as a focus. This was powerful for the students - touching emotions and allowing an awareness of the issues to be acknowledged. Since this there has been a remotivation from my perspective when students were given a further women character to study - they have now been excited again to do this study. (Miss Z T2)

⁶ Dirkx, "The Power of Feelings: Emotion, Imagination, and the Construction of Meaning in Adult Learning," 64.

Challenges that students recounted in this area of their personal faith journey were those stimulated by physical response or physical image (labyrinth, walking in chapel, their names on the board, the symbol of the cross). Possibly this was simply a result of the reporting strategy. It was much easier to report a challenge as an outcome of a physically recountable event than a more numinous response from a prayer or Bible reading session. However while that may be so, it remains that the trigger events in this area were introduced, often involved a physical element or response, and often contained symbolic content. This is one area where the need to continue to forge the link between 'theology' and 'spirituality' is apparent. Planning for spiritually transformative events may include using a wide range of stimuli and elements which may bring a challenge, especially those which access imagination and intuition.

Activating event arising from relationship issues

Another major area of challenge was that of relationships. Approximately a quarter of the weekly student recounted challenges related to relationship issues. A sampling of the 'challenge' section of student reflection sheets showed how much relationship problems triggered deeper thinking:

There was a fight with my class fellows – I was thinking that now I have fought so much will God forgive me or not? I had read in God's word, love one another – I was thinking that I had got so angry- now how can I forgive her: this is what affected me emotionally (Parveen R1)

Such a terrible fight that I want to go home, but I said to Miss P to phone my home, I do not want to stay here. However I did not phone, it was hard for me to share a room. I wanted to meet with Saima but Satan locked up my mind and heart. Then I thought that I had a special reason for coming to UBTC, so making peace with Saima was a challenge - God what will I do? what will happen to me? God help me. I am in a mental struggle. (Parveen R3)

I often note other people's mistakes and point them out to them: you made such a mistake. I and those around me are living together very well, but often not even meaning too I choose to do it. This is hard to bear for the others. Others do it to me too, but everyone likes advising others. (Nageen R3)

Razia's negative attitude was a real challenge to me: I thought that I will never say anything to her again - let her do what she wants. I didn't even want to see her. I was very angry with her. So many times I had thought about Razia that I will not talk to her, but that passed and more than once I felt that I didn't do what I thought I would, or said. (Nabila R3)

The challenge impinged on the students in different ways: their own emotions and conscience in having bad relations is a beginning. The other students, and living in an unhappy atmosphere,

also made them move toward resolving the problem. Thirdly, teachers were quick to pick up on issues between students and helped them to consider what they could do to resolve the issue.

Activating event from repeated occurrences

Sometimes a student may encounter a similar idea a number of times in different types of activities, which works to reinforce the challenging aspect. When Tahira mentioned this piling up of challenge, they have occurred in a range of activities that include personal and communal, cognitive class and reflective devotional (QT) times. The varying nature of the incidents may help to reinforce the idea on a number of levels within the student:

Often whatever I am thinking about that comes up too in my QT. And in chapel and in class. Then I am surprised that I think of one thing and then everywhere I find that same message. Then I think about it more and then go ahead even more. (Tahira FI)

Similarly, over a short time period classes on the Holy Spirit, Discipleship and the Youth Work class looked at different aspects of students having gifts and needing to use them. So a couple of students responded:

To recognise my own gifts and to present myself for service, because I had never thought about this, I thought it was not necessary. (Naheed R3)

In discipleship class we had to recognise our gifts I could not use my gifts - I have not polished my gifts. (Parveen R3)

Activating events and types of perspective

The range of challenges encountered by the students came from a wide array of experiences: from their classes, from practical work, chapels and devotional experiences, and from relationships issues. The settings varied from communal to private, and from cognitively oriented to practical work, and some were from spare time activities. Students themselves were at different stages developmentally and had different concerns, so that even though the students experienced most of these situations together, different elements challenged them. What may have been an activating event for one student may have not have been a concern for another, or alternatively may have been such a concern she was not yet ready to deal with it. Some of the activating events were provided intentionally by staff either in class or devotional content or in

mentoring. Students became aware that when they had been challenged they had a choice to ignore it or to follow it through to understand themselves, their assumptions and their responses better. The range of activating events covered epistemological, theological, and personal perspectives. Epistemological challenges arose mainly in class, whereas the theological and personal challenges also surfaced in other situations.

Recursive aspects of the transformative learning process

As has been said in a different context, it is possible to distinguish without having to separate. The various phases of the transformative learning theory have been differentiated but in the teaching-learning process this does not mean that they can be easily separated out. What follows does try to some extent to do so, but all of these processes worked together. While it was possible to distinguish the source of challenges, the places where these phases of transformative learning take place are harder to know, apart from what is self-reported as belonging in the classroom or the reflection sheet itself.

Articulating assumptions

...it is amazing the assumptions that are there because they are assumptions that aren't assumptions that I am so aware of [...] and so as a teacher it has been absolutely crucial for me to discover what the assumptions are because I would never have touched them - I would never have guessed some of the assumptions that are there. And so in a small group that has been really necessary and maybe ... for others as well how do you know what the assumptions are and you can't dig them all out and you can't handle all that and yet how can you teach and how can you help people change assumptions? (Miss Z SF)

It bears saying, although it seems obvious, that teachers do not know how students think. The frames of reference, habits of mind, and points of view that each person holds may be partly shared but also have individual elements. Even if a teacher does recognise the kind of assumption a student may be working from, for change to occur it is the student who needs to recognise the assumption, and want to evaluate how that assumption is functioning in her life. Very often teachers recognized that student assumptions were in some way awry, but to move from there to getting the students themselves to articulate the assumptions that underlay the statements they made was more difficult.

To find the real root of something we might be thinking about is difficult (Miss T T1)

Teaching transformatively

It is very challenging to help them realise that they are thinking something wrong (Miss U FOCUS I)

In prep I need to be planning in ways of helping students to articulate their assumptions. (Miss Z T3)

Their assumptions are not revealed that quickly, but finally I can know which their wrong assumptions were and in the end they have done something. (Miss V T3)

The information that I asked for in this regard centred on the classroom. During the year the teachers became more creative, and more intentional in helping students themselves to articulate and recognize their own underlying assumptions. Earlier in the year responses were more straightforward, including questions, looking at students' questions, and journaling:

Miss Z: I realise that when I am thinking about this, then I ask more questions as to know where the students are coming from because it has been in our minds then I have been more aware of making opportunities for the students to actually share what they are thinking.

Miss Y: I have noticed that in my class there are more questions, and from the questions I can better find out how they are thinking with the end in mind that they will actually be able to arrive at what the root of their thinking is. So that is a good change in the class – it was more of a lecture before.

Miss W: For me too what has happened is that there are more questions to try to realise what they are thinking – then it is easier to help them.

CAS: [also the students' questions] as this morning someone asked if the Israelites already had the Bible? when two days ago we had done the canon – but to a large extent it is a false understanding not a false assumption –but it is also a false assumption in that the idea is that the Bible (like the Quran) came down as it is.

Miss W: They keep a journal – personal evaluation

Miss V: We also become aware of their false assumptions in general conversation – just sitting chatting, and here and there, something that you can see what they are thinking and some false idea.

Miss U: ...sometimes someone presents an idea, and by a story or a role play they can realise 'what am I thinking and is it right?' Another idea is that by asking the other girls if they agree or do they want to say something else. If there is any need for change. (FOCUS I)

This related partly to having to establish an environment where students would respond, but also training the students to be self-reflective:

They are starting to think about their inner selves.

To include themselves in imagining biblical events was a good method, through this their thinking is developing. (Miss W T1)

By the end of the year there was far more variety in how the teaching staff worked, which matched a greater readiness in the students to respond. It was more possible to use group discussion with effect because the students had learned to discuss.

The girls who don't talk can now reveal their thoughts. When I made two groups and gave them two different topics to talk about "good works are necessary for salvation" and "the importance of good works for the Christian" they discussed well and very good ideas came out. (Miss V T3)

Through group discussion & QT notebook

When I motivate them they can express ideas, even if they have wrong ideas

Brainstorming responses (Miss W T3)

Persistent questioning to make them define 'ministry' as more than 'what a minister does.' Every time they used word 'ministry' making them put it in other words (Miss R T3)

By asking questions by showing the advertisement and asking who is Jesus and how is Jesus presented here? What do we understand about him? (Miss V T3)

As with the devotional aspect of the activating event, anything like a whole body or physical response generally helped in students becoming aware of and giving voice, or place, to their thinking, which led on to articulating their assumptions.

Students were asked to stand on a line to show their position – 2 clear positions emerged (Miss Z T3)

Because many of the assumptions that students held were congruent with their culture, it often required example and persistent questioning to help them realize that what they thought of themselves, and maybe that the 'right' answer in their Christian milieu, was not necessarily the only answer.

Assumptions that have arisen from the surrounding environment and traditions are brought into their experience. Studying they want to show that those things they have always seen and heard are not always true. (Miss Y T3)

We were looking at Pharaoh and why the plagues came: so the girls said that Pharaoh did not fear God, and I said that sometimes we are like that too, that we don't fear God. They said, no Miss we fear God. Then I pointed to a few things where in small things we don't fear God. Then they recognised that yes, it is so. (Miss V FOCUS I)

Articulation of assumptions at this level was still largely assumed, giving only a general idea of the area of assumption. Only occasionally was there indication of this being pressed to be more finely articulated and questioned:

Through questioning and response – asked ‘on what do you base this’ ‘how do you know these people are correct’ (Miss Z T3)

Now I see that it is not easy to see all people’s assumptions – and maybe those who talk are the ones whose assumptions are ok, and the ones who are silent are those who have faulty assumptions.

Only by finding out from each student.

Those who give answers more ‘bravely’ – and others agree even if they don’t really

There is a difference between generally held misconceptions and personally held misconceptions. (FOCUS II)

When students had gained the opportunity to articulate their assumptions, then more opportunity had to be afforded to help them understand the source and consequences of the assumptions, and to continue to move through the process.

Critical self-reflection

One of the significant changes seen throughout the year is the way that students learned to critically self-reflect on their own personal issues, not only in class when a teacher guided them to do so but as various issues confronted them they had discovered a way to deal with them. The development of epistemological complexity and ability to think and work in groups outlined in the previous chapter was a significant factor in this. For instance the initial reflection sheets tend to be vague, as students were learning how to reflect. I explained to the students how to fill them in and how to think about what they were writing. Part way through the first term after I had left Miss Y took an evening session with the students on reflecting and writing. As the year progressed the level of reflection in the weekly sheets intensified. For instance to the first question ‘what has challenged you most in the last week’ example 6.4 gives a selection of responses from the first, second and third terms from one student. These get more detailed and show a readiness to reflect, for instance Feb 18 and Oct 29 are similar circumstances but differ in how Parveen continues to think the situation through.

Example 6. 4 Developing epistemology shown in reflection sheets through the year

Term 1

Jan 28: The amount of work

February 4: God's word – I just don't understand it – I prayed that God would help me understand

February 18: It is difficult to forgive Saima because such words come out of her mouth which I have never heard before – she said that if anyone says something time and again she hates it and that affected me emotionally

February 25: In our SS preparation, which I just could not do but I saw it as a challenge, even though it seemed so difficult to me that I was angry – I did not want to, say something to Miss where my heart was pumping that I will leave it and go home but I prayed - God you are there.

Term 2

April 22 Last week I had to do a presentation in the matric class – I wanted to do it really well, and I could not understand, I really thought about it, and prayed that I would know God's will

May 28: Taking chapel: because I thought that to speak in front of so many people would be difficult. I did not know if I would be able to do it or not, this thing was going around and around my head.

June 17: Yes, I never liked living among people when I came to --- Hospital and had to live in the middle of so many people so I got very upset. I was very distressed – and I got angry.

Term 3

Sept 11: I was asked to give a message in a women's meeting. But there were more men than women there – and I got nervous: how can I speak amongst men? – I was worrying about this, that instead of women there were more men, I was called up and then I was even more nervous. But as I started to deliver the Word then God gave me courage. I knew God is true in his promises – I remembered Joshua 1.9, and not only is that true for Joshua but today God is strength in my weakness.

Oct 8 On Saturday when the earthquake came there was lots of damage but I was standing on the roof, and running and in a quandary. When I know that it was an earthquake then I was very upset. It seemed strange to me, what is God like? Does God want to make us aware of his presence?

Oct 14: I want to make my character better – because I don't want to understand any person as special or ordinary – I want to give the same kind of time to everyone, which is difficult.

Oct 29 : Such a terrible fight that I want to go home, but I said to [hostel superintendent] to phone my home, I do not want to stay here. However I did not phone, it was hard for me to share a room. I wanted to meet with Saima but Satan locked up my mind and heart. When I thought that I had a special reason for coming to UBTC, so making peace with Saima was a challenge – God what will I do, what will happen to me, God help me. I am in a mental struggle.

(Parveen)

The students recognised their growing ability and mentioned how they would take time to think and reflect:

In class, chapel and spending time with God I found more opportunities to learn about this question, and to examine myself (Tahira R2)

In these days I have monitored myself closely – when do I get angry? and I looked into the reasons. I am trying to deal with the reasons, and started to pray for myself about what I have found out. Also I have thought about the reasons my family [get mad] and I am trying not to get angry quickly and not do or say wrong things. (Tahira R3)

I have changed here - before I thought that I did not have anything - I could not recognize myself or God. I just did not think about it at all, I just lived in my house ... And I have changed here in this way, that I see that in myself and I can perceive God more closely. Every day, almost every day there is a new challenge. In these last days through a picture I changed myself. I think that now that change has happened - that I feel where am I weak, what can I do. In this way I can go forward with someone's help, or do it myself and with prayer. So in this way it seems I have changed - I think so, before I did not even think

SO BY THINKING YOU CHANGE?

Yes. (Iqbal MI)

Well it is so that from each other, thinking and rejecting this idea and straining them through - surely we do need to do research but also to think. (Sorraya FI)

Students' developing cognitive complexity impacted on their ability to reflect. The teaching staff also learned processes to encourage more critical reflection. Teachers gave time for reflection in class but teachers do not mention modelling their own reflection. In one class Miss Z talks about how she had the students thinking about their own process of reflection:

We then reflected not on the topic but on how we had communicated, what we had achieved and how we could do better in future. Student ideas: listen, research first, believe others might have something to contribute. (Miss Z T3)

Observing a class early in the year I was impressed that the teacher had set aside the time for reflection on what had been difficult and personally inferential material:

Miss W spends about 10 minutes at the end on application and reflection – very good, could be more intentional about ways of reflection – give some help. (CAS)

Miss W had given time but the students needed to be helped to use the time for reflection more precisely. Two teachers record how they learned to do this:

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I have found it helpful to consciously include more ‘why’ questions and other probing questions in helping the reflective process. We have been using a diary to record new things learnt – I am trying to encourage deeper reflection on how/ why these things are good – as a way of critically reflecting. (Miss Z F1)

[Critical reflection] in thinking about their past and present. (Miss T T3)

Miss Z reflected on a class in her course on the gospel of John, when to help students connect with the action in chapter 13, where Jesus washes the feet of his disciples, she had washed the feet of the students. For the students this had been much more than a cognitively oriented study of what had occurred, and the teacher wanted to give the students time to reflect themselves before she guides them further.

...what was interesting to me in this process is that I won't finish that class there when I next meet with them. We will now go back and actually - we talked a little at the time just to help shape that at the time but now we have to go back. And at morning tea time after [class] the girls were looking serious and upset and oh I haven't had time to think about that yet - so it was sitting in their brain but I haven't had time to think on that was the comment ... (Miss Z SF)

The use of various self-inventories made students think about themselves:

Worksheet on different topics like listening, self-esteem (Miss W T3)

Sometimes reflection was on practical matters. Miss Z sat with the students to help them reflect on the practicalities of the weekly girls’ club they were running:

It is interesting after the [girlz] fellowship on Friday night I sat with the whole group and wanted them to reflect a little bit on how they are doing in fellowship not so much the individual presentation but the larger thing and there people were able to think quite well and articulate.

So actually they had this info and as they discussed in the group different people put in quite a lot of things so in that context I can see that in their thinking transformative learning is starting be applied. Not theologically but in terms of the larger picture thinking - real progress, great progress on a practical side (Miss Z T3)

Group work and the instance above of what is in reality group reflection are also ways for students to model and learn reflection from each other.

In a Discipleship Course class the teacher had used a self-inventory about listening as a way of helping students think about their mutual relationships and how actively they listened to others.

In the reflection sheet below (example 6.4), the student not only reflected on how she listened, and in the final section she expanded the idea of ‘listening’ to how that impacted on her relationship with God. This shows a reflection above the level of the simple meaning scheme of listening to others but a higher ‘habit of mind’ which includes all the different ways she listened and related to other people and to God.

