UN/LEARNING TO TEACH:

A DOUBLE TESTIMONIAL NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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Abstract

The central thrust of this dissertation is that the crises and conflicts in education, teacher preparation, and society at large are not only socio-political, but spiritual as well. I suggest that what is needed in faculties of education are conversations which take us into the deep places of our inner lives to the bedrock of our beliefs about ourselves, life, the world, and our relationships within them. I also suggest that there is a need for a contextually sensitive and responsive curriculum and pedagogy that strikes a balance between a focus on self and society, the individual and the relational, the rational and the intuitive, and the socio-political and the spiritual or "religious".

This inquiry is a two-pronged, longitudinal study in testimonial reading. To read testimonially is to approach the text of an other with a disposition of receptivity, humility, and hospitality. Testimonial reading regards our reactions to various texts as sites for the interrogation of how those texts challenge our investments in familiar socio-cultural values. It saves us from allowing our reactions to become a justification for dismissing the text, regarding its author with disdain, and thus opening the way for yet another 'small' or 'big' act of cruelty to be committed.

The study is "two-pronged" or "double" in that it involves a double engagement in the practice of testimonial reading – first in relation to the texts produced by those whose voices have historically been pushed aside in the formulation of the public education system in the Modern West, and second, in relation to the texts of the Holy Bible. The self-knowledge which derived from the first engagement in the practice of

testimonial reading is what led me to the second set of texts. What I 'found' in the context of that second set of readings surprised me, and awes me still.

To conclude, this dissertation offers an exemplar of one teacher educator's process of un/learning to teach for the purpose of encouraging world weary travelers on the journey across the landscape of education. It suggests that the remedy for the social inequities of today in schools and society lies not in the manipulation of externals, such as curriculum, pedagogy, and context, although redress of historical injustices in these areas is certainly necessary. Nevertheless, I am suggesting that since there will always be circumstances that threaten to overwhelm us, unjust conditions and imperfect people that have the potential to get us down and knock us out, conversations in teacher education must go beyond the socio-political to include the acknowledgement and regeneration of the inner life, that is to say, the spiritual.

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We learn many of life's lessons when times are good and circumstances easy.

Others, we learn only in seasons of hardship, loss, and great darkness.

Although suffering can be the harshest of headmasters,

its curriculum may open the door to freedom beyond our loftiest expectations.

Sometimes it's only in the adversity we dread

that we begin to discover the kind of life we've only dreamed of.

(Rothschild, 2002, pp. 15-16)

Prologue

Travel with me if you will in the theatre of your mind to a crisp, clear, autumn morning somewhere in middle North America. After a long, hot shower, a glass of cold juice, and a full breakfast, you don your jeans, flannel shirt, fleece vest, and a pair of cozy warm socks. You pull on your hiking boots, and set out on your daily morning walk. You move briskly along your customary path As you are walking, you hear a familiar sound – twigs snapping beneath your boots. First, one. Then another. Then another. And so on. Very rhythmic. In time with your steps. Your attention, however, is not on the well-worn path on which you are treading. Rather, you look around in wonder and in awe, gazing at the beauty surrounding you: lush green plants, myriad small creatures scurrying about, the brilliant autumn colours. Red. Gold. Brown. Orange. An azure blue sky. And you muse to yourself, "Thank goodness I live *here*." All seems right with the world.

Slowly, your gaze turns inward, and you begin to go through your list of things to do today, your various projects and plans. As you muse, now and again, your attention turns to your fantasies, your anxieties, and your fears. At one point, you feel yourself half-tripping, and you kick absentmindedly at the branch which caught your foot. Without missing a step, you continue in your reverie. You recall what transpired in class the other day. You wonder what would have happened if only … and you wonder what will happen when … And you imagine how you will handle it. You conjure the image in

excruciating detail, and you map out very carefully the strategies you will execute. First this. Then that. Then, suddenly, a hard crunch underfoot shifts your attention once again to the world 'outside.' You experience some degree of irritation at once again being torn away from your imaginings.

When you look around, you notice that you are further along on the path than you thought you would be, much further than you had ever intended to go, and the sound of twigs snapping underfoot has grown much, much louder. SNAP! SNAP! SNAP! The path, it would seem, is strewn with what feel to your feet like large, knobbly twigs. But when you look down, what you see horrifies you. You realize suddenly that all this time, what you have been stepping on without noticing is not twigs at all. That rhythmic snap, snap, snapping underfoot has been the cracking of the bones of long silenced and suffering others. Many are dead. Some have been dead a good long time. Many continue to struggle to draw breath, to be heard. Their screams, though now visible to you, remain inaudible.