Example 6.5 Student reflection sheet on listening

<p>WHAT CHALLENGED YOU MOST THIS WEEK?</p> <p>The discipleship class on listening with Miss W was important to me. I evaluated myself on what kind of listener I am. I filled a form, that asked what kind of listener I was, and it was difficult because I had never thought about this. I found out that I listen to others but this way I also learned about the benefit and the harm.</p> <p>Q2 HOW HAVE YOU THOUGHT MORE ABOUT IT?</p> <p>Talking to others after this class, I started to take note of myself, of how I listened. I checked myself and saw how far I listened and now what I have to do. This class benefited me and now I can make better relationships with people.</p> <p>Q2A WHAT CHANGE HAVE YOU SEEN IN YOURSELF?</p> <p>I used to make others listen to me, but now I try more to listen to others, and I am working on that, how I can do it better. I have learned some ways too and I am trying to work on them. I was glad, that I kept listening attentively to a student even when I was tired and wanted to sleep, so I could help her with her problem. If I had not learned this, I would not have done that.</p> <p>Q4 HAVE YOU CREATED SOMETHING ABOUT THIS?</p> <p>God I want to spend lots of time with you</p> <p>Give me strength to listen to your people</p> <p>I want to stay close to and be aware of you all the time</p> <p>I want to hear you and your people</p> <p>So I can be wise.</p> <p>Q3 WHAT HAS MADE YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE?</p> <p>Talking with Miss Z about this, I realised that I can talk with others for quite a time and listen to them. How much fellowship do I have with God and how much do I try to improve that? And how important do I think it is? This is something to think about. (Tahira R3)</p>

Implementing self-reflection

In asking students in the weekly reflection sheet to identify what they were uncomfortable with, I was asking them for material that later might come up as a challenge. In the early weeks, and sometimes later, students mentioned family problems or issues that they had no control over. As

time passed students would recount something that troubled them and then continue to explain why it had made them uncomfortable and how they were resolving it. They had internalized a method of critical self-reflection. That can be seen in the final sentences of example 6.4 above, and in the comment below. The background to the angst of this student is that often students demanded a great deal of attention, and sometimes their need to be noticed, or not being noticed, comes up in their reflections.

WHAT HAS MADE YOU UNCOMFORTABLE ?

It seemed to me that in class others were being given preference and not me. This made me extremely worried and upset, and I was not happy to be in class. Then I thought: it is not necessary that what I think is really the case, and I tried to change my attitude, and prayed to God asking why did that idea even enter my mind? (Parveen R3)

The form of the reflection sheet, which asked the students to nominate a point of challenge and then work through that challenge, would have helped students to continue to do this for issues when they were simply asked what made them uncomfortable. The function of this question had been to help identify issues that students may not have been ready to deal with and had simply noticed and then disregarded. Instead what started to happen is that students became ready to explore their own negative emotions and responses.

Alternate viewpoints

Sometimes living alongside others meant that students came face to face with viewpoints and attitudes that were different from their own, and learned from this:

I saw this same point of experience in someone else's life and saw all the negative consequences so it became the chance to think about it and change my attitude. (Mumtaz R2)

Different students solving challenges differently (Miss Z T3)

They have started to listen to each other, how difficult and useful it was to meet [Muslim people] during fieldwork. (Miss Y T3)

Possibly for the students to be ready to listen to other's view points, it was important that they felt that they themselves have been heard:

All presented their own ideas – some were very different from the others (Miss V T3)

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They listened to the others and were encouraged as they gave their own opinions (Miss V T3)

The teaching staff used various methods to help students to see other opinions. If articulating their position meant getting them to stand somewhere along a line, students could start to appreciate that others held different views. This led to listening to each others viewpoints:

Students then took turns presenting points of view and responding with a challenge to listen to the others' side and consider their POV (Miss Z T3)

There is however an acknowledgement that other viewpoints can unleash emotional as well as cognitive responses:

Students were asked to explain to others their position... it was emotive, animated, opinionated, with not a lot of listening but people were thinking on their own ideas –groups physically divided into 2 sides, initially they were spread on line. Once all had shared & interaction had happened we sat down. (Miss Z T3)

The results of conflict and disagreement in their lives are mainly negative: it is necessary to come to know the other's idea and purpose in a conflict. (Miss Y T3)

Sometimes teachers would argue a contrary position to help students marshal arguments against them:

Taking opposite point of view and letting students defend biblical points of view e.g. Holy Spirit only gives gifts to pastors/ men/ older people and not to lay people, women or youth. The girls argued vehemently against this and Rubina even came up with a good biblical argument (Miss R T3)

Books were another avenue of finding different viewpoints. Nabila read books which led her to think about ideas she had not previously considered:

I read [that it says] in the Talmud that Hanook spent three days with God and the fourth day went to the people to give them advice and guidance. Then he spent six days with God and the seventh went to the people. In this way a year passed. One time he went to the people and met them and the rest of the time spent with God. The Talmud tells things which are not in the Bible written account - I don't believe or claim this book but I like that point that more time should be given to God (Nabila R2)

Teaching staff also talked about some of the physical parameters that were useful:

Debate on baptism. (Physically facing each other helped them to listen to others points of view better) Tahira said she understood other viewpoint (believers' baptism) better and could accept alternatives as still biblical. Nabila was encouraged to stand firm on her position (infant baptism) despite pressure from members of her new church (Pentecostal). (Miss R T3)

Physical separation and students' defence of their own position led to them considering the other side as they listened. (Miss Z T3)

Students at this point were only interested in confirming their own point of view, but were getting ready to listen to others. So I had them all stand on line again, but on the side opposite their opinion. (Miss Z T3)

Sometimes the 'other viewpoint' was a clash between a cultural and a biblically expounded understanding of the topic. Discussion about what 'ministry' entailed falls into this:

Several biblical passages about meeting practical needs to show that this concept is biblical in contrast to original assumptions that were far more cultural. They acknowledged that their concept of ministry was what was taught (and modelled) in church. They agreed that they wanted to follow biblical pattern rather than cultural. (Miss R T3)

Students occasionally talk about the effect of having to evaluate other viewpoints, as a learning experience for their own assumptions:

Before we just heard someone's point of view and that was it. Now we have to think about our own point of view - and that is the main reason for change. (Nageen FI)

Discourse

Discourse, in the rubric of transformative learning, is a special subset of discussion where participants test out and justify their own, possibly changed, assumptions. Many aspects of the transformative learning process can be encountered within discourse. In discourse challenge can occur, assumptions can be articulated and reflected upon, and others' points of view can be heard. Sometimes arguing about a topic necessarily involves some level of commitment to previously held assumptions, which in the course of discussion may be challenged, as Cetuk apprises students entering seminary:

You are being pushed to examine what you once thought were secure beliefs and are perhaps wondering what they will be replaced with, if anything.⁷

⁷ Virginia Samuel Cetuk, *What to Expect in Seminary: Theological Education as Spiritual Formation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 189.

Part of the difficulty in good discussion was in the students' own restricted thinking, and how they related to each other. The educational system that most had passed through is one in which the teacher has the right answer and students simply have to listen. An environment where students were encouraged to present their own views, and to discuss options, was novel and initially threatening for them.

In the first week they did not talk much, but their facial expressions changed. Their ability to think has changed to the extent that they have started to ask questions – and sometimes by asking questions show their interest (Miss Y T1)

Sometimes they don't want to talk about their ideas, I need to encourage them to do this, and give some options, so they will at least be able to recognise them. Not to discourage them. (Miss V T1)

Miss Y: Because in their thinking or understanding they get stuck with their own idea, only that is ok – they don't evaluate the idea (FOCUS I)

Miss U: I tried but they very quickly agreed with one another rather than continue the discussion. (FOCUS I)

This latter comment is partly consonant with a perspective of the Subjective Knower who values her connection with others and so only with difficulty expresses her own ideas.⁸ While students were sometimes reluctant to speak out, from the beginning of the year there were also elements of development and readiness for deeper discussion. Comments such as those of Miss V and U below show teachers giving the opportunity for students to speak out and to continue to maintain their connection with each other:

Miss V: Well we do it when we leave it to the rest of the class – 'what do the rest of you say about this?'

Miss U: Sometimes it is interesting because maybe the girl who first spoke - they try to convince her, and don't go ahead until she says 'ok' (FOCUS I)

Assumption changes are occurring in self-belief – believing in their own ability to read the Bible and study and hear God for themselves. In learning to think students are starting to use the tools they're getting – such as the type of questions they themselves can ask. There's a desire to think through issues...the means of them doing this is still in process. (Miss Z T1)

⁸ Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 65.

As the course progressed it became clear that the students were making progress epistemologically, which made them more ready for the level of discourse required.

Six weeks ago students wanted answers – now students are able to discuss, search, think, reflect and seek. Final class discussion showed this up in people’s ability to share and to listen. (Miss Z T3)

The students’ ability to critique others was most positive. I asked what they thought of the Sunday sermon and they were able to critique areas that they thought were not based on the text. They also recognised a good intro and were able to discuss the objective and how clear/ unclear this was. Both believing they were able to do this and their ability to productively discuss was amazing. (Miss Z T3)

A study of Jn 1 then proceeded and clearly John’s words explain he is not Elijah. This was a study undertaken in groups – the student who had before thought [John was] Elijah now herself read, thought and presented to others that this was not true. (Miss Z T3)

As above, students use personal experience first as their basis, then later started considering a biblical response. (Miss Z T3)

Students were slower to speak; they gave more thoughtful biblical answers. Some really entered into the thinking of the other side – others heard the other side and agreed with their original argument. (Miss Z T3)

Students’ constant need to reference the teacher was a problem in discourse, but students did sometimes overcome it. Teachers mention this problem in the quotes below.

How to get discussion going that is not teacher oriented? (Miss R T3)

Preparing questions that will really get students to talk and share their ideas and feelings with one another (not just with me) rather than just teacher-induced responses fed back to teacher (Miss R T3)

An effective discussion occurred in two groups regarding the Paul and Barnabas' conflict and the decision regarding Mark. Both groups gave good reasons for their own side, as to how both had made their decisions. (Miss Y T3)

We actually got a discussion going in which they ignored me and everyone’s comment was not peppered with ‘Miss... ’ – they were arguing with each other (CAS T3).

In the previous chapter students related how they had been enculturated to be quiet and not to speak or argue. In a sense encouraging discourse was being counter culture. Giving students the space to articulate, explore, and argue their perspectives without being reprimanded was transformative not simply in regard to perspectives they were evaluating. Discourse also helped students to develop a more complex epistemology, and provided space for them to develop confidence in their ideas and in themselves as persons of value who held and could argue ideas.

This is consonant with research on transformative learning in Pakistan and the Middle East,⁹ and points to aspects of transformative learning that are viable across cultures.

Revising assumptions

It is easy to deconstruct: to reconstruct is much more difficult. The teaching staff found that they could recognize where students might be coming from, but helping students to see that for themselves was harder. Even more difficult was to motivate students to come to the point where they could think about something from a different angle and change those assumptions:

Once exposing assumptions, how to then help another person to analyse these and shift their assumption base, if this is necessary? What is most effective, when? Confronting, discussing, praying, etc (Miss Z T3)

Assuring challenged assumptions are dealt with – helping students to reassemble. Today I decided I will keep a note of questions and issues that we are opening at the beginning of the course and at the end I will keep time aside to revisit these – to see if the students themselves have resolved them, or else to give brief teaching to allow for an element of closure before the course finishes. (Miss Z T3)

It is easier to get at assumptions, but to see if they are changing, and to see the latest steps is much more difficult. (FOCUS II)

Assumptions again come in the epistemological, theological and personal categories, and sometimes include more than one category.

Challenging the authority of those we listen to – we cannot assume a leader has all the answers (Miss Z T3)

Having read the gospels three different girls came to talk to me, who told me that in being a servant they have recognised that they did not want to do anything for other people, but rather they would then be thought to be inferior to others, so they wanted others to do things for them. But they have decided that they will humbly help others and will show this in how they present their readiness to help on Sundays. (Miss V T3)

An assumption that important people sit at the front has been challenged. With this some appeared to recognise that unconsciously they gave some Christian sisters more respect than others (Miss Z T3)

⁹ Cross-cultural literature on transformative learning is discussed on page 75

A more complex example, integrating teaching over time, showed both epistemological and theological changes. The context was a question: what comes first – faith or miracle, in the context of John's 7 signs?

This was a foundation for looking at and comparing the 7 miracles. As we are doing this students are uncovering that there is not a consistent pattern – students themselves are now saying they want to stand in a different place on the line – but they also want to create a triangle, as they have seen sometimes opposition also followed miracles. Because students had first recognised their assumptions, hence as new points of view arose, then themselves saw the change occurring. Interesting is that later a new challenge arose, 'can Jesus heal non-Christians'? The students in discussing among themselves began to realise they didn't all agree and wanted to create another line for them to compare where they stood! (Miss Z T3)

One teacher recognised that in helping students to personalise the learning, their assumptions became articulated and changed:

In their QT copy, and if an assignment had a personal dimension then [we] saw their ideas change etc. (FOCUS II)

Not only was helping students to revise their assumptions difficult, but because students had different assumptions specific time could not be given to each. However as the final example above shows, students themselves could articulate these revisions in their own written work, in their personal devotional journey and within assignments. Further, once students felt comfortable in an environment which encouraged exploration of ideas and supported change, then it was possible for students to revise assumptions themselves without this support.

Change in action

Part of the more personally oriented time of teaching and mentoring related to helping students put into place what they found they were now thinking and believing. This is in accord with Mezirow who affirms that real change has not occurred until it is shown in behaviour.¹⁰ Such change in behaviour took time:

My thinking has changed but not yet in practice. (Sorraya R3)

¹⁰ Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 171.

What I thought life is about, it isn't: it is not easy to change yourself. To change the direction of your thinking is easy but to bring it into practice is difficult - now I am praying for myself differently. (Naheed R3)

As soon as we came back from holiday we had to start preparing studies again - but now I understand the Bible deeply, even so it is difficult to present it in front of everyone. It is very difficult to apply God's word to your own life. (Rubina R3)

The literature had suggested making action plans to help put the new found understanding into practice.¹¹ Miss V in a sense did this when she talked with the students about their practice of helping on Sundays when there was no cook. The change in students regarding working hard for Sunday School, work which they had originally thought was easy has been noted earlier:

I was disturbed when my Sunday School did not go well, in fact really distressed. I considered that if I had made so many mistakes I must have prepared carelessly ... and that until I prepare really well with hard work I can't tell others. (Hamida R3)

It was also possible to see the students become more self-aware in their thinking and teaching method:

This change in their ideas, that now they think themselves that 'no that was wrong - we did that wrong taking the Sunday School class, if I had done that, it would have been better.' That is they see their mistakes and try to think how to repair them. (Miss P T1)

Students did not expect studying the Bible, read since childhood, would be hard work, an assumption which was subject to revision:

WHAT CHALLENGED YOU MOST IN THE LAST WEEK?

CAS's class - when I came I thought that the work would be easy but then CAS took class and I started to think that this work would be very difficult. (Parveen R3).

Changes in person and character were based on the theological learning they were involved in:

I was too stubborn to listen, and did not think I did that. But now I realize that I am stubborn and I do want to have my own way. In fact I include my own will so much that I leave God's will right out of it - I don't even want to find out what God wants for me. That happened like this, preparing for class and assignments, and I thought - I have done that. But when I did it and read it, I felt really odd, that this is not right, because it was my own idea. Especially when I was

¹¹ For discussion on bringing change into action see page 60

preparing chapel, I preferred what I had thought out, so people would learn from me. But I did not think about what God wanted - so that was a change. (Nageen FI)

Two students seriously tried to understand each other in their disagreement. Instead of accusations, they presented reasons why it had happened - with the result there was forgiveness and acceptance :) (Miss Y T3)

I now keep at less distance from the other girls, if there is any misunderstanding then I try to clear it up and re-establish the relationship. I was weak at this, now it seems to me that I have got stronger in this regard. And from that I now am happier working with others. I used to think that - I don't know if anyone thinks about me, and that idea has changed. I learned that I myself was so negative in my own thinking about myself, maybe others aren't - that is what I think! (Tahira R3)

There were changes in epistemological outlook as well:

Openness to questioning previous knowledge in light of further study – I will look for this in future (Miss Z T3)

They suggested they were more open to listening to other points of view and thinking on them (Miss Z T3)

The other area of change based on this epistemological strength was in students' presentation and communication skills:

For girls' fellowship Nabila had decorated the stage as if it was a vineyard and to narrate the parable of the workers instead of simply reading told it by acting it out. And it was excellent. (Miss V T3)

The example above shows the readiness to break out of the traditional 'sermon' type schema for communicating teaching, and a growth in confidence. To deal with the original challenge earlier mentioned in practical work, when students started to lead studies and worship experiences they tended to set up 'church style' with rows for listeners, use a lectern to position themselves '6 feet above contradiction,' and delivered closed communication. As students grew in confidence they changed the physical arrangement, and opened up to a two way communication with their audience. With more practice and confidence the questions became more complex requiring those present to think and reflect. This kind of questioning, and such change, does not always happen: I made a note observing a class taken by one of the trainee staff,

Can't teach transformatively until totally on top of material – or of own ideas, and then can start to ask the hard questions and explore ideas with students. But when still learning, and don't have epistemological depth and breadth then can't give freedom to others for that (CAS).

These examples affirm that change had really occurred. Epistemological changes alongside changes in assumptions about ministry showed in a range of actions: from students being ready to serve one another, to students' ability to lead and teach with confidence, and readiness to hear other ideas. Personal change brought changes into how students interacted with one another. These assumption changes occurred through a joint effect of class situation, mentoring, and practice leading to growing confidence.

Issues on the phases of transformative learning

The comment on the trainee staff member above leads to an overall consideration of the processes of transformative learning, better discussed in general than with each phase individually.

This is only the beginning and change does not happen fast. I must be patient – but sometimes it is difficult to be patient. (Miss V T1)

The level of meaning change

The level of assumptions articulated are often at a 'meaning scheme' or point of view, that is lower level assumptions that affect a narrow range of behaviour. Partly this is because of the level of challenge or trigger that can be presented at a class level: planning for something that would challenge students over an entire course would require a different level of trigger event than something to engage students for the length of a class. There were some of these more global level of objectives in some classes. For instance throughout her John's Gospel series of classes, Miss Z made constant attempts to help the students to understand the context by creating maps on the floor and going on 'journeys' so students would have to think "water – lake – how to cross?" and along with this gain an idea of both geographical and related physical boundaries in the travels Jesus made. Yet although Miss Z worked hard on this,

Easy discussion about the context – mountains become real. It seems students started realising these events happened in real space and time, between classes the reinforcement meant people

were thinking about what these journeys would have been like. A new realisation and depth of understanding is happening (Miss Z T3)

and undoubtedly it did make an impact,

I can't tell you - every day she (Miss Z) takes us into a new world (Zarish FI)

yet specifically it was not mentioned in terms of any disequilibrating event for the students.

It was necessary to maintain a balance between the kind of challenge used to engage students for a class and the quantity of challenges that could leave students twirling like tops as they moved from one class to another, or the levels of challenge that could cover in a deeper way the range of material being presented over all the areas of a particular subject. Then there was the even larger picture of how all of the work moved together, and what kinds of challenges could be enacted in a more global way to cover the entire course objectives.

[Problem with] being aware of the overall transformation happening in the students lives, through the whole course, and dealing with potential transformation specific to my subject (with only 1-2 classes weekly). (Miss Z T1)

...tension of how much of that space to create and how much of that is creating space or for if I say obvious assumptions, assumptions that can easily be articulated, and how much is allowing for assumptions that are much bigger that don't come up in a sentence or a picture or in one moment. But that change over the course of the year. (Miss Z SF)

On the other hand with the awareness that students could not bounce from class to class and challenge to challenge, there had to be a way of both inducing challenge but letting students feel comfortable and supported.

Using the adjective 'false' assumptions, which I had not balanced enough with 'limiting' or less perjorative terms, left some teaching staff with the idea of having to correct students' assumptions, rather than that of helping students to clarify and evaluate their own assumptions:

Talking about students' false assumptions needs to be balanced with new ideas and then students can choose. (Miss W T1)

In discipleship class I gave them one statement and they have time to share their ideas. Only one girl was one side but after discussion she accepted the right thing. (Miss W T3)

Tension between content and reflection

One area of tension was that of lack of coverage, when teachers wanted to impart specific information, and discussion or reflection took time away from that. Taylor noted that for students it is important that there be connection between class material and their lives and experiences. Stopping to discuss content which resonates with students may result in more deeply internalized learning. Taylor encouraged the view that “if deep approaches to learning are the goal, less may be more.”¹² For teachers at UBTC the issue of balance frequently recurred and teachers struggled with how to teach content and yet give time for reflection:

DIFFICULTY: When there are large amounts of information (Miss Y T1)
Balancing class time to cover content and facilitate reflection (Miss Z T3)

Teachers acknowledged that while initially it needed sustained commitment just to try to make reflection happen, it was worth the ‘waste of time’:

It is difficult as the students were not really ready to think, and then it seemed that time was being wasted. But for them personally to evaluate themselves and their thinking, and to grow confidence in themselves it is better. (Miss U SF)

One teacher attempted to solve the problem with some practical suggestions about dealing with content and course planning:

So in terms of practicality in the classroom this tension of material, content, notes, ... I think that is one solution to that in terms of summaries and ...all these resources could be prepared and used by others. I think this sort of solution is one part towards it - that you know a fifty minute lesson, if you put into place within fairly regular lessons some sort of reflective activity at the beginning to help with assumptions and allow time at the end for that - ... and that only allows thirty minutes which is a very limited actual length of time to cover material.

Alongside that lesson planning in the bigger picture with four lessons a week: one a week being actually a very conscious reflective lesson and others very consciously not being ... and maybe a bigger picture rather than individual lessons would be better in keeping that balance as well.
(Miss Z SF)

¹² Kathleen Taylor, Catherine Marienau, and Morris Fiddler, *Developing Adult Learners* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 307-9.

In one respect the challenge for the teachers lay in thinking about knowledge and realizing that a teacher is more than a knowledge provider, but a stimulus to thinking and dealing with information:

Mainly it was not difficult - except when I sometimes forgot to implement it. Sometimes I forgot that I was teaching in a transformative learning way - I taught but my focus was on what I was teaching (Miss W SF)

Some teachers barely thought about themselves as a change agent, other teaching staff thought of themselves very much as change agents. For some this was a point of confusion, for instance for one teacher mentoring is an extremely important aspect of her understanding of her role, but moving that aspect into the classroom was a constant struggle.

I need to be aware/ note that in my study are a range of teachers who teach in their own style. While they may be supportive of idea of transformative learning, for them to shift out of a lecture mode and into a searching for knowledge mode is difficult. So I can't change teaching style but I can help teachers to be aware of where their students are coming from and how to help them. (CAS)

Teachers who relied upon a lecture method did change over the course of the year, partly as they saw how students responded in a transformative classroom.

There still remain a variety of ways of putting the theory into practice. This is reinforced by comments from those who have researched heavily in this field, that there is no one way of teaching transformatively:

*There are no particular teaching methods that guarantee transformative learning.*¹³

*Facilitating learning [relies on] no standard model*¹⁴

As noted above there is an element of confidence as well. Not all reflection happens in the classroom, and possibly part of the content/reflection tension is in this misconception. Teachers made a variety of out-of-class options for the students to reflect specifically on their class content material. These options included general journal type activity that might have been for each

¹³ Cranton, "Teaching for Transformation," 66.

¹⁴ Brookfield, *Developing Critical Thinkers*, 233.

lesson or each week, which was required for such classes as the Significant Characters class (DC), or John's gospel (FC). Other reflection activities related more precisely to parts of the class. Miss U asked her students to 'rewrite' the last few chapters of the gospel of John as if they were an eye-witness to Jesus' arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection. The students themselves testified to how this impacted on them:

Miss U asked that for the Gospel of John class, we write about the last chapters during Christ's crucifixion and all that occurred, as if ... when that all happened to Christ I was also there. Writing my emotions and thinking about this was really distressing (Tahira R2)

Whenever teaching incorporates two way communication then there is a demand for flexibility. Teaching staff commented about having to change plans, or topics taking longer when they were more ready to respond to student need:

Miss T: I was thinking about something today as to how long CAS had spent answering one question, and then still finished the class. (FOCUS I)

Sometimes thinking about the needs of the student the class changes... the way of teaching changes - and what was written/ planned does not happen, a totally different class emerges. ... - maybe one day if there is a difficult issue, then more time spent on it; or if there is something lacking in terms of what they need to do for their own personal evaluation, then a written assignment. I want to do that in class - you write, you talk about it...and then in this way it will help them. As I teach then I need to be constantly looking and thinking where is there need for change, so it can be improved? But it has also to be done in order, systematically, or the course gets right behind - so there needs to be balance, balance is important (Miss Y SF)

Staff were divided about the time that it took preparing to teach transformatively. Two teaching staff who both taught quite creatively said:

Preparation time is the same (Miss Z SF)

Difficulty: to give more time in preparing classes (Miss W T3)

Both the DC and FC groups were small, yet even so in such a small class there was a wide range of ability. The teachers struggled with how to help the students with simpler epistemologies, or who had difficulty dealing with conflicting ideas and surfacing their own:

...with some students it is hard to use this process (Miss T)

Of two students in the class it seems to me it has been difficult for them to learn from these processes (Miss T T2)

Difficult to use this with Razia in preparing Sunday School material - I find it difficult to follow Razia's thought processes and hard to guide. (Miss Z T2)

All the girls do not understand the same things so it is difficult to keep all their different standards in mind. (Miss W FOCUSII)

With a dynamic understanding of knowledge and the construction of knowledge, then part of teaching practice becomes helping students to be co-constructors in knowing with the teacher. Within a transformative learning pedagogy, in the pathway of searching for knowledge, old ways of knowing and distorted assumptions may be uncovered and brought to a place of having to change. This required some change in teaching style to give students the opportunities of articulating their understandings and reflecting on how they had arrived there, so they could have the chance to move ahead.

Transformation as rational and intuitive

In this research to a large extent the changes seen in students can be, and have been, dissected and explained largely as rational responses to the material and situation, as if students say, 'this is what I thought and this is how I changed thinking about it.' This exposes my research to those who critique transformative learning theory as being too heavily invested in the rational, and most especially to the thinking that anything to do with spirituality is somehow supra-rational. Yet the material shows that the students could, even if in retrospect, see how their own personal changes rested on things they had learned or events that had occurred. Staff make mention of prayer in the transformative process:

For changing others prayer is a good resource (Miss W T1)

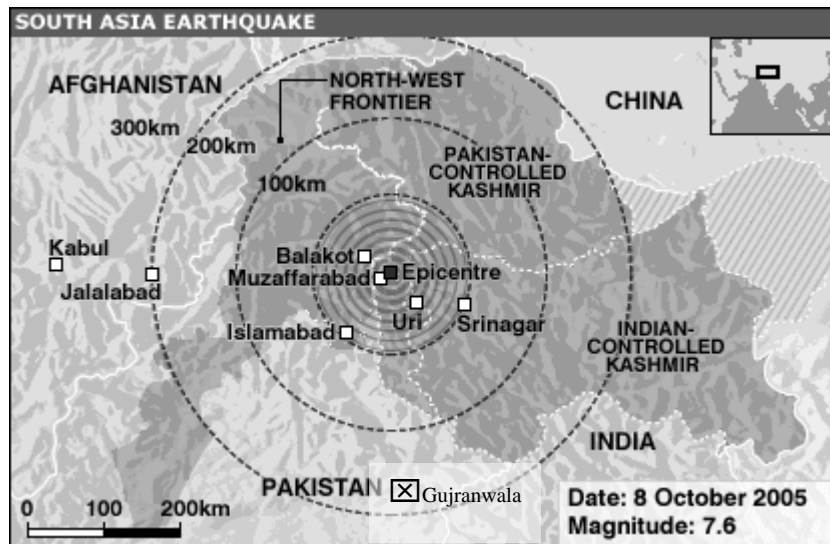
The teaching staff did work hard and creatively in implementing transformative learning. Yet as the comment above shows they were also aware that there were other factors at work that were wider than those that could be easily enunciated. Possibly when some students used a formulaic "I was worried about x but I prayed about it and now it is ok," it begged the question. On the other hand I have only recounted those stories where students could see how they had changed and how that change occurred. Change that occurred in a more assimilative manner, and through

less conscious processes may not have been so easily discerned or studied. This means I do not claim to have covered all the change in students, or all the ways that students changed, but simply what was reported when that reporting itself relied on a discursive methodology.

The South Asian Earthquake: a special case study

On 8th October 2005 a severe earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale affected large areas of Pakistan's North West Frontier Province and the Kashmir region of Pakistan and India. It caused the loss of the lives of over 73,000 people, and made three and a half million people homeless.¹⁵

In Gujranwala the massive earthquake was felt strongly even six hundred miles from the epicentre, although little damage was sustained. For the research at UBTC it also became a window for seeing these young women work through a crisis which challenged their understanding of God, exposed their fears, questioned their theodicy, and confronted them about their image of ministry and their place as Christian people in an Islamic Republic.



¹⁵ Raja Asghar, *Not Forgotten: Despair and Hope, One Year On* (October 8, 2006) (Dawn Group of Newspapers, 2006 [cited October 24 2006]); available from <http://www.dawn.com/2006/10/08/top1.htm>.

Fig 6.2 Earthquake affected areas in relation to Gujranwala¹⁶

This was, from a teaching-learning point of view, a challenge that fell outside of the general rubric of the teaching sphere. Following the earthquake formal and informal activities helped students to work through the issues. There are also glimpses in the reflection sheets and interviews of how the students' ideas changed in the aftermath of the earthquake and how the students had learned to process, that is, how reflection and self-reflection had become part of their repertoire.

Trigger event: Initial Response is Fear

When the earthquake struck just before 9.00 a.m. the students were involved in a range of Saturday morning activities: some still sleeping, one bathing, others studying, or doing laundry. The severe shaking lasted over five minutes. For many it was their first such experience, and it was a terrifying one. When the ground stopped heaving most students were in tears, badly frightened.

Tahira and I were studying, and when it was just a little bit we thought it would be ok, but when the tube lights and fans started swaying we went outside. All the girls were upset but we gave them some comfort and I comforted them too even though I was also afraid... (Hamida FI)

This fear continued through the protracted strong aftershocks, which persisted for weeks, fear reinforced as news of the extent of the damage started to emerge. Media coverage also increased fear, for instance the first night the expectation of another quake just as devastating meant people were advised to sleep outside. As Miss Y discovered when she talked with the students, it was not only that they were afraid, but what they thought of themselves for having that fear:

We went on to talk about what does fear arise from? ...I encouraged them because some were scared, thinking that it was not right to fear... (Miss Y SF)

Most of the students acknowledged their fear in some way. Sometimes this is a physical fear at the time of the event, and for some a fear of what had happened to their families.

¹⁶ Map of South Asian Earthquake, ([cited March 23, 2007); available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/5392908.stm. (Gujranwala my addition).

I kept worrying about my family - because our house is what my grandfather lived in: the ancestral house. We have been thinking for a while to pull it down and build a new one in its place. People have advised us that if we don't do it soon that it could be dangerous to keep it. When it happened I was so concerned because our house is so weak and we should make a new one quick... (Mumtaz FI)

In the same way that there is a difference in how students dealt with other challenges on the course, there is a gradation of how they reflected on their fear. For those with a simpler epistemology, this was the simplest unreflective type of response:

I was scared because of the earthquake but in church I learned that we are not to be upset but pray and God will look after us in all circumstances. (Saima R3)

People say an earthquake came, but that was also from God. We did not know if an earthquake was coming or not, he knows better. Our faith is that he saves us from every circumstance. He does not want his people to die in this way, in an earthquake; he looks for a better way. And through him, he knows, he knows better, what his will is. (Razia FI)

For others, reflecting on this initial experience, on their fear, helped the students to crystallize some of their assumptions about the presence of God, and what their faith meant in those circumstances:

My thinking about God changed that he can do everything...It was such a shaking that I was afraid but he can do anything. (Sorraya FI)

For me it was a kind of temptation, and a lesson. About the temptation - I did not know at first then when it got stronger then I started screaming and praying at the same time - I remembered God and Jesus and so I learned about God whether I remembered him in difficulty or not. So that was it. (Sorraya FI)

Sorraya's situation is complicated because she was bathing and was too afraid to leave the building naked. It led to a discussion on prayer and nakedness.¹⁷

Another girl asked ... [whether] if God is holy then we can talk to God like that too -when we are naked. (Miss Y SF)

Sorraya [who was bathing] said that she was so frightened and now she had learned that God is in every place. (Miss Y SF)

Naheed was really troubled by her fear-filled reaction:

¹⁷ In folk or popular Islam it is thought that God's eyes are averted when people bathe...so then prayer would not be viable.

Last week I learned something about myself from the earthquake, that my faith is so weak, in the way I was busy screaming and yelling. What was wrought by my screaming? At that time I could have been so close to God and he would have comforted me. This is a challenge for me, and in future I will not be afraid like this. I will put my faith and trust in God and accept his will. (Naheed R3)

Continued reflection on why she reacted as she did left her seeing a disjunction between what she says she believes and her behaviour: trusting in God, believing in God's continued presence with her, and screaming and searching for someone to be with because she was terrified. She concludes this by resolving that if another such episode should occur, she will trust God. Naheed here articulated, critically reflected and became ready – she hoped – for changed action:

Why did it happen with them, and not us - I am pleased we were safe but...really this day I saw that God - about myself I thought - I ran outside at once and I needed someone else, that someone or other would be with me. I didn't think that God is with me - if God wanted I could have died then - if that is what God wants. After I was sad that - don't I have any faith in God? It troubled me so much [tears] - I think of myself as someone with faith but at that time what happened to my faith - why didn't I think of him? Why did I run here and there? OK yes he has given us enough of a mind to save ourselves but I didn't feel that I should be aware that God is with me - that troubles me.

So I have since prayed that if in the future I should be in such trouble I will keep my faith on God...and I will know his will and whatever his will is I would do it. (Naheed FI)

Parveen also talked about how her fear made her think about what God was doing.

On Saturday when the earthquake came there was lots of damage but I was standing on the roof, and running and in a quandary. When I knew that it was an earthquake then I was very upset. It seemed strange to me, what is God like? Does God want to make us aware of his presence? (Parveen R3)

Most students moved into the complexity of understanding that having faith did not mean that life would be problem free. The possibility that bad things might happen became a challenge for the students to reflect on their own relationship with God and how they would stay firm in their faith in the face of personal disaster. One example of this is how in the nights following the earthquake, with prolonged aftershocks, the students were afraid to sleep. In a very simple way the students exposed their assumptions about fear – for some explicitly including a fear of death - and looked at that in the context of a God who they also believed was with them. It may seem

tenuous and even naïve, but these students were reflecting on their faith and their relationship with God, and on what their faith meant in uncertain times.

First that in that time that I pray I have faith and maybe no fear - at first when the earthquake came I was really frightened, but having prayed I wasn't. At night I was afraid, and after praying I slept soundly. So maybe prayer is for me a belief that if I pray, then what I pray for will happen. (Nageen FI)

Til now I prayed just when I needed something - or I didn't understand something, or whenever it seemed I had to pray. In these days after the earthquake when I was about to sleep and frightened then lying there lots of ideas came in to my mind - just whenever I thought of it or thought I needed to. (Nageen FI)

Then after the earthquake that I was afraid at night, wondering what would happen next or in a little while. But when I started to pray then that fear and dread changed to peace. That is how God guided me and it seems I was ready for everything mentally - if another earthquake comes then what do I have to do...So God quickly changed my fear, even though I was afraid - so very afraid... (Iqbal FI)

[Aftershocks] kept coming for so many days and at night when I was ready to sleep then humanly speaking I was afraid... I thought that when I sleep - maybe there will be an earthquake and the roof will fall on me. I might die: who knows if I will be alright in the morning? So I said to God, "God, life and death are in your hands, even if an earthquake comes I put my spirit into your hands" and then I am not afraid. Because I thought that to live is Christ and also to die. Because I thought that if I die that too is in Christ. (Nabila FI)

If you think about the earthquake then my faith has grown - because now I am not afraid of death. Being human I am afraid but I know that my spirit will go to him. My body might stay here and be finished. (Nabila FI)

Processing the disaster

It took a few days for the students, and the world, to become aware of the magnitude of the disaster. Initially their responses were limited to themselves and how the earthquake had affected them, but as the days passed there was time to think more broadly, and they became more aware of the extent of the damage.