What began as a pleasant and 'routine' morning walk has become a waking nightmare. You realize that all the while you have been walking along this path, you have walked kind of absent-mindedly, looking everywhere but down at the very ground that you have trod. And as the bile begins to rise in your throat, a feeling of contempt wells up from some place deep within you. In a heartbeat your mind is flooded with memories of many conversations you have participated in, in which some one, or some other, or some group of others has been accused, criticised, judged, and condemned for his, or her, or their participation in the maltreatment of others: right wingers, left wingers, indecisive fence-sitters, 'Bible thumping religious bigots,' 'bleeding heart liberals,' dirty politicians,

"capitalists," "imperialists," street people, single mothers, "welfare bums," Nazis, neo-Nazis, 'neo-feminazis,' fascists, hate mongers, 'special interest groups' driven purely by self-interest and an unremitting disregard for "the common good", and such like. Easy targets – all neatly packaged up in little boxes with bull's eyes painted on them, dehumanized. Of course, the list of such groups goes on, and on, and on. This time, though, the contempt has a different target. Until this moment, you have managed to keep your own hands, and the hands of those closest to you, clean. But your boots …

What to do … Where do you step next? You feel panic. A quick glance around at your feet reveals that one step in any direction is sure to visit suffering upon another. You cannot move forward. But neither can you go back the way you came, and you certainly cannot remain where you are, standing on somebody's neck. In an instant, you fall down prostrate on the living ground, as one will lie down flat on thin ice in an attempt to preserve one's life by redistributing one's body weight over a larger surface area. Here in this place, as you lie face down on the ground, the world feels, smells, looks, and sounds a lot different than it did when you left the comforts of home this morning. All is not right with the world, after all.

Down here, you feel for yourself that the ground is not fixed and firm, but alive and moving. And lying down on this living ground, you find yourself being carried across the surface, as if on a wave. As you ride this wave, there is an insistent grasping, and tugging, and pulling at your limbs from below, as hands reach up, and try to drag you down, and under. The air is no longer fresh and crisp, but fetid, thick, and pungent with the smell of bodies – bodies of the living; bodies of the dying; decomposing bodies.

Down here in the miry clay are bodies of all kinds. Red skinned bodies. Brown skinned bodies. Yellow skinned bodies. Black skinned bodies. White skinned bodies. Skinned bodies. Bodies from all cultures, all creeds, and all nations. Bodies of women and bodies of men. The bodies of politicians, citizens, clergy, lay persons. The bodies of the rich and the bodies of the poor. The bodies of workers and the bodies of the unemployed, CEOs, administrators, managers, and labourers alike. Forgotten bodies. Diseased bodies. Malnourished and emaciated bodies. Obese bodies. Slender bodies. Broken bodies. Beaten bodies. Bleeding bodies. Able bodies and disabled bodies. Aged bodies and young bodies. The bodies of adolescents. The bodies of children. The bodies of those conceived but not born. Down here, you hear the murmurs of peoples and creatures whose voices have historically been overlaid, like a bad voice-over in a television advert, with stories not of their own choosing.

And down here, the sounds of the footfalls of a group of early morning runners on the path strikes terror into your heart as never before – earlier this very morning, you might have felt comfort and joy at the prospect of having company on your walk, but now, with your eyes wide open, and your whole body trembling, you ask yourself, "How did *this* happen? How did I get *here*? How could I not have *seen*? How could I not have *known*?" And perhaps, most importantly, you wonder, "What now?"

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So, what might this graphic account of such a gruesome promenade signify? What might it represent? And what is it doing here, at the beginning of this doctoral dissertation? I offer the following testimonial narrative of some of my lived experiences of un/learning to live, teach, and do research over the past nine years as an explication.

Introduction

Background and perspectives: Setting the context for the study

This study emerged out of my own sense of unpreparedness to teach upon graduating from the teacher preparation program I had been through. I was somewhat disgruntled about it. In the main, the problem I identified was that there was no forum in which we, as preservice teachers, could think through, learn more and dialogue about some of the kinds of thorny social issues and uncomfortable situations which would almost certainly come up in classroom contexts. For instance, in the course I took called "School and society," we touched on some pretty 'hot button' social issues – race, gender, class, dis/ability, sexuality, teacher unions and professional associations, First Nations education, and so on. We read articles and listened to lectures and we had tutorials, but the tutorials were only one hour per week, and they were highly structured, very professor-directed. We didn't really have much of an opportunity to delve too deeply into the issues. And there was no real call for us to examine our own frameworks, beliefs, points of view, and so on. We were just required to take in as much information as possible from the lectures and readings, and to demonstrate basic comprehension of the course content in class and on exams, and that was it.