On the day after the earthquake students were tired out and responding personally – they did not respond to how we view the earthquake. (Miss Z T3)

On Sunday I had fellowship with them and the girls talked about the experience and how God had taught them in new ways. The earthquake was great for them to strengthen their faith and from this their thinking about God (Miss Y SF)

Deeper assumptions about God and omnipotence, and the searching issues regarding 'why' started to emerge. This included a range of questions, from 'why did the earthquake happen?', to

‘why did so many die?’, ‘why did those particular people die?’, ‘why did it happen at that time and place?’ The responses correspond with the areas seen in students’ epistemology and the way they handled personal problems and growth. Other responses came from the idea of God’s love and how were they thinking about that in the face of such an enormous tragedy. Still others clung to an idea of ‘faith’ and what that meant for them being safe in such circumstances.

Some did not ponder at all:

From that loss, that was God's will - we can say that what God was going to do that is what he did; that was his decision and we have to accept it whether it be for good or ill. That was his will what he did. (Sorraya FI)

Two students organized their thoughts from a particular aspect of theology: they appeared to find meaning in attributing the earthquake to biblical end-time foretelling (popular teaching among oppressed minority Christians), although this still does not address the deeper issue.

Such times are coming and we should not get worried - such things are coming and we should be ready. Because in the Bible it is written that these things will happen. (Zarish FI)

Yes because when I read in the Holy Bible that God said that at the end times then there will be kinds of earthquakes and in various places there will be other kinds of disturbances, but we have received a sign so that if this happens more so then we have to pray to the Lord with confidence, to keep our relationship with him. Because he can save us. (Hamida FI)

Of course the earthquake and its after effects were discussed a great deal by the students, privately among themselves, in class, with their mentors, and over meals and tea. More formally students made comments on their weekly reflections and in their final interview, one to two weeks after the quake, about how it had affected their thinking about God. Reminded daily with the newspaper coverage, TV news, our own discussion, and continuing aftershocks, it remained at the forefront of their minds. Some of the responses and later thinking through the issue showed repetition among the students, as they ‘try out other viewpoints’ until they come to revised perspectives of their own. The most basic of these Zarish states baldly:

All of those who died, to whom it happened, they were all sinners. (Zarish FI)

It is not clear who Zarish meant by ‘sinners,’ except that it did not include her. Hopefully she would change in her thinking in the same way that others articulated. At the time of her final interview the earthquake was still being interpreted from a personal point of view:

We need to make ourselves ready so that whatever happens, when disasters come, we need to keep this faith that - when our faith is strong on something then all of these problems won't affect us. (Zarish FI)

Another student, Parveen, explained how she reflected on her thinking. She articulated what she thought, her critical reflection on that, and her changed position.

Last week I thought about the earthquake, that the people who died were sinners. That is why they died. But I changed my thinking, that it is not certain that they died because of sin. I am also a sinner - lots of people are sinners. I, mortal human, cannot judge anyone - that is God's work and a heavenly secret only God can know. (Parveen R3)

Then she tried to convince Rubina, who thought as Zarish did, of her new position:

I was talking to someone - Rubina, I said look you went to Qalandarabad,¹⁸ and the earthquake could have happened then. There was more damage in Muzzafarabad, it could have come then. But God did not do it then, and who knows why maybe God wanted to save us. That is God has a purpose for each life, what he wants for them. So that too is his love and kindness that the earthquake did not happen here, it came there. (Parveen FI)

For others the earthquake made them evaluate or re-evaluate their lives, and their faith. The questions were personal ones: not ‘why did it happen?’ but ‘why did it not happen to me?’

Parveen continued from the comment above, trying to make sense for herself personally, as do others:

So then think about what God's purpose for me is, why did God save me? ...The Israelites were far from God and felt that God is not here, then God through troubles reminded them, reminded them of his presence. Maybe God is doing that today now. Lots of people - not just Christian but Muslim too, who don't know God as they should, and even today they don't think that God is like this, and they fall into sin and do not remember that God will judge them [unclear] (Parveen FI)

¹⁸ One of the hospitals students went to in their internship was at the edge of the badly affected area.

In thinking about the personal questions, some also answered it in terms of their own responsibility to learn from the experience and to help others within their ambit. Responses included prayer, giving, visiting, and planning for future ministry.

The earthquake was a challenge - suddenly when I was sitting working and I was so afraid. I was living such a wonderful life. When I heard about how much damage – people’s lives and property, that people died without salvation. So I asked myself - how have you handled your responsibilities and how will I? This day taught me to be serious about my responsibilities. (Nabila R3)

But then I was thinking that day about how far I have not fulfilled my own responsibilities, and if it happened once it can happen again. So I have to do my work and not be lazy (Nabila FI)

At another time Nabila also talked about her response to the people who died and her decision regarding this.

In class we discussed the earthquake and it was very interesting. Because we all gave our opinion - some said that they died because of their own sin, and others said God does not want anyone to perish. The main thing I learned was that I cannot judge anyone. This could also have happened here - I am also guilty - none of us are more important to God - we are all equal to him. But the important question is why did he bring me here? So that I can learn about him and bring others to God, and I have not seriously taken on that concern. He wants to use me for himself, but for me the question is, how far am I ready for that? (Nabila R3)

Similarly Nageen started asking ‘why’ and ended up thinking about her own personal response. In the example below she was doing some ‘meta-thinking,’ deciding that maybe she was asking the wrong questions and moving to something that she can answer : what is she going to do about it? :

That is a big problem for me - so many people died and I wonder why did God kill them? If we say it is God's will then what kind of will is that that so many people died? What was God's plan? Maybe there were so many people who had never heard about Christ or may be heard but not accepted him. So what kind of plan must there have been for these people? It is hard for me to think about it, but at night time ... in my mind that idea came that if he has called someone to himself that it is not necessary that I would know the reason, but I do need to know why he has put me here. So I don't know why I should pray for them, it is God's will so why should I pray? Then I thought that when God has a purpose for putting me here, maybe I can pray for those people. Maybe there is another reason for that, and I do need to think about that, rather than thinking about what was his will regarding them. And so I moved away from this point, that what does God want from other people, my idea is that I should think about what God thinks about me, what are his thoughts toward me. So I have changed my ideas. (Nageen FI)

For others the questioning was related to the larger sphere of the magnitude of the disaster. It was not a purely cognitive questioning. Their responses clearly showed the emotional pain they shared with those who were affected. Making sense of the tragedy was a serious problem:

When I think about ourselves and our building and the students it seems that God does save people and is full of love. From this perspective God is loving, but when I think about those [injured] people I don't understand what God is trying to teach us - even though he is loving, he is love, he is a kind God, when I think about these people I just don't know what God is trying to teach. Here we are safe it seems: it is written that God does good but I don't know what good is there in this.. And in the future what good will God do. (Iqbal FI)

God's power really is strange and beyond my understanding. I always thought why had God let that happen to those people, such a terrible situation - can God see it? Did these people have to die in such a terrible way? (Naheed R3)

One student wrote a poetic lament to articulate her questions:

Oh God why are your secrets so hidden?

Why do your people travel different paths?

If you don't want anyone to perish

then why is there such a purpose fixed for their lives?

Oh Lord my God show me your mysteries - why are you silent? (Farhat R3)

Rubina also grappled with two contradictory ideas:

God has authority; all authority is in his hands. Before the earthquake I thought that God does not want his people to die but now there has been such an enormous earthquake and the people who died that is not God's will either because God does not want anyone's death. But the people who died did not know what was about to happen - God knew. So all authority is in his hands. Why did he let this happen? That I don't understand... When in one place he says that he does not want anyone to perish, and they died, and God did not want their destruction. That people would die without accepting Jesus Christ. (Rubina FI)

For Rubina this was an epistemological crisis. She was holding together the ideas that God has all authority, that God does not want people to die, and yet people died. She could distinguish between these conflicting ideas, a sign of at least quasi-reflective epistemology, but could not solve how to put them together. This forced her to move into a more complex epistemological position. Steele explains:

A challenging process recognizes that true learning occurs when the individual realizes that her current knowledge or ways of thinking are no longer adequate. Christians realize that in the face of suffering and death their notion of God is much too simple. It is in the midst of this situation, a teachable moment, that one can mature in faith.¹⁹

Mumtaz had a slightly more complex epistemology and took the problem a little further. She made it clear how difficult transformation is: she could state the problem, and her grappling with the issues is laid out clearly in the quotes below. At the same time trying to move toward a solution left her faltering, or as she said, she wanted to run rather than solve.

...hearing the stories of those affected by the earthquake shook my heart and after it I was very upset - why did this happen? Can't God see the trouble of these people? (Mumtaz R3)

A question arises - just as we read the news, and our concept of God and people gets deeper. It is a complex question - like a story that after 8 days a family of three children found under some rubble - they were saved but there was another child who died, God could have controlled it, the land so that it did not happen - so such - to have that concept - why so many people died in such a way - I think these things about God and my ideas upset me - I don't want to think about it more. Then it seems to me I am thinking wrong things about God - why did God let that happen, they were such little children - and then for some to be disabled, to lose their little hands...How can good arise from this? I can't think about this more, I don't understand - it is not a solution: just that I can't think about it more. The solution I can think of is not a solution; it is running from it... (Mumtaz FI)

Mumtaz was doing more than students who give simplistic answers, as her epistemology would not let her rest with easy answers, nor could she hold different concepts together easily. For Mumtaz the experience could be as much an epistemological transformation as one in thinking about God and faith.

Prayer

At the time, and in the aftermath, students prayed for themselves and their own safety. Even that was an opportunity for them to reflect upon the selfishness of their prayer:

The day that the earthquake came, that was a bad day in my life. Zarish was very upset and crying...she was worried about her father, and so I said to her that when you have prayed then

¹⁹ Les L Steele, *On the Way: A Practical Theology of Christian Formation* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1990), 185.

you should have faith - and I said lots of things like that to her, to explain to her. Then I heard that there was a lot of destruction in [Rawal]Pindi, and we have a lot of relatives there, in 'Pindi 15 to 20 villages had been destroyed. So at once I was shaken and I got up and was so frightened - and I was crying and running, and wanted to phone 'Pindi because our mamoo [maternal uncle] is there. On the way to the office I went to the prayer room, thinking that I am going to phone and I [emotional pause] I am going to phone and I don't want to hear any bad news. So having done that I came out and phoned, and truly nothing had happened and all was fine. So when I was coming back I thought I will pray a prayer of thanksgiving and go on - and when I went in to the prayer room then it was like I had laughed at Zarish and then when I was in the same temptation then it was the same.

It was time to stop and think, and I was sitting praying about that, and in those days especially I did get selfish and did not pray for anyone else except for myself and thinking about God. (FI Farhat)

One response students made to the tragedy was to pray for those who were affected.

Why was there an earthquake? The people who died in it, and who suffered so much loss - what can I pray for them? It is even hard to think about. (Nageen R3)

From this day I am especially praying, for my family, for everyone, for the whole country. A special feeling in my heart has begun and since then I have thought about this and I am still praying. See how there are those who are still sitting hungry, without homes, and I will ask God for this that he puts mercy in people's hearts so they can give more and more help. I know God will, it is not that he won't he surely will. (Saima FI)

Oh God be merciful and like Israel – protect these people in the wilderness – who have become homeless – through Christ's blood we have become your adopted children – so adopt those children who are your orphans. (Tahira R3)

Compassion

Images that the students gained came from the newspaper and television reports, and reports from myself and others who went to help. From this they initially started to feel compassion. Parveen recalled reflecting on this:

One night when I was sleeping, I got suddenly cold and got up and turned the fan off and controlled my chill. When I was no longer cold, I started to think that I am in great comfort - the ones who are [not housed], what will happen to them? I was quite upset. (Parveen R3)

Later as injured people were shifted to a local hospital students went to visit them. They found this visit even more affecting, the problem was no longer images at a distance but people they had met:

We went to meet those affected (of earthquake) people in hospital Hearing their pain and grief I was truly grieved and sad – it felt that these were my own people, as if we were related. I pray for them. Whenever I think of these mothers, children and widows then my heart fills and I feel a burden and pain for them. (Tahira R3)

In CMH [Civil and Military Hospital] there were some earthquake victims and we went to them. Before that we had heard, but that day we spoke to them and really saw them. When I was listening to them, then I felt their pain as if it was my own. I have not felt such pain as I felt for them. I was especially concerned for the orphaned children...They have no-one. That day I wanted to have an orphanage where these children would be cared for. I had a dream and told Miss Z who said that I should place this before God; maybe it will also meet your need. So from that day I am going ahead planning I will help such people - may God hear and accept my prayer, Amen. (Nabila R3)

Students were changed not only by thinking but by doing, by getting involved and seeing firsthand some of the loss and grief that had occurred. This is akin to Banks' missional model, of learning through doing. The students' comfortable lives were shaken and they started to think more broadly about their response:

Listening to testimonies, stories and hospital visiting has put into students a desire to be doing more for the victims. Some students want to go north after grad to work at BCH or Kunhar and are praying this through. It is very exciting to see this burden to pray and go arising. (Miss Z T3)

How can I, in my limited circle, do something for those affected by the earthquake? (Farhat R3)

I am worried about all the affectees of the earthquake. I am worried because how can I help them? But now my thinking has changed - I can in small ways help them. (Rubina R3)

I want to give ... hope to such people too. Because that day for the first time they seemed to be my own, - before it was a duty - maybe I also wanted to but bring them to God but not this way - I have seen this change in myself, that I have started to take others troubles as my own and when I feel like that then I will surely do this task! (Nabila R3)

I've been thinking about going to Qalandarabad - I want to serve; if I go for a week - God knows what God's will is, I want to go for a week. Wherever I am needed, it seems to me there are lots of people who can give things but understanding emotions is difficult. To take time for other people is difficult - please pray if I should go to Qalandarabad. (R3 Parveen)

The students themselves were very poor, most of them had no discretionary spending money. They made comments such as "I gave my shampoo money" (CAS), and amongst themselves decided to cut tea and fruit from the hostel menu, and ask the hostel to give them the money saved to take goods to the hospital when they visited. One of the teachers outlined how their initial assumption, about what they could do to help, changed as they considered the options:

Assumption: we are at UBTC, what can we do re earthquake? Nothing!

Revised: we can visit in hospital

We can save \$\$ and give milk and biscuits

We can send supplies

Maybe 'I' can also go and help after graduation

I can pray about helping orphans in future (Miss Z T3)

Some students talked about trying to understand concepts of God as faithful and merciful in the light of so much destruction:

When I think and more and more the big question is and what I ask is how faithful is God - and in class we discuss why is God faithful? But we don't have anything so special; there is nothing in us, out of which God would love us. In the world there are other things he has made, he didn't just make us, [unclear], he made other things so why does he love us so much? And so I can't understand from the time of the earthquake that every difficulty, in every thing - I had prayed for three or four days for one particular thing and on the fourth day that problem cleared up I was seeing how and I don't know. But why does he love us so much? I just don't know. We are nothing, for him to love us. Maybe he wants something from us and that is why he loves us? Maybe - I can't say. (Nageen FI)

For some it helped them integrate their own pain in the past, see how that pain was helped and want the same for these people:

When I watch TV, and them digging out bodies or see people in hospitals and people crying for their families, then I felt that in my life a similar earthquake came in 2003, when my mother died. At that time I too I cried a great deal, for me it was like judgement day and I needed support. Who brought me to Christ? Who restored me? All [the] teachers. Now my responsibility is to bring these kinds of people to God - God grant that I would do so! (Nabila R3)

Summary effect of the earthquake

Transformative learning is written about in terms of a person being transformed by the ordinary and extra-ordinary crises of life, however as yet little is written about how wide- scale natural disasters also become transforming experiences for those affected. The responses of the students showed that transformation is still idiosyncratic, as the same shared crisis led to a variety of responses for the students. Students with less sophisticated epistemologies were less able to reflect upon the circumstances and bring changes to how they thought and responded. They clung to ready-made understandings in order to bring meaning to what was beyond understanding. Students with more complex epistemologies started to understand that there were no easy

answers and so began the transition to an even more nuanced way of understanding. The changes in students thinking also related to their social development. In Kegan's terms those who may be in more of an Interpersonal stage thought more in personal terms of how it affected them, those who were possibly in a more Institutional stage, more related to a larger group setting, were more able to start thinking about the questions in terms of a bigger arena. Teaching staff had to be ready to be supportive in helping students work through the problems they encountered, and to be flexible and creative to make the most of the opportunity to teach and learn from the situation. This happened two months before the students' graduation: revisiting the students after some time regarding the changes they claim and the action they hope to make would also be useful.