We had had just four weeks of this course and our other courses when we were sent out into the schools. We were mainly supposed to observe, but some of the school associates had other ideas, and so some of us ended up doing a fair amount of teaching. This was a circumstance for which I felt not adequately prepared. I did not feel ready to

take on the responsibilities of teaching. I wanted some time to observe, to get a 'lay of the land' as it were, and that was how the experience started out. But then things changed. Anyway, this one day, under duress (I had three people in the one class I was teaching who were in a supervisory role evaluating my teaching), I got blind-sided with a comment from a student that totally undid me and disrupted the class, and I didn't handle it very well. All three supervisors, my associate teacher, the department head, and my associate's soon-to-be replacement, came down on me like a ton of bricks, each one telling me in no uncertain terms what she thought I should have done. I was very upset by what had happened (and by the whole practicum experience at this particular school). I even thought of dropping out of the program altogether. I felt very isolated.

That sense of being isolated is important to get across because it is one of the major issues identified by new teachers who are leaving the teaching profession today. Why are new teachers leaving the profession? In an analysis of induction and mentoring programs in five lower mainland BC school districts alone, Chamberlain, Tooley, and Woodside (2002) found that teaching has come to be regarded as one of the professions that "eats its young." Their review of the literature shows that no less than 30% of new teachers leave teaching within the first five years because they feel physically and emotionally isolated and generally unsupported in their work. This research finding which comes some seven years after I finished my teacher preparation program and several thousand miles away suggests to me that my own experiences of nine plus years ago are neither unique, nor something that could not or would not happen today. But is learning to teach that hard?

A glimpse at the social context of teaching and research

Learning to teach is hard. Not only is the work of teaching itself challenging, but the context into which one is thrown and in which one is expected to perform one's professional service is highly complex socio-culturally and politically, and potentially volatile, especially in this day and age. One might say that it is characterized by crises, conflicts, and unfulfilled promise. Let us look at each one of these in turn.

i) Crises

Here is what some teachers have had to say recently about the circumstances in which they are required to render their professional service.

> Everybody was so stressed. There were so many more demands on our time, particularly that year as all this – there's all this talk all the time. It's not positive talk. It's always, "What if ..." and negative talk, and it's really bad. The irony here is that, and this is a huge problem, we have to do our jobs, like I said before, we have to be able to come in here pumped and positive everyday. You can't teach without being that way. Yet, we have a government that's forcing us to basically question everything, and jump through all these hoops with less and less support every year. (2003, Interview)

> I do not know a teacher on this staff or any of my other teaching colleagues who would say to you, "Yup. Oh yeah, I'm full of pep and --" They'll all tell you the exact same thing, "I am exhausted." And so, we were all exhausted. We'd just been kicked in the teeth by ... the Ministry of Education, so on that level, we were all really, really demoralized ... but as I said, that was very subtle. We still were back in the classroom. ... but there's a fear factor there ... (2003, Interview)

> Given ... what some of the cuts mean to the most vulnerable and needy people in our society I have been emotional, stunned and until the last day or so completely immobilized. Everywhere I turn I feel bombarded with bad news. ... I feel powerless and I need somewhere to focus my anger, energy and sadness. I feel like my life's work and all that I care about socially is being washed away with the stroke of pen. We are told we need a business plan. Unions are bad. Collective agreements will be reopened. We can't afford to be a caring and compassionate society. We can no longer afford education and healthcare. The corporate agenda is

good for us. Goodbye, welfare state -whatever that's supposed to mean. For me, the government is not supposed to be a business. It's not supposed to run at a profit. Did people vote for this? Do the majority of people support this stuff? Where are the churches? Where is an organized response to what is going on? Labour rallies are important yet only appear self-serving to the general public. Where are the community groups? I'm afraid that people are not brave enough. There is fear. I see people closing their eyes and hoping that they will escape unscathed. I believe the government agenda is well planned and that they will not stop in their decimation of the public sector and in their attack on the sick, poor and vulnerable. (2002, Teacher friend, personal communication)

One does not have to look too far these days to get the sense that there are many

crises brewing in education in general and in teacher education in particular: the "crisis

of legitimation" occurring across knowledge systems (Lather, 2001); the "crisis of

representation provoked by postmodernism" (Ellis, 1997); the "crisis of truth" (Boler,