Transformation through aspects of the UBTC environment

Mentoring

For a number of years the teaching staff at UBTC have been assigned students for mentoring care. At the Principal's request I took two staff workshops on mentoring during the initial research period, which helped the teachers to rethink the place of mentoring in the transformative learning task, giving the teachers the opportunity to help students develop personally. Daloz particularly stresses the role of teacher as mentor in the transformative process. In the risks associated with change Daloz finds that the strength of a caring relationship is important in fostering transformative learning.²⁰ In as much as Slee found that "women's faith experience often grows in conversation"²¹ mentoring can help growth in faith.

Mentoring really seems like a scaffold – if there were not classes then would not need mentoring – the things that came out of class and living in the hostel only could happen because of the other.
(FOCUS II)

²⁰ Daloz, *Mentor: Guiding the Journey of Adult Learners*, 15-16, Daloz, "Transformative Learning for the Common Good," 110.

²¹ Slee, *Women's Faith Development*, 62.

The four physical positions which Bloom mentions are seen in the relationships between students and their teacher-mentors: standing behind, walking ahead, face to face and shoulder to shoulder.²²

Standing behind

This is a position of presence, when the student is capable of forward movement but simply needs to know that someone is ready to 'catch me if I fall.' In these examples below the students themselves do most of the 'work' but the presence of the mentor gives them the impetus to move ahead into something new and difficult.

Mentee Saima raised the type of anger that she had written about. Highly significant in the way her simply becoming aware of it and her new concept that she is able to think about it. This new freedom to think, analyse and be self aware will be interesting to watch. (Miss Z T2)

In the last two years emotionally I was the subject of a deep unease/ confusion/ entanglement...especially someone's guidance, I am thankful that I can be free of this from someone's help. (Mumtaz R2)

In these days, and before there has been a lot of work on my personality and in these days with Miss Z during mentoring I have known myself even more deeply. In my QT and spending time personally with God, that he loves me. Before I knew that God loves everybody but now I know personally that God loves me. I thought about the first term retreat and the letter I wrote (as from God) 'my dear one' and I remembered that, and Miss Z reminded me too. (Tahira FI)

Walking ahead:

Sometimes a student is entering a new area and needs a guide or leader. Miss Y as mentor encouraged Tahira when she was going off on field work, and wrote something in her diary which stayed with her as she went to a distant place feeling alone. These examples showed how this was useful regarding developing epistemology:

Miss Y: I can't tell her that is good or bad - it is important too that students are able to make their own evaluations...what is good what is bad - we can't do that all the time - and when students ask me I ask back what do you think - and they say and then I say yes, and you can also think about how that could be changed... I think that in [mentoring] what we are doing is developing their ability to think - as in some ways God has made us a little bit expert in that we are able to assess our own thinking and ideas, not that we know more but that our experience is

²² Bloom, "Multiple Roles of the Mentor Supporting Women's Adult Development." Also see p. 62

greater - and on the basis of this experience we can point out this and that - so mentoring is one of two ways we really help (Miss Y SI)

In mentoring I feel I am asking a lot of questions, and 'digging' to encourage reflection, but alongside this I feel like there's not two way interaction. I am wondering about how to balance guidance and offering new perspectives to think on alongside what I feel like an over emphasis on questions to facilitate self-reflection (what I have been doing) (Miss Z T1)

Face to face

A face-to-face mentor is someone to talk to about issues that otherwise would not get aired, giving the student an opportunity to reflect and think through problems and situations.

WHO DO YOU SHARE YOUR IDEAS WITH?

Before I didn't but now with my mentor. (Iqbal II)

Students are not going to talk with 'teachers,' they will talking with other 'people.' Then problems and negatives - for instance - we have the same problems - student or teacher - and the difference is simply that we know each other in different ways, we are at different levels in understanding these problems I have learned something about this and I can share it - but still I have the problem - I can't solve it yet (Miss Y SII)

Miss V: especially mentors – I was talking with Zarish and she says that she doesn't share any ideas with anybody, because she doesn't trust people. It seems to her different that here there is someone she can talk to and it will remain confidential. So her trust is growing. (FOCUS II)

Maybe I have lost the habit, and I am not secure. I think that, I have learned that, one should not talk to people a lot - so maybe that is why I don't talk much to people. For instance in mentoring I often think that I will ask this and that, but I just think it, I don't say it. (Farhat FI)

Sometimes as students worked through their issues and their inability to talk to others, they started to peer mentor. This may happen in a context of prayer-partnering.

Tahira has talked once or twice, that her relationship with God in prayer, that she has prayed with a partner and when she has prayed with others, then she has progressed, and Parveen has said that it was difficult for her, that – why should she pray with someone else. It was easy to pray by herself, maybe we can't tell anyone what we want to say to God – it is quite personal. She has learned that – maybe after a lot of classes but one day she shared that and I said that I would pray with her. (Miss T SF)

Students learned to mentor each other 'face to face.' This also points to the way that prayer seen as conversation with God can also be seen in a 'mentoring' type of relationship, in which the phases of transformative learning can also be encountered.

Shoulder to shoulder:

If a mentor is to be silent enough in order to listen, then sometimes there comes the tension about whether or not to share one's own issues and the processing of them.

If we don't present ourselves as experts - especially when it comes to mentoring... then we can better help them. (Miss Y SI)

Miss Z decided in a particular situation it was right to share her own similar issues to the student's. The effect on the student was illustrative:

And she said oh you know I really valued the fact that you shared something personal because we are on this road together and people don't do that. I thought this is very very interesting because how much we share of ourselves... there is a balance because we don't put our own issues onto the students but her comment was obviously... it was quite meaningful to her. Whether the content of what I shared or the fact that I shared that's for her, but that sharing had gone two ways in the sense that we are on this journey together. (Miss Z SF)

I observed in the evenings teacher and student pairs walking in the garden or sitting somewhere to talk quietly, which showed how important teachers saw the mentoring relationship. The students too saw it as important, important enough to take on tasks for others in order to free them for the time. Rubina learned to make evening tea when the person whose duty it was may have been talking with their mentor. The mentoring relationship was one in which all the phases of transformative learning had opportunity to come together in one nurturing relationship: sometimes a teacher would challenge a student regarding thinking or behaviour, at times the conversation would give the student the opportunity to articulate ideas or assumptions that had not been able to be given voice, the one to one conversation may have given opportunity to try ideas without peers who may laugh or scorn, and with someone who might guide and give ideas as to how to consider things in a different light. The teachers could also provide structure or scaffolding for new ideas to come to life in practice. In this way the mentoring relationship was a crucial adjunct to the entire transformative learning environment.

Personalising of teaching

In considering generally how transformative learning may have impacted on students for change, one aspect that teachers picked up on was the personal element in the transformative relationship.

I think it is in the personalizing of the whole learning that has been important in this whole process. It has not been the learning, but it has been the personalizing and the effect of this on me. (Miss Z SF)

Parveen reinforced this as she talked about what for her has been most helpful in her own change process:

The behaviour of the teachers (Parveen MI)

Personalising the teacher

*Personalising the teaching must start then with the teacher, her "own behaviour and strategies and own unconscious behaviour."*²³

Personally I have had a chance to review the assumptions in my own life. I don't just prepare with the needs of students in mind but also thinking about myself, and when I go to class with personal change then I think the class is more effective. (Miss W T1)

Miss W mentioned various topics covered in her own classes, which she applied personally:

It is necessary to work on personal ethics, wrong desire, what we say (Miss W T3)

Another teacher considered her own thinking processes in her preparation:

I need to be more conscious of my own assumptions and be working on this personally, if I am to be thinking of this as a process for others. (Miss Z T1)

One of the biggest challenges for teachers, and one which few were able to take on, was to model their own change. It was easy to understand that they were models and examples to the students, but this tended to be understood as a static modelling rather than modelling of process. Yet not just in thinking, but in the whole area of being students needed to see not simply a 'finished

²³ Elizabeth Tisdell, "Feminism and Adult Learning: Power, Pedagogy, and Praxis," in *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, ed. Sharan B Merriam (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993), 102.

product' but a work in progress, and a teacher who is ready to "model questioning of their own values."²⁴

When transformative learning was not limited to the classroom but engendered through the whole learning environment, then teachers too were ready to be challenged in their own personal lives through the programme, the chapels and retreats, and by the students themselves.

I am changing due to the changes of the students. I am blessed by their changing - I need to say that too - that I am blessed and then think that God is using me. But as far as change is concerned, especially I am feeling more humble than before, more quiet than before, I am feeling more concern for them, especially through mentoring. And sometimes there are concepts that students remained convinced of for a long time - it is difficult for them to leave them and my opinions are different - so then what will I do? I have learned to control myself more, so not with anger or - sometimes I often remained silent or was a bit angry, as day by day something or other happened and I really tried that this would not affect my teaching. But I confess that it still happened. Yet I did see that change in myself that I would stay humble and make myself available for such change. So those are some things... (Miss Y S2)

Working as a faculty developer, Wilcox recognised that she was attempting to learn through others' experience, and realised she could try to learn through critical reflection and analysis of her own experiences. She analysed her own work and personal journals and other work related material, and wrote that "through this process of critical reflection on my own practice, I began to feel the full power of becoming an active agent in my own learning and development. The door to transformation creaked open." From this she was able to see her own assumptions, themes, of her own work.²⁵ In some sense, the fortnightly reflection the teachers completed worked in a way for them to think about their own development as teachers and to be reflective of their own practice. For some this was easier than others.

On the other hand, it was not simply their own self, as there was awareness that if this teaching is personalising then what does that meaning for their teaching style, considered briefly above. As transformative learning is about changing a habit of mind after examination, teachers found they needed to examine their habits of mind about teaching in order to transform them too.²⁶ One

²⁴ Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 201.

²⁵ Susan Wilcox, "Becoming a Faculty Developer," *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education* 74 (1997): 28.

²⁶ Patricia Cranton and Kathleen P. King, "Transformative Learning as a Professional Development Goal," *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education* 98 (2003a): 32.

teacher who admits that "... I was limited to a lecture style and did not come out of that," (Miss Y SF) had earlier planned otherwise:

I would prefer in the lecture that more students would give each other more opportunity to think – in pairs... ask more questions so that personally they would know more about individually understanding. (Miss Y T1)

Maybe it happened before but not with such emphasis, now an 'alarm' that they can have wrong ideas and often lots of wrong ideas will suddenly appear - and so we will think 'what can be done about this' maybe sometimes we just ignore them, that is just a wrong idea so never mind but now we are aware of this problem (Miss V SI)

Often we are really surprised 'is that what you think?' 'why do you think like that?' 'That is a bit silly.' But now we are aware that they can think like that so when we are teaching ...then I can prepare in this way thinking with this expectation what will they say or on what can I work so their thinking really will change (Miss V SI)

Miss V's comment that previously teachers had noticed that students had wrong assumptions is a good point. Learning about transformative learning theory and putting it into practice helped teachers to recognize what was going on in students' lives and to help the development go on further. Miss Y talked about intentionally being aware of these factors in other situations as well as in her mentoring and other responsibilities.

Students as persons

Personalising learning for the students was enhanced when there was a secure environment for students to let down their guard and interiorise the learning. This meant both horizontal and vertical relationships must be ones where the student will feel free to ask questions or make comments that relate to their own personal issues.²⁷ It was also helpful when teachers knew the students to some degree in a personal way and have a better idea of their backgrounds. Miss R searching for time for the personal angle says:

I still haven't had time to spend much time with the girls apart from assignment based or chapels or whatever, I haven't had time just to talk to them about themselves, about their families, and I feel there is a lot of background I am not aware of that the other teachers know from mentoring them... We don't have time to talk on a personal level... (Miss R SF)

²⁷ Daniel Pratt, "Andragogy after Twenty-Five Years," in *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, ed. Sharan B Merriam (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993), 18-20.

Teaching transformatively

Knowing students might mean being particularly aware of an issue in an upcoming class:

Through fellowship with students I will know their needs more and then my teaching will be more effective (Miss W T1)

Mentoring played an important part in helping staff become aware of personal individuality and the personal aspects which inform transformative learning:

Miss V: Usually in general conversation we can see how they are thinking, what their concepts are, and in mentoring, and often from the way they present themselves, lifestyle, what their thinking is ... and the mentor can be aware what is going on (FOCUS I)

I thought that it would be easy to understand but human individuality is very complex. It seems to me that as much as we know someone, that person becomes even more complex - to recognise this has changed my last few days. (Miss T T3)

It is difficult for a teacher to bring change as she wants: it is not that I put emphasis on it, mainly it is the concepts that come from the students which get talked about and which bring change. (Miss Y T3)

Teaching transformatively was a positive experience for the teachers at UBTC. It helped them in their own teaching practice, in becoming more focused:

Our own thoughts became more focused as to how to prepare and what needed to be brought to the forefront in our teaching.

We could look more clearly at what our target was in teaching. (FOCUS II)

It also helped teachers to feel that all students were involved, and that they were meeting the student needs:

When all students have to present their own thoughts, then it is easier to go forward (FOCUS II)
In their QT copy and if an assignment had a personal dimension then saw their ideas change etc. (FOCUS II)

Teaching in a way that encouraged students to express their personal perspectives meant that over the time of the study students gained in knowing who they were, in their self-confidence in their identity with their own unique gifts, in their identity as Christian women, in their ability to think, and in their ability to take part in various activities of service and ministry. This is far more than 'theologia,' quite other than 'clergy education,' and more analogous to 'reflection on Christian formation.'

*“As [Belenky et al] found, teaching strategies that unite theory and practice, that value affective forms of knowledge, and that require reflection on how the course content relates to students’ life experiences seem to contribute to the ability of women to find voice. **Such an approach may also work for minority students.**”²⁸ (my emphasis)*

This was not only a time of growth for the students, it became a time of learning and developing for the teachers as well. Although all were learners when it came to applying transformative learning theory, perhaps the successes and failures in this regard act as markers for others wishing to put the experience into practice.

It is getting easier! (Miss V T3)

Transformative learning is necessarily more personal than a teaching methodology that delivers information. A more personal pedagogy has concomitant demands on teachers and students, in moving away from a framework which objectifies knowledge and knowing, into one where these make an impact on one’s very self. Within theological education this accords with the felt need to move away from a philosophical framework which bifurcated theological knowing from being, toward one where the rational is united with intuitive and emotional aspects of the self. In this way transformative learning has been seen to be useful in meeting this aspect of theological education.

The influence of data gathering

When planning the research I had chosen to gather information about the students from interviews and a weekly reflection sheet. I thought that the three interviews would give me some broader perspectives and understanding of student assumptions, and the reflection sheet would help me to see changes in progress. They furnished a mine of insight into the students thinking and emotions and growth. More than that, for the students these interviews and the weekly reflection sheet were also instruments for their own reflection.

²⁸ Tisdell, "Feminism and Adult Learning: Power, Pedagogy, and Praxis," 101.

Students' interviews

The interview was a data gathering instrument that became for the students time to think. An hour or so after the first student interview with a staff trainee, other staff asked me what I had done to her, that she was so 'high' since the interview. This young woman then responded to the effect: "She asked me questions no-one has ever asked me about myself, but I always wanted to talk about." Similarly, after the first students had bravely presented for the very first interview, the rest of the students also became keen to come and talk, and not just for the foreign chocolate bar they received as a thank you at the end of it. Possibly Razia in her simple way conveyed how important it was, and how special it was, for these young women to have someone who wanted to ask them about themselves, and who wanted to hear about who they really were:

I like this, that you take an interview, and whatever is in our hearts and hidden we can tell you and you can ask us and say how did you change... and you said if you want to do it then you can and I said I want to because there are so many things inside me that I can share with you and it seems so good to me (Razia FI)

Yet it was not simply a good time to talk, as Iqbal made plain:

I didn't ask anyone about the interview, I thought maybe we shouldn't as it might be personal. So it was interesting - sometimes it is very difficult to recognise yourself but here [in the interview] I started to recognise myself. (Iqbal II)

For other students the questions asked stayed in their minds and they returned to them in conversation, in their reflection sheets or in the subsequent interview:

SO HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU ARE GOING THIS WAY – HOW DO YOU DISCERN..?

On the retreat I learned that maturity is our goal, we need change and maturity.

YES BUT SINCE JANUARY YOU HAVE BEEN CHANGING

I have not noticed – yes it happened but this time I started to focus on it more. Before it was happening but I was not looking at it, at where I have changed or not changed.

OK – SO WHY NOW?

Well you said, last time we had an interview, that – I knew about change and it seemed I was changing but maybe I didn't know how to say it... So then I started to focus on it. (Nabila FI)

The discussion in the interview had acted as an impetus for Nabila to think about how she was changing, which left her more able to express it next time I asked her.

The weekly reflection sheet

The reflection sheet was an unexpected avenue of change.²⁹ The weekly routine of completing the sheet became a framework for students to learn to reflect, which they found valuable in different ways. First it helped students to recognise an issue when it arose, rather than ignoring it.

To think about what has been a challenge: I hadn't thought about that. Before something would happen, but I didn't think about it, about how I could deal with this better. But when I started to sit quietly and think, what was it? and if it was that, then why was that a challenge? So thinking in this way became a very effective way of helping me to think. (Tahira MI)

The challenge things -we had to think a lot about that what to write that was a challenge. So after a lot of thinking then we realised that that is what we learned from this experience. Then that stayed in the mind that that happened and that is what we learned. - and the QT was just what we read and learned. (Noureen FI)

Second, having helped students to identify an issue it provided a framework for students to think through questions:

From filling that form - it gave me a chance to think. Before I wanted someone to help me, to tell me how I should walk, how I should progress. I used to think about how I should do things. But when I started to fill the form, and not just filling the form but when an idea would come then I would read the form about how I could take that thought forward. So thinking about it then I would move ahead. So from that I have progressed in my thinking. (Mehwish FI)

Some students saw the reflection sheet as a tool for developing their epistemology. When Tahira was asked how her thinking has changed, she replied:

Yes just as I said before if I had problems I just buried them, if I knew. Now I try to understand where they came from, and I don't just look from one side but from all sides.