1997; Felman & Laub, 1992); the "crisis of witnessing" (Felman & Laub, 1992); teacher

shortages, leadership succession, and experienced teacher 'disinvestment' (Grimmett &

Echols, 2002); diminishing resources (financial, material, human); a growing burden on

teachers to be all things to all people; increasing racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic

heterogeneity in schools with no corresponding shift in representation in the teaching

force (Sleeter & Grant, 1994). Instead, researchers (Sleeter & Grant, 1994, p. 30;

Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998) are finding that while the population being served

is becoming increasingly diverse or heterogenous, the teaching profession is becoming

increasingly homogenous – those entering the profession are mainly young, white,

Anglophone, middle class women. There have also been in recent years increases in

school violence, including swarmings, bullying, shootings, stabbings, beatings, and the

like, and this catalogue of "crises" only begins to scratch the surface.

ii) Conflicts

Some of the more obvious and sensationalized conflicts in education are those clashes occurring between groupings of individuals along racial, ethnic, cultural, subcultural, linguistic, gender, ability, class, faith, and other lines. But there are many more conflicts that occur within groups. While it may come as a surprise to some, it seems obvious to others that racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, gender, class, faith, and ability groupings are not monolithic. Individuals who occupy spaces within such groups differ each from the others in multiple ways, and so it is not uncommon to find individuals who are similar one to the other along one axis of identity to be at very strong odds each with the other along other axes. Manifestations of these conflicts in school settings today can range from minor verbal disagreements to brutal slayings, e.g. the Columbine, and Taber, Alberta school shootings, and the vicious, fatal beating of Reena Virk in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

iii) Unfulfilled promise

The fields of social and educational research are not immune to such conflicts and crises (although brutal slayings are, to date, rare). While armchair education theorists[1] of all stripes cogitate, meditate, and pontificate on these 'perplexities' (What's wrong with kids today? What's wrong with schools today? What's wrong with education today? What's wrong with teacher education today? How can we fix them?), interpretivist theorists of education, that is, critical theorists, postmodernists, feminists, antiracists, poststructuralists, queer theorists, anticapitalists, environmentalists, and so on, challenge such individualistic notions as conceiving of the locus of the problem to be the individual. They identify instead a wide array of systemic problems not only in

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[1] Everyone who has ever been to school, and those who have not.

education, but in society at large (often at the exclusion of individual responsibility), which they claim are responsible for the manifestations of verbal, physical, and sexual violence we see and hear so much about today.

They draw attention to the various inequities entrenched in North American society, asserting that schooling "is representative and simultaneously constitutive of the race, class, and gender disparities illustrative and symptomatic of the larger U.S. society" (Buley-Meissner et al., 2000, p. ix). They contend that changes are needed to challenge the explicit and tacit assumptions which frame education as it is currently practised.[2]

These theorists speak also of crises of representation, not only in terms of the lack of representation in the corridors of power and in positions of social authority of those persons who historically have been marginalized and disenfranchised within society (e.g. people of colour, people with disabilities, people of First Nations ancestry, women, people from a working class background, immigrants, people whose first language is not English, impoverished peoples, and so on), but also in terms of linguistics. In other words, they draw attention to some of the problematics of language itself as a medium of communication, challenging the notion that it is a transparent medium that corresponds directly to some 'objective reality,' arguing instead that reality itself and all meaning is a social construct, that is, a product of social consensus (most often, unwitting), and therefore open to contestation.

But as Buley-Meissner et al. (2000) point out, these criticisms of education, language, and social and educational research as currently practiced, and of society as

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[2] And given texts like Bannerji's (1990) "The other family," Barlow & Robertson's (19..) *Class warfare*, Ellsworth's (1992, 1997) "Why doesn't this feel empowering?" and *Teaching positions*, hooks' (1994) *Teaching to transgress*, Kohl's (1994) *'I won't learn from you*,' Kozol's (2001) *Ordinary resurrections*, McCarthy's (1993) "After the Canon," and others, all of which depict the social inequity in North America, specifically as it relates to education, I am inclined to agree.

currently constituted have by and large failed in terms of ameliorating either the conditions of education, or the quality of life of those who historically have been oppressed, marginalised, and disenfranchised within what has professed to be and prided itself upon being an egalitarian society. Likewise, these discourses have failed in terms of bringing about the kind of just society all profess to want. Why might this be? Buley-Meissner et al. (2000) suggest that one of the reasons these discourses have failed to deliver is that the problems to which they address themselves are not merely socio-cultural, linguistic, and political, but moral and spiritual as well.