SO WHAT HAPPENED THAT YOUR THINKING CHANGED?

... filling the reflection sheet, in this way we also think how it has happened. In the beginning we did not understand but as we matured then we started to understand how to fill it.

TRUE - NOW YOU FILL IT MUCH BETTER. (TAHIRA FI)

Rubina noted how the very act of thinking in filling the reflection sheet led her to constructing knowledge:

²⁹ The staff at UBTC have continued to use a revised version of the reflection sheet as it was so valuable in helping student formation.

Whatever a person thinks, new things come from her mind. So you get us to fill the reflection form, and not every time but sometimes totally new things emerge from (my) mind and we learn too. We write them and they become knowledge. (Rubina FI)

The students are also aware that there are issues that maybe they were not ready to talk about, but the act of writing them down gave them a chance to start to articulate them. Apart from this, as part of the mentoring role, the teachers were given the weekly reflection sheets the students filled in so they could attend to any particular issue that might have arisen. Students could elect that their mentor not be given the sheet, which from time to time some did, knowing that it meant only I would read it.

I could write those things that I could not share (Parveen MI)

[The reflection sheet] was good - the questions were hard, and something that we could not share with others we could write there. So it was a good experience. And we could test ourselves. Which was good because we could remove our faults. (Rubina MI)

Yes. Because I thought, but I could never tell anybody these things that I am writing: to tell someone is hard but to write it ...it really is a good thing. (Naheed FI)

The act of writing about issues also helped students to think about themselves, already something identified as something that students were not previously able to do in a reflective manner.

I had to think and understand myself as to where I was and how I was growing (Parveen MI)

I see my own faults and strengths better through this reflection, what I am, what I was, what I should be and what the purpose of my life is. (Parveen FI)

Really all these things happened through these papers [reflection sheets] – it has been useful to think about myself. (Iqbal R3)

More than simply filling in the reflection sheet, the format gave students a way to start thinking that would continue even if they did not use the reflection sheet per se.

IN THE HOLIDAYS YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO FILL IT IN, BUT DID YOU CONTINUE TO THINK THIS WAY?

Yes, like I wondered what was leaving me unsettled. I thought about it, and found lots of things. There were some things that didn't come out right away, but in another way. If I didn't express my anger to this person, and I wanted to forget the matter, then that anger stayed inside and then I would let it out on others because of some little matter. Then I thought - why does that happen? Then I realised that this is what it is - and that became a challenge. What more have I learned? what change happened? - these questions came to mind and I kept thinking. (Tahira MI)

Last night I was thinking about something, and talking that afterwards we could do these forms in our notebooks and keep thinking. There was a question in my mind, as to how useful it had been for me. Until I am a student - maybe in ten years I will be living a very different life yet these questions can make such a difference. I can change these questions? for that time? (Mumtaz FI)

The students recognised the reflection sheet as a way of bringing change into their lives. When they were asked whether being at UBTC had changed the way they thought about themselves, and what had been helpful, students frequently included the reflection sheet in their response:

Most of all was the reflection form to fill every week, I had to write really thoughtful points, and I thought and wrote them and it seemed that I was learning as I filled it. And things that I didn't even understand, I had to write them down. (Saima FI)

Doing the reflection sheet – because it asked questions that we would never have thought about and so it was useful... because in this way one question comes time and again, first the challenge and then you have to think again and again, that if this is the challenge then what happened, then what happened, how did I change. And then at the end how I was last week and now - what have I done, so that now I recognize myself. (Parveen FI)

Thinking - especially about myself, what are the things that upset me, that challenge me. From this there are something that we never think about, and we don't learn from them - but those events that happen to us, we can learn from them.

YOU MEAN FILLING THE FORM?

Yes but not just filling the form. Thinking, working, considering why something is like that - what is there in me that is like that. (Mumtaz FI)

Inculcated in students was an awareness that there were many issues and challenges in their life, and having to choose some to continue to think through.

In the QT copy then without thinking we could just write something, but for that [reflection sheet] we had to think and then thinking we had to go back into our lives and then come back and then think about events - so that had a good effect because I thought before I was this and now I am that...and so I would think about the challenges paper all week. In every class there were challenges, and I had to think what will I write? So whatever happened in class I had to keep thinking what will I write? So this way the things stayed in my mind. (Farhat FI)

Farhat's awareness throughout the week of the task raises the question on what basis some issues were chosen and some not chosen for inclusion in the sheet. Obviously there was some kind of gate-keeping in place, and some issues were chosen to create a positive impression, and others because they honestly were issues that students wanted to reflect on and possibly to gain help in that reflection.

Teaching Transformatively

Transformative learning is more than the sum of its parts. It is not simply a series of processes but is also related to the total environment, the support that teachers give and the wider array of experiences students have while they study. In this chapter I showed how transformative learning is a useful pedagogy for teachers involved in formational aspects of theological education. The phases of transformative learning were employed by the teaching staff to help students to become aware of their assumptions and move toward change.

The activating event is not necessarily, in fact is unlikely, to be something planned for by the teacher. The activating event was seen to be idiosyncratic for each student, and while some aspects were shared, for each student the way that it influenced their lives was different. It was valuable and important for teachers to plan challenges and events that might cause some disequilibrium for students, but teachers also needed to keep in mind that each student was an individual and responded according to her own assumptions and own readiness to have those assumptions disrupted. However the teachers were aware of the range of questions and queries that students had, and were flexible enough to adapt a lesson plan, where there was a need, to help students deal with assumptions that were troublesome. Activating events came not only from planned events in the classroom, but also from training and exercise of ministry skills, devotional activities especially with an extra-rational orientation, relationship issues, and the wider environment. Teachers did bring disequilibrium into the classroom in teaching material and presentation, but disequilibrium also occurred because of where the students were at and the backgrounds they had. Teachers gave attention to creating disequilibrium in their preparation, while remaining aware that planned challenges were not the only trigger point for a change in student assumptions. Over time teachers may become more aware of the kind of issues that frequently arise and tailor the choosing of challenges to this end.

There is tremendous variety in the activating event, and it is very often beyond the control of the teacher. This made it even more important that the work of the remaining phases, leading to uncovering and evaluating assumptions, was modelled and supported by teaching staff whenever possible, so students gained facility for exploring their own idiosyncratic activating events outside of the formal learning environment.

Students started to learn to articulate their assumptions, which was most easily done, or reported on, from activities within the classroom. Asking questions and whole body response activities helped students to become more aware of their own thinking. A pedagogy which included questioning also inculcated a questioning attitude in students. Generally students tended to be quite general rather than specific about the assumptions they held. This did not however prevent more change from occurring.

Students' learning to self-reflect was one of the most valuable outcomes from this project. It was possible to map an increase in student ability to write their reflection sheets and to move from generalities to more deeply held ideas over the year. This was seen also in the way students identified issues they were not comfortable with. Reflection was developed through the use of the reflection sheet, and a variety of classroom assignments and activities, and as well as through the student- teacher mentoring relationships. Students themselves identified reflection as a way of change.

Other aspects of the process, including seeing alternate viewpoints, became available to students mainly through class discussion, although reading material and listening to sermons and presentations also became opportunities for them to consider their own point of view. Participation in discourse improved over the year as students gained voice and felt comfortable in taking different views from each other, to exposing their own ideas and using discourse as a vehicle for checking their own ideas.

Being in an environment which encouraged and supported change meant that students had opportunity and support when they wished to put new ideas, habits of mind, and points of view into place. When they articulated areas for change, support included staff and students challenging them when change did not occur. A residential setting added to both the support and the scrutiny.

As a methodology, I found that while teachers might have planned for an activating event to help bring student assumptions and ideas to the surface, there was no guarantee students would respond to their planned event. Students are individuals in their own phase of learning and development and grappling with issues at their own pace and place. However when it became

clear that issues had been raised teachers learned to help students surface their assumptions, both through questioning and through a variety of assignment and written work. A range of verbal and written, group and individual classroom activities helped students to self-reflect, consider other points of view, and be engaged in discourse regarding the efficacy and veracity of their ideas and attitudes. These activities were a kind of scaffolding which enabled students to come to new places of thinking and then put that into action.

While it was clear that assumptions changed, to attribute these to a certain level, a frame of reference or meaning scheme change is not practicable. It is possible that for one person a certain issue might bring a greater degree of change than for another person with the same issue.

Mentoring is a crucial adjunct to the classroom sphere, and is one part of the personal aspect of transformative learning that makes it particularly suitable for its use within theological education. Relationships with students where staff led, accompanied, listened, and supported from behind were important in students' transformation. Teaching was effectively transformational because of the high element of personal interaction in the environment. Teachers themselves needed to be people who were changing, and who modelled change and desired change. Students also modelled teachers and each other as an avenue for change.

The South Asian earthquake affected the way students thought about God and God's actions in the world, as well as stretching prior stunted notions of ministry. The difficulty of thinking about such a catastrophe contributed to their thinking about pedagogy, and stretched their epistemological limits.

Conclusion

I have started to be restless for my personal relationship with God, whereas before I thought that I am working for God all day long. But now I have a deeper feeling that this personal relationship is bigger than service and is necessary for doing ministry. (Mumtaz FR)

Mumtaz in this statement is reaching a point of awareness that her formation, and particularly that part which relates to her relationship with God, is foundational to the ministry she might have, and to the progress of her theological education. I have argued throughout this thesis that formation is a central purpose in theological education, and that transformative learning is a pedagogy that can be used to focus the formative purpose. Formation in theological education is limited by lack of extrinsic attention to students' prior formation, the separation of rational and non-rational aspects of spirituality and theology, and the lack of integration in a fragmented curriculum. Transformative learning encourages the articulation and evaluation of unexamined assumptions, leading to growth through a more mature discernment of underlying frames of reference. My research looked primarily at how transformative learning can help address the problem of prior formation, but additionally addressed how transformative learning might effect greater unity in spirituality and theology, and lead to greater integration of the fragmented curriculum.

I carried out my field research through an educational intervention using transformative learning in a women's theological school of an evangelical tradition in Pakistan. Students reported change in a wide range of theological and personal assumptions, and developed greater epistemological complexity. Interpretation of the data shows change due to various factors of the transformative learning intervention.

Conclusions are drawn about transformative learning in general, and transformative learning as it addresses formation in theological education.

Transformative learning

The field research at the UBTC, Gujranwala, Pakistan, contributed to an understanding of transformative learning from the perspective of the student, the teacher, and the process.

The field research occurred in an environment intentionally based on transformative learning principles. Staff training, occurring before the students arrived, focused on a brief orientation to the theory, and staff completed fortnightly feedback sheets during the term which helped to keep transformative learning in focus. My two six week visits during the course also gave teachers the opportunity to ask questions and continue to consider their approach from a transformative learning perspective.

The students found that transformative learning was beneficial as they learned to reflect on their thinking and behaviour. Students become aware of what was shaping them, and how that needed to be brought to their attention for them to start to think about other ways of acting and responding to their situations.

Teachers found the transformative learning experience helped them to be more aware of the way that students were thinking, so they could provide opportunity and support for students who wished to articulate and reflect on previously unexamined assumptions. Teachers also developed a pedagogy with a student-oriented rather than a content-oriented focus.

The process of transformative learning relates to the phases, and to the type and level of perspective transformation. The seven phases of transformative learning that were used to study the progress of transformation were found to work together rather than as discrete processes. The trigger and the articulation of the problem may occur simultaneously, or may be widely separated in time. The evaluation elements (reflection, other points of view, discourse, and revision) may be simultaneous.

I make three major points with corresponding implications about transformative learning, that have emerged from this study. The first is about the nature of assumption change, second the

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level of change at meaning structure level, and third regarding student epistemology and how that affects the use of transformative learning.

The nature of assumption change is idiosyncratic for each student. The research took place in a fairly controlled environment, with a homogenous group of students. Students were in a similar situation and went through a similar training process. Yet each student was challenged by different elements of the environment, and responded to the challenge in their own way. There are two important implications that arise from the idiosyncratic nature of student assumptions change. The first is that the affirmative environment for change is important, rather than the nature of the challenges that teachers may provided or use to provoke challenge. Students were able to elect to change, and what to change. This gives rise to a second implication, which is to affirm once again the ethical nature of transformative learning. Students were not manipulated as to what should change and how and why, but were in an environment where they were stimulated to reflect, and supported as they chose to do so.

By investigating the changes of assumptions as the students were in the change process, changes of assumptions were able to be tracked. Research on transformative learning in the past has been generally retrospective. Retrospective studies by their very nature will be drawn to study macro levels of change. My research shows that meaningful change in assumptions does not occur only as perspective transformation but also in meaning schemes, which brings about changes in behaviour which the students find emancipatory.

A third major finding is that students with less sophisticated epistemology benefit from transformative learning. While two or three students functioned at a pre-reflective level, most of the students in the study functioned at a quasi-reflective level. For all students the opportunity to learn to reflect and self-reflect was useful. For students at the quasi-reflective level reflection led to greater self-understanding and to change. Readiness to use transformative learning for students at less complex epistemological levels can be productive in assisting students to bring change.

Some students were not able to articulate how change occurred, although they were aware that their thinking and behaviour had changed. Mezirow calls 'assimilation' transformation that does not show elements of discursive articulation and reflection. Change of an assimilative nature

occurred for students with less complex epistemologies, and through creative intuitive activity rather than verbal reflection.

Theological education

In the first theoretical section of this thesis I proposed that transformative learning provided a means of meeting the need for formation within theological education. In doing so it could also provide a way of helping to bring unity to the separation that has developed between theology and spirituality, and assist in the integration of the theological curriculum. In chapters five and six respectively I described the changes in assumption and how that change occurred. In this section I bring those two together to arrive at conclusions regarding formation through assumption change.

Formation

In chapter one I set out five factors of formation outcomes relating to relationship with God, thinking theologically, communicating the gospel, relationships with others, and self-understanding. When the five factors are revisited in terms of the formation that occurred within the students, transformative learning is found to have contributed to formation. At the same time, it was clear that providing an environment which fosters formation was crucial to students coming to a point of expecting formation to occur. While many students did not initially expect formation, as they experienced transformation they also came to expect it to occur. For students to hold such an expectation meant they personally gained a readiness for change, anticipated that the environment would bring opportunities for formation, and responded appropriately. Transformative learning experiences did not effect change uniformly in these five aspects of formation. Student formation differed in response to various aspects of the transformative learning environment.

Relationship with God

Students' conceptions of God influenced the way they related to God. They revised and broadened initially fuzzy and narrow concepts. For instance in the first term some students who

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explained good outcomes from accidents as being due to their own character, goodness and cleverness, changed to attribute the good outcomes to the goodness of God. Their change was not so much in an understanding of who God is but of a much larger imagining of the whole world and their own place in it. They began to see themselves in the hands of God rather than thinking that all events in the world were contingent on their own being. Similarly a student enlarged her concept of God from 'father' to include other images of God. The change in how the students related to God were seen markedly in their discussion of prayer. They changed from speaking of prayer as mechanistic, to prayer as a way of creating and building their relationship with God.

Changed images of God occurred as students studied doctrine about God, connecting with the students' wider knowledge and understanding of God. At the same time students integrated their changed images into their own personal relationships and perception of God's work in their own lives. Integration came about through the opportunity for students to articulate what they thought, and to evaluate their existing assumptions in the light of their new knowledge. Evaluation and articulation of assumptions occurred in assignments and the weekly reflection sheet, as well as extra-rational opportunities afforded by personal and group prayer, individual and corporate modes of worship, and creative expression during retreats.

Thinking theologically

Students entered UBTC from an environment where they thought there were 'right answers,' and they expected to be taught information which would make them people who 'knew the Bible.' Students learned biblical and theological material, but in becoming aware of a variety of approaches to different issues, learned ways to make their own theological judgements. Students developed ways of thinking theologically about issues and events in their lives beyond UBTC.

Two major factors contributed to the area of formation in thinking theologically. The first was a teaching-learning environment which fostered critical reflection, leading to greater epistemological complexity. Critical thinking skills, and biblical and theological knowledge gave students the basic essentials in order to think in a different kind of way, that is, to start to think theologically.

Conclusion

The second feature contributing to formation in the area of thinking theologically was the opportunity for students to compare and discuss a variety of biblical and theological perspectives, so they developed the rudiments of biblical knowledge, and critical awareness of theological issues. Students came face to face with disagreement, and with difficult theological issues such as the theodicy of the earthquake, which they dealt with in written assignments, class debate and personal discussion. Further, the educational environment coupled thinking theologically with appropriate action, which contributed to students' changed ability to engage in theological thought.

Communicating the gospel

The incoming students' concept of ministry in the field study was restricted to preaching and teaching. Students expanded their appreciation of the spheres in which ministry could be undertaken, to include broader parameters of ministry, and the personal dynamics which occur in ministry. At the end of the course students talked about having a 'passion' for a range of ministries, for instance working with youth, or providing facilities for orphans. The range of understanding demonstrates a change from a mechanical understanding of ministry as knowledge transfer, to service, and to communicating and helping others to grow in their thinking and relationship with God.

The changes in assumption occurred chiefly through ministry opportunities at UBTC, in the local community, and on field work, followed by reflection. Students were guided to think more widely through class content and discussion about the concept of ministry. Students thought about the standards that needed to exist in order to communicate effectively, and contact with a range of people in different ministries expanded their concept of ministry. The South Asian earthquake helped students to realise the depth of need, and the vast range of ways in which they could meet those needs, and hence also served to expand their understanding of ministry.

Relationships with others

The way that students became aware of how their relationships impacted on everything else, and that maturing personally was also part of their theological education, was a prime area of visible

change. Students reported learning to deal with anger, forgiveness, misunderstanding and other matters which arose in the context of people living and studying together. In reflecting on two particular areas of building relationships and dealing with anger, students showed awareness of change and how that change occurred.

The changes in the way students related to others conformed to a classical transformative learning model. The changes started with some kind of crisis or challenge in the relationship, and students began to articulate what it was that had upset them. The articulation of the problem often meant that students then started to examine their own behaviour to see what they had done, rather than excusing themselves because of the way another acted. As students reflected on their behaviour they participated in discourse, revision and new ways of acting. Other students and the teachers played a role in the changing ways of thinking. Mentors, the hostel superintendent, and other teaching staff often discerned when there was a problem and pro-actively engaged with the students to bring about resolution. The help teachers gave might include counselling, thinking theologically about the issue, prayer about how it was to be resolved as well as discussion. Talking with teachers and each other provided an opportunity for the students to discuss avenues of response, and to present a new way of dealing with the situation and it provided support for the students to act on their new found understanding.

Self-understanding

One of the elements of the course that surprised students was growing self-knowledge. Almost all students wondered at this ‘coming to know myself.’ In itself self-knowledge was a new concept, and related to an evolving self. Kegan describes people growing from ‘being relationships’ to ‘having relationships’ and in a similar sense these students also grew to ‘have a self,’ they grew to know themselves well enough in order to ‘be themselves’ rather than being an accumulation of response to all the demands to be and do that were around them.

Important ways of coming to know themselves were the ‘data gathering instruments.’ From the initial interview students began to think about their identities and ideas, and the copies of the weekly reflection sheets the students kept became for students a rich source of data for them to mine about themselves. While initially they found the sheets difficult to complete they came to

find them a tool for self-analysis and self-knowledge. In this way the 'reflection' element of transformative learning was largely established by the weekly reflection sheets.

Changes of assumption led to formation, but there was also a level of developmental change. Epistemologically all students became aware of the complexity of knowledge and the need to be able to make choices, although not all managed to negotiate being able to defend their choices with reasons rather than subjectively. Socially, students' ability to reflect on their relationships showed their movement beyond Kegan's Interpersonal balance to a place of their own independence, if not interdependence. With regard to faith development, as Fowler describes it, students developed in ways that their faith became their own, an individuative-reflective faith, something more than the synthetic conventional faith many brought with them.

In summary, transformative learning contributed to the five aspects of formation outlined above in a 'classic' sense and also variously in reflection, debate and discourse, supportive environment and planning for action. The major implication of the study is that transformative learning can be used with effect in addressing students' prior formation as outlined above within theological education.

Unifying Theology and Spirituality

Apart from prior formation, the initial chapters identified two other areas of concern in formation. The first was to cross the divide which had arisen between theology and spirituality, an outcome of the privileging of reason in Enlightenment philosophy. Helping teachers to provide intentionally for reflection within their teaching structures rather than formation being an add-on to the curriculum, and including other reflective opportunities helped to integrate theology and spirituality. Reflection was integrated within teachers' own methodology and part of all the teaching processes.

Many of the reflections that students wrote showed how students were bringing an integration of what they were learning in the classes into an understanding of their own person. Students also brought their feelings and creativity into 'rational' understandings of theology. Students reflected

on class material about their own ideas, but also on how that material could be appropriated into their lives and relationships.

Conversely students brought an element of critical thinking or rationality and theology into 'softer' elements such as the way they thought about their prayer life, and evaluated the way they had been relating to, and thinking about, God. Extra-rational opportunities for reflection occurred most often at times that were focused on student's own personal spiritual growth, such as retreats and chapels. Transformative learning, with the use of rational and extra-rational strategies to engage students, and reflection on assumptions raised, contributed to students integrating their theological studies with their growing spirituality.

Integrating a fragmented curriculum

The third area of concern regarding formation and theological education, the fragmented curriculum, was also addressed by the use of a transformative learning based pedagogy. Even though the UBTC curriculum was largely based on the four-fold encyclopaedia, influenced by the educational background of those who developed it, the use of transformative learning was a way of making links between subject areas, and from class material to students' lives. Although this did occur, this was less clearly shown. For instance students become aware of how the hermeneutics class can help them with their practical preparation. Some students become aware of how material from a range of classes impacted on an area of formation for themselves personally, for instance when students started to identify their gifts and abilities. I suggest that the entire teaching-learning process needs to be far more pro-active with regard to the integration needed here. Students are entering from an educational background where studies often were not integrated: mathematics had nothing to do with Pakistan studies for instance. When students finished a subject they felt that it was now possible to put those notes away as they would not be needed, and so the knowledge and the practices they learned in one class were not thought to inform another. While the teachers were aware implicitly of subjects' interactions, this relationship was not often made explicit. The more reflective students made the connections but more explicit help for all students could make this more meaningful.

Conclusion

This research study showed formation occurred in the students, and was enhanced by the transformative learning principles being applied in the classroom and the general environment. Principles of transformative learning helped to provide an environment where students learned to question the ideas and concepts they held, and to reflect upon their experiences and their responses to these experiences in order to better understand themselves. Students prior formation, the fragmented curriculum, and the separation of spirituality and theology were addressed in the use of transformative learning contributing to student formation.

Implications of Transformative learning in theological education

I had expected the use of transformative learning to enhance formation in theological education. This is the major implication from the study. The study results showed the transformative learning contributed according to my expectation. These findings are useful for the employment of transformative learning in other theological education environments. I make some specific comments on the phases of transformative learning below.

Activating events and articulating assumptions

Students encountered challenge from the classroom, relationships, extra-rational presentations, and the wider learning environment. When students were challenged in the classroom, challenges were those intentionally planned by teachers, and challenges which occurred through the concordance of the class content and their own interests and concerns. Transformative learning is most effective when teachers are able to be flexible in response to awareness that students are facing challenge, even when that is beyond what a teacher had planned for the class. Teachers can help students when they have been challenged by being ready in questioning and in giving students room themselves to question, for the underlying assumptions to start to be articulated.

Transformative learning theory is clear that trigger events are idiosyncratic for each person but the variety in trigger events in the field research was beyond my expectation. While teachers might plan for an activating event, to help bring student assumptions and ideas to the surface, there is no guarantee that that is the item to which students will respond. Students are individuals in their own phase of learning and development and grappling with issues at their own pace and

place. In the classroom teachers learned to help students surface their assumptions, both through questioning and through a variety of assignment and written work.

Teachers can maximise the opportunities which arise in the teaching situation and which activate disorienting dilemmas in students, dilemmas well beyond what they may have planned, by being perceptive and flexible.

Critical self-reflection

Students' learning to self-reflect was one of the most valuable outcomes from this project.

Students themselves identified reflection as a way of change. It was possible to see over the year an increase in student ability to write their reflection sheets, and to move from generalities to more deeply held ideas. Increasing reflectiveness was also seen in the way students not only identified issues they were not comfortable with but themselves went on to further reflect on the issue.

When students articulated assumptions there was a great deal of opportunity for the students to continue to reflect on what had surfaced, from the devotional time at the beginning of the day, through morning chapel, a variety of class activities and assignments, and other time students may have wished to take. Time during class sessions can productively be given to activities which encourage articulation of assumptions, critical reflection, discourse, and revision of assumptions, but these activities can also be part of assignments and activities that happen outside of the classroom teaching time. Activities which encourage reflection also need to include a range of oral and written, group and individual activities. Reflection was also developed through the use of the reflection sheet, which continued to be used at UBTC after the study had finished because it was a useful formational activity. Mentoring relationships also contributed to students' ability to reflect, and a variety of mentoring models can be used in other contexts. Flexibility and a readiness to move away from a reliance on a lecture methodology are also important in fostering a transformative classroom.

The practice of reflection in a variety of ways and contexts has resonances beyond theological education, and particularly with work which speaks of the importance of reflection in teaching for spirituality.

Discourse, revision, and support

Students could encounter other viewpoints in their reading and activities, and questioning teachers and other students. Discourse occurred as an intentional part of the classroom, but also in private conversations around meals, free time, and in mentoring situations. Discourse through creative activity such as role play rather than rational debate gave students other opportunities to voice their questions and new-found understandings.

When students wished, they gained support in revising their assumptions and putting new practices into place. Often they themselves chose what they wanted to do and did it. Scaffolding afforded by teachers and peer support meant students could come to new places of thinking and then put that into action.

Together the use of an environment which questioned and gave room to think differently, which supported questioning, reflection, and changed action made the environment one in which transformation was fostered. This suggests a limitation on the use of transformative learning in contexts where the classroom is the only meeting place of teacher with student, and students with each other.

Theological educators

Transformative learning principles helped teachers to act as facilitators of transformation both inside and outside the classroom. Using transformative learning helped to make teaching staff aware of distorted assumptions that students held, and so to be ready to adapt their lessons in ways that would give opportunity for students to be able to articulate these assumptions and to clarify them, evaluate them, and make any necessary revisions. Teachers could be aware not only of cognitive problems, but also to see how students were struggling with implications from a personal angle. The use of transformative learning pedagogy was subject to a constant content/

reflection tension, but teachers were able to work through how to balance giving information with teaching to think and reflect. Outside the classroom, transformative learning theory was an effective approach for teachers to use in their formal mentoring and in informal contacts with students.

Mentoring

Mentoring provided several benefits in formation for the students. The one on one time gave students individual opportunity to articulate problems they might have, especially something more personal which they may not have been ready to discuss in class time. Mentoring time also gave teachers the opportunity, which did not impinge on teaching time, to help a student explore an issue. Teachers used time in mentoring to help students articulate and question assumptions, to think through the practical ramifications of changed assumptions, and give students support in putting into practice the implications of changed perspectives.

Mentoring is a crucial adjunct to the classroom sphere, and is one part of the personal aspect of transformative learning that makes it particularly suitable for its use within theological education. Relationships with students where staff led, accompanied, talked face to face, and supported from behind were important in students' transformation. Teaching was effectively transformational because of the high element of personal interaction in the environment. Teachers who were changing, and who modelled their desire for personal change impacted on students understanding of growth and development. Students followed by fashioning their behaviour after the models of teachers and students, sometimes accompanied by critical reflection on the model they were following.

The South Asian earthquake was a trigger shared by all students in their transformation. It affected the way students thought about God and God's actions in the world, as well as stretching their stunted notions of ministry. The difficulty of thinking about such a catastrophe contributed to their theological thinking, and stretched their epistemological limits.

Transformative learning, and formation in theological education require a personal angle for transformational goals to become concrete. The UBTC study allowed for close personal

relationships due to a small number of staff and students, informal activities where staff and students spent time together, and formal mentoring relationships. Opportunities for small group work, faculty and peer mentoring, and informal faculty student interaction create an environment where students' personal questions and growth issues can be addressed.

Implications for the enhancement of a general teaching learning environment to be transformative:

This study was undertaken with Christian women in Pakistan, a religious minority group within a patriarchal culture, however many aspects of the findings are applicable to transformative learning in other teaching-learning environments.

Activating events arise from expected and unanticipated events; students may require opportunities to question and be questioned, and to articulate hidden assumptions. Teachers can help students by allowing for flexibility to follow moments of challenge.

Multiple types of opportunities for reflection and self-reflection supported students to follow through on issues that arose during the course. Reflection may occur alone and in groups or pairs, in written and oral formats, and in creative non-discursive formats such as music, art or drama. Varieties of reflective activities meet the need for students to reflect in ways that are consonant with their own personalities.

Students encountered a variety of viewpoints in different kinds of ways, formally and informally, written and spoken, and from creative arts, again including rational and extra-rational orientations. A variety of viewpoints gives students the possibilities to see different points of view operating, as they consider what a change in their own assumption might look like.

Students were helped by opportunities to voice the changes they wished to bring into play, to ask for advice, to be strengthened and challenged as they put that into action. The changes that were seen in this study, turning changed assumptions into action, were supported by caring relationships with teachers, and student-student support.

Further research

This study looked particularly at theological education using transformative learning in a cross-cultural setting in Pakistan. Further research regarding this study can be undertaken in a number of directions.

Transformative learning in theological education can be further researched by varying the setting in terms of the residential location, the small intimate situation, different denominational or Christian traditions, other cultural situations, and other than a purely women's environment.

This study was conducted in a residential setting, where students lived in an environment offering formational opportunities. They had regular access to teachers and mentors, and in turn teachers and mentors were aware of how students were responding to the formational environment. The influence of the residential setting on students was also of benefit due to the mutual interaction of students. In non-residential settings there would be more reliance on student self-reflecting without the support of teachers and fellow students. Research in a non-residential setting would investigate transformative learning theory without the secure supportive environment in place at the UBTC.

Transformative learning could be investigated within a larger theological education setting. The environment at UBTC, the small number of students, with teachers generally available, led to close personal contact between teachers and students. Investigating the use of transformative learning in settings where there is a much larger student body and less possibility for the close formal and informal contacts between students and teachers would require putting in place small group opportunities and other creative aspects of the environment to maximise growth.

Transformative learning can be investigated among a range of Christian traditions and denominations. This particular study was carried out within an evangelical tradition which considers formation to be important, even though for the students the concept was unfamiliar. Research within other traditions which emphasise other purposes of theological education, such as professional ministry development, may serve to highlight other aspects of transformative learning theory and its usefulness to theological education.

Conclusion

The particular cross-cultural nature of this study, in a culture which favoured rote learning, and which had a communal rather than individual focus had special difficulties in putting the study in place, but also gave special fruitfulness in giving students opportunities to reflect and question, and to become aware of their own individual identity. The researcher also brought her own New Zealand perspectives to the study. Research in a Western environment where students bring quite different personal assumptions and learning backgrounds will also bring a different range of findings.

Minority identity formation was important for this group of students. An environment which provided role models from inside their own culture was instrumental in this. Students looked at the young Pakistani women who were their teachers and considered their understanding of the role of women in the church and in their society. If the majority of teachers had not been from their culture then the transformative experience may not have been so profound. The effect of teachers who share or do not share aspects of minority identity for minority students in transformative learning environments could be given special attention.

The researcher and participants, teachers and students, in this study were women. Special attention was paid to developmental theories which did not privilege white western male trajectories of independence, individualism, and justice, but rather valued relationality and an ethic of care and understanding. How this affected the findings will also be seen in comparison with similar studies if they were to be done among men or mixed gender groups.

Further study in Pakistan could investigate these same issues listed above, with a participant range which would parallel this original study in many ways. For instance studies in a non-residential setting such as the Open Theological Seminary,¹ among mixed gender and all-male student bodies, and among different Christian traditions could be carried out in Pakistan, which would open up the possibilities of a closer comparison of findings.

The current study investigated the general notion of formation in the Christian tradition, and not in Islam or other faith traditions. Transformative learning and developing spirituality in other

¹ Theological Education by Extension programme in Pakistan

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traditions may give opportunities for further research into the way that transformative learning shapes spirituality within particular faith traditions.

Finally with reference to the current participants, longitudinal research would give opportunity to assess the long-term effects of the educational intervention. After two or three years to re-interview these participants regarding the changes they claim to have made and the action they hope to take, would give opportunity to assess the long term effect of the teaching strategy. Topics to be considered would include whether they continued to use reflection, and the kinds of ways they use to reflect, personal changes that occurred regarding relationships, anger and how they respond within their families. The environment at UBTC is a reasonably safe and closed one, and to track students' Christian identity and female identity, and how have they progressed in terms of being Christian in the local community would give further indicators of what has been a long term effect of the teaching strategy. Asking students at that time about the changes that they understand to have happened would give the opportunity to compare a retrospective understanding of change with the current data on change in progress. The changes that were just beginning to be made as an outcome of the South Asian earthquake could also be investigated

The UBTC study did not formally assess students' cognitive, social, moral or faith developmental levels. While attention was paid to developmental structures, particularly epistemological but others as well, as markers or signs of growth and structure, the point of interest was changed assumptions. In order to further investigate the relationship between formation and development, further research with more formal assessment of developmental parameters would be necessary. For instance developmental assessments such as reflective judgement (Kitchener and King), or faith development (Fowler), could be taken at the beginning and end of the course and these results would give another aspect of the particular developmental changes taking place, and how transformative learning contributed to them.

The kind of formation that religious minority female students in the rote learning educational environment in Pakistan came with, will be different in many ways from the formation students from more developed countries may bring with them. Nevertheless the aspects of minority formation discovered may shed light on other situations where there are minority students.

I used a reporting method and analysis that depended on discursive rationality. Students drew pictures and wrote poems, for which I did not have an interpretive method. A method which also included interpretation of images and less discursive ways of expression could contribute to an understanding of the contribution of transformative learning in the extra-rational domains.

Final word

I undertook this study with the practical intent of being able to contribute to the practice of theological education, especially in the area of formation. I began this thesis with statements from three students as they considered how transformation had occurred in their lives. This thesis has been chiefly about the third student's comment, Mumtaz' saying how teachers at UBTC had contributed to how she changed.

So I am so thankful to [UBTC teachers] that they worked hard so that change would happen in me - otherwise I would not have changed. (Mumtaz MI)

This thesis has shown how the use of transformative learning within theological education augments the formational function of theological education. Theological education is formational, but there are other factors at work. The second statement at the beginning of the thesis regarded the students' own motivation:

[Change occurs] when people themselves try to change (Hamida II)

I have discussed how a transformative environment can be fostered, so students are also conscious of formation and of working toward their own transformation. Nevertheless, even when students work and put their effort to bring about those personal changes that they see as necessary and desirable, and while theological educators take their responsibilities seriously, transformative learning is not simply a mechanical instrument of transformation. Lawson gives a timely reminder that:

Conclusion

*We take our own responsibilities seriously in the task of teaching, but we do it with humility, recognizing that it is God who supernaturally brings about spiritual growth and fruitfulness of life...*²

Saima articulates theologically that there remains the mystery of God at work:

I thank God; God did it (Razia FI)

² Lawson, Kevin E. "Marginalization and Renewal: Evangelical Christian Education in the Twentieth Century." *Religious Education* 98, no. 4 (2003): 452

Appendices

Appendix 1 United Bible Training Centre

The United Bible Training Centre was founded in 1939 as a Presbyterian centre for training women to be involved in ministry in the church. By 1944 under a move from the WCC other denominations had joined and it became the 'united' centre. Currently the centre is governed by a board made up of representatives from most major Protestant denominations and mission societies working in Pakistan, and students come from all groups. The focus has changed over the years, from the original two year training programme, to providing a range of short term programmes. At the time of the study, over a year nine short residential courses also ran alongside the two courses from which students in the research study were drawn. The year long Discipleship Course began in 1998, and the three month Foundations in Bible Ministry course started in 1991.

The programme at UBTC includes a mix of worship, formal classes, informal time spent with staff, and structured activities. Students in longer courses meet with a staff mentor once a week. At times the presence of another group on a short course may mean students become involved in leading study groups or similar. Other courses during the year range from courses for adult literates, school and college students, nurses and professional women, and retreats for women in ministry. Students are residential, four students sharing a room with ensuite bathroom. The compound has high walls and gates and is closed (guarded) due to the need for women to live in a secluded environment in the context.

A notional daily programme might be as follows:

7.00 a.m.	Breakfast
7.45 a.m.	Devotional time (students might lead students on a shorter course, otherwise the time is not supervised)
8.15 a.m.	Combined worship
8.35-12.00 p.m.	Three classes, staff and students spend tea break together
12.30 pm	Lunch, with other students and staff
Afternoon	Free for study, resting (especially in summer), going to local shops for supplies, laundry...
4.00-5.00	Class
5.00-6.00	Games
6.00-6.30	Prayer in groups – Mon- Thurs student groups, Fridays students and staff together
6.30	Evening meal
Evening	Meet with mentors Involvement in a short term course evening programme Relaxing, drinking tea together Study

Appendix

The curriculum is grouped around three foci, formational development, Biblical and theological studies, and ministry skills. Although the three areas of focus overlap, classes are grouped into three consonant areas with class hours per week per term in brackets [].

Formational development classes include Discipleship, (3 terms covering the life of a disciple, the qualities of a disciple, team work and leadership) [1]; Abundant Life (TEE course)[1], Prayer (TEE course)[1].

Biblical and theological studies include Significant Bible Characters [4], Old Testament Survey[4], Exodus[4], a major prophet [2], New Testament Survey[4], Synoptic gospel[4], Gospel of John[4], Acts[4], Romans[4], non-Pauline epistle[2], Doctrine (God and Bible) [2], Doctrine (Person and work of Jesus) [2], Doctrine (Holy Spirit and Church) [2].

Ministry skill related classes are Ethics[2], Evangelism[1], Apologetics & Islam[2], General Interest seminars[1], and classes in Sunday school theory [2]and practice[2], hermeneutics[2], homiletics[2], Shepherd (a TEE course on ministry skills), leading a range of Sunday school, Bible study groups (internal to UBTC and in the community), leading worship services and preaching, and a one month Internship.

Appendix 2 Student Interview Schedule

Initial student interview

Student semi-structured interview: A range of questions to discern students thinking complexity, some theological understandings regarding the nature of God, the Christian life, and their self-understandings. Each response needs to be then drawn out to look for what may be underlying assumptions, so changes can be tracked.

Processes – at this stage students may not be aware: but ask students as to how they arrived at the understandings they already have.

A. Questions on self-understanding

Purpose: to see what differences in how they reflect on their life in different ways after being part of the course and learning a more reflective method.

1. Narrative biography: can you briefly tell me about yourself? Include such things as (prompt as necessary)

- your family & where you fit in
- your Christian experience and how your faith has changed
- what you hope for in this course and how you think you might change by being here
- your hopes both in the past and how they have happened, not happened, and for the future

2. Self-concept and relationships

What do you think about yourself?

Do you think people generally like you?

Do you want people to like you? What do you think you should do/ be in order to gain people's liking? Or respect? Which is better to have?

3. Identity related – gender and minority status

Which is the most true statement?

i) Men are created in the image of God, women are secondary

ii) All people are created in the image of God

iii) Only Christians are made in the image of God

What do you think about how women are treated in your family/ village? How is it, what happens?

What does being a woman mean to you? Do you think there are important differences? How has your sense of yourself as a woman been changing?

What about how Christian are treated?

What would you like to change – about yourself, and about that status?

How do you think you will cope with the work on the course? (Self-image)

How easy or difficult will it be to cope with coursework? Why? Or what will make it easy or difficult?

Students' thinking complexity

Epistemologies: How do students understand that the study, and the study environment, will help them? All of the questions, including these, will lead to an expression of their epistemologies – if it is simply to gather information from ‘authorities,’ are they at a more subjective stage of knowing, do they know how to use ‘rules of knowing’ to process information, or how to construct meaning for themselves?

1. How does knowledge originate? Where does knowledge come from?
2. So how expert are your teachers? Can you disagree with them?
3. What do you find is the best way to learn?
4. What would you believe most? Why?
 - i) Something written in the Bible
 - ii) Something written in the Quran
 - iii) Something that you learned / God told you in a dream
 - iv) Something your pastor told you

Who/ what would you most likely obey? Why?

- i) Something written in the Bible.
- ii) Something your mother told you to do.
- iii) Something your father (or brother or male relative) told you to do.
- iv) Something you learned/ God told you in a dream.
- v) Something your pastor told you to do.

When learning about something you want to know do you rely on experts? If not who or what do you rely on? if so, what do you do when the experts disagree?

How do you know what is right and true?

Some dimensions of theological thinking

(This is only a sampling of concepts, changes may occur anywhere not just in these, but I have chosen these as being important and also areas where there are often mistaken underlying assumptions)

A. Concepts about God/ Jesus / relationship

What is your image of God?

What does it mean to talk about God's love? What does it mean for you to say that God loves you?

What is your image of Jesus?

For instance: What is his relationship with God –Father (khuda-bap)

How can you explain his being both human and divine?

What does his death on the cross mean for you?

Response to this story:

Najma ran away with her Muslim boyfriend and they had a court (civil) marriage ceremony. Najma wants to go to church sometimes, and still goes. Her father says he will never forgive her, and forbids the family from having anything to do with her. Najma's mother sometimes visits her secretly – but is afraid what the brothers would do if they knew.

Opportunity to ask about God and relationship; Najma and faith retention, assurance; father & forgiveness; mother & love for children, precipitating wrath of husband

B. Concepts about the Christian life – salvation/ Christian life/ prayer / forgiveness

Why would you say you were a Christian?

Alternatives: “How would you identify someone as being a Christian? Or what are the characteristics of a Christian?”

What does salvation mean for you?

For instance: how does one gain salvation?

Can we be sure we have gained salvation – if so how?

How do you think we should forgive people who have done wrong to us?

For instance if someone has harmed the family honour how should we behave?

Respond to the following story (issues of forgiveness, honour)

Afshah's father Saleem was in prison for murdering Nadeem. In the prison someone gave him a Bible which he reads and he takes part in Christian activities whenever the chaplain comes to visit. When he is released, Nadeem's brothers want to come to visit him. He is afraid they will kill him. What should he do? Assuming that you know both families, what could you do? What advice would you give?

Why do you pray? What happens when you pray?

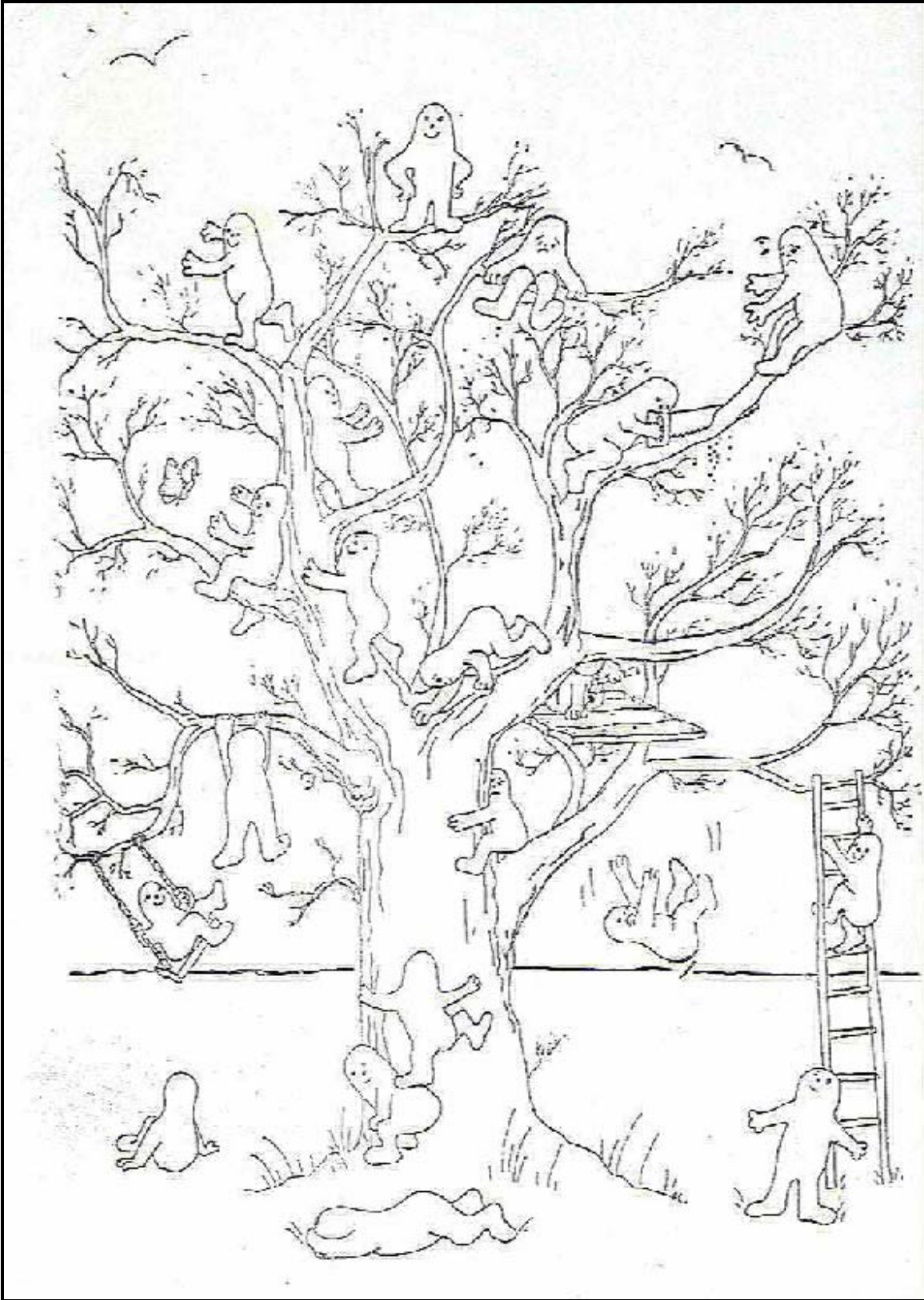
How do you benefit from saying prayers?

Use the tree diagram students to describe who they are in relationship to God (over page).

What will you and your life be like fifteen years from now?

Is there anything else that you would like to add about how you are thinking or feeling about the programme? Are there other questions I should have asked you, that would have thrown some light on these issues we are interested in, that is, how students are learning?

Thank you for talking with me at this time.



September (medial) interview with students (semi-structured)

Some changes to above including:

b. During the time that you were at home over the holidays, how do you think you related differently compared to how you lived there earlier?

Did family members or other people make any comments about any changes they have seen? Can you tell me about them? Did they surprise you or had you thought you had changed that way too?

If your best friend were to introduce you to someone, what would you like her to say about you?

Is the way you see yourself now different from the way you saw yourself in the past (at the beginning of the year?) What led to the changes? Have there been any other turning points?

Has being at UBTC changed the way you think about yourself or the world?

What has been most helpful to you about this place?

Are there things you would like to learn that you don't think you can learn here?

c. Processes:

What activities during the course do you think helped to bring you to these changes? Was it simply what teachers taught? How much of it was due to you having to stop and think? What made you stop and think?

d. Epistemology

How has your thinking changed over these months? Do you think that you think in a different way? Can you tell me something that sticks in your mind from the last year, where you know you have had a fundamental change in your understanding or assumptions?

2. Questions that have arisen from the weekly journal and from observation, to clarify any issues.

October (Final) interview with students (semi-structured)

As above excepting the question area of holidays.

1. Epistemology:

Before the interview the students were given two sections (about half a page) from two different books to read. One gave very specific details on Mary, mother of Jesus, and Joseph her husband (ages, dates of birth etc), stating that Joseph was married prior to his marriage to Mary, and the children of that marriage were the brothers of Jesus mentioned in the Bible. It was written by a respected Protestant Pakistani theologian and churchman. The other wrote about the kind of family background Jesus had, and talked about his younger siblings.

Questions: What do you think of these two – are they saying the same thing? Which one do you agree with? Why?

2. Forgiveness: The church treasurer took a large amount of church funds – 3 lakh rupees. When some elders discovered this, he first said he had not done so. Then he said – I have done a very great sin: please forgive me. Now some people in the church say that he should resign as treasurer, and others say that, no, he has been forgiven and he should still be the treasurer. What do you think?

Appendix 3 Weekly student reflection sheet

Term One:

1. What challenged you most this week? – it might be something to think about, something to do, something emotional? What happened to make you think/ do something about it?
2. How have you thought more? What helped you to consider this issue – class material, other students, prayer/ thinking with God, communication with family, something else?
- 3 What leaves you uncomfortable ? and made you want to retreat, to turn away from thinking and stay in a safe place where you are?
- 4 Have you created something this week in the course that demonstrates this feeling/ change that you would like to share?

Term Two and Three

1. What challenged you most this week
2. How have you thought more?
3. What change has occurred?
4. Have you created something?
5. What leaves you uncomfortable ?
6. Is there any change relating to last month's reflections

Appendix 4 Students' Final reflection

You have three or four days to think about this – use the time so when you sit down to write on Wednesday it will be easy! In order to help you think you should look back on your reflection sheets for the last term or two. These may remind you of things you may have forgotten.

You may like to think about why you came this year – what were the purposes that brought you here, seen now in retrospect? Maybe what you have seen occur is different to what you expected to happen.

Think about the person you were when you came here in January (September):

Describe this person – you might like to think in terms of socially, spiritually, mentally; what were your gifts and abilities, your character, your strengths and weaknesses, your hopes and dreams. What did you believe and what was the effect of your faith on you and practical Christian life.

Or maybe you would like to think in terms of what you thought and understood as right and good and true.

Now stop and think about yourself now, in the same terms: your gifts and abilities, your character, your understanding of the world and your place in it. What did you believe and what was the effect of your faith on you and practical Christian life. Describe who you are now, and what your hopes and dreams are now.

What are the significant changes that you recognize?

Take one important area where you can see you have changed and write about that in more detail – what has changed, why and how. What were the fundamental ideas? How do you see that change continuing to happen? Are there significant events or opportunities that contributed to this change?

Appendix 5: Staff Data Gathering Instruments

Initial (Jan) Interviews with Staff

Initially what is your expectation with the programme?

How do you think your own teaching is going to change?

How will your preparation change?

How will you make yourself aware what is going on in students' lives?

End of first month staff focus group

What has gone well in teaching using transformative learning theory? How can you capitalise on that?

What has been difficult? How have you compensated?

How have students responded in ways that you did not expect? How is that different from maybe before?

What ways are you using to monitor student interaction? How do you know if students are doing something different or you are simply more aware?

What is problematic? What do you think should be changed?

How can I help you more?

Fortnightly Staff Reporting:

1. Firstly think about your students these last two weeks: what changes have you noticed in terms of their assumptions? Their ability to handle material, to take initiative in thinking through issues, in preparing for any field work/ teaching assignments

2. Think about your own teaching: how have you found transformative learning processes have helped you to help students?

From term two the list of processes was included:

2a crisis or challenge

2b articulated assumptions

2c critically self-reflect?

2d other points of view?

2e discourse

2f revision of assumptions

2g change in action

3. What processes have you found difficult to get a grip on?

4. What do you think is NOT happening that you think could happen better by changing something in your teaching style?

5. What about your own 'transformation': are their concepts or assumptions that you have been challenged to rethink this month? What lead you to rethink them? How have you continued that process?

6 Environmental: has anything general in the environment occurred that would affect students formation?

7 Mentees: if you have been able to read the reflection sheets from your mentee and discuss anything pertinent with her, please comment on areas of development.

September Staff Interview Schedule – Individual and Focus Group

Theological assumptions: what were the theological assumptions that you saw changed most in the students? Do one by one and then see if there are also some generalities.
Are there classes/ subjects where this seemed to happen more?

Transformative learning methods: what processes did you find were easy and natural? What helped most? Were there any processes that you found not necessary? Were there elements that are not part of the theory but actually you regularly saw happening in student lives?
How much can you attribute to what happened in the classroom? How much to what happened in non-formal and informal activities?
How much happened due to things totally beyond the programme control?

Epistemologies: how are students thinking in more complex ways now? Can you give examples for any students?

My own questions arising from monthly reports

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