This is the tempestuous context into which preservice teachers in teacher preparation programs are thrown, and within which new teachers, many of whom feel inadequately prepared, are required to render their professional service, too often, without much in the way of social and professional support (Chamberlain, Tooley, & Woodside, 2002). As a consequence no less than 30 % of new teachers, some say some of the most talented (Montgomery-Halford, 1998), are leaving the profession within five years of beginning to teach. This is not good news, especially given the current crisis of teacher shortages described by Grimmett and Echols (2002).

Veteran teachers are tired, frustrated, and demoralized as circumstances seem to get worse and worse instead of better, and new teachers quickly become discouraged and lose heart upon finding themselves in work situations in which they are not adequately supported, and for which they feel they have not been adequately prepared. Palmer (2003) writes, "When we lose heart, we need an understanding of our condition that will liberate us from that condition, a diagnosis that will lead us toward new ways of being in the classroom simply by telling the truth about who, and how, we are" (p. 71).

One colleague has offered the following analogy as a way of understanding the current context of teacher education. He suggests that what happens in teacher preparation can be likened to the training and dropping of paratroopers into enemy territory, only with a few significant differences. First, military personnel dropped into hostile territory can generally expect that the plane is going to be flown in a particular direction and that they will be dropped in a particular location – i.e., they know where they are going, and what they are in for. They can also reasonably expect that their chute has been properly packed and will open, and that when they land on the ground, the other people in the same uniform, superordinates, peers, and underlings alike will not be shooting at them. Not so with teachers (Wideen, 2003, personal communication).

As a teacher educator and classroom practitioner, this raises a number of questions, one of which is: Is there some way by which teachers might be truly enabled and empowered not only to weather the storms of practice, but to flourish in the midst of them, some way that will enable them to transcend both self and circumstance? Could there be something in my story of personal, political, and professional transformation that could provide assistance, hope, encouragement, and/or inspiration to teachers who find themselves caught in a net of frustration, fear, and despair? In part, this dissertation is a response to these questions.

Taking as my starting point the view that the problems in education, teacher preparation, and society at large are both broad and much more than skin deep, that is to say, they are not merely social and political, but moral and spiritual as well, I shall map out the terrain by taking an exploratory look at some of the literature concerning education, teacher preparation, and spirituality. My purposes for providing this review

are threefold. First, I aim to establish that there is a conversation taking place, in education in general and in teacher education in particular, about the relationship between spirituality and education. This dissertation represents the beginning of my contribution to that already ongoing conversation. Second, it is my purpose to locate this dissertation more precisely in the context of that conversation and to preview some of the issues, questions, and concerns that it addresses. My third purpose in providing this review is to show that the problems in education do indeed have a moral and spiritual dimension.[3]

Spirituality and education: Mapping the terrain

According to Palmer (2003), we in teacher education can make, and have made teacher preparation entirely an outward enterprise, concerned primarily with curriculum (content), pedagogy (methods of instruction), and, more recently, context. He suggests, "[w]e are obsessed with manipulating externals because we believe that they will give us some power over reality and win us some freedom from its constraints" (p. 72). The truth is, there will always be circumstances that have the power to overwhelm us if we do not have a store of inner resources upon which to draw in times of crisis. Palmer goes on to say that "we are experiencing an exhaustion of institutional resourcefulness at the very time when the problems that our institutions must address grow deeper and more demanding" (p. 76), a global widening of the gap between rich and poor, a worldwide awakening to the reality of systemic "othering" and oppression, a rising tide of violence, and so on.

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[3] Moral education is a field in itself, and too expansive a one for me to delve into for the purposes of this dissertation. Therefore, while I shall point to the moral dimension of some of the contemporary problems in education, I shall confine the scope of my review to the literature concerning spirituality and education.

Given that, it would seem that we in teacher education ignore the inner life of teachers at our and our colleagues' peril. Deep speaks to deep, and since we cannot 'sound the depths' of our students' lives when we have not sounded our own (Palmer, 2003), it would seem that precisely what is needed in teacher education is for teacher educators to begin to sound our own depths. Palmer (2003) writes that what is needed in faculties of education are conversations which take us into the deep places of our inner lives, to the bedrock of our foundational (or anti-foundational, or non-foundational) beliefs about life, the world, and our relationships within them. He acknowledges, however, that speaking about ourselves in this way in the workplace, especially in an academic context – an institution which may reasonably be regarded as "the heart's worst enemy" (p. 75) – is an enterprise fraught with danger.

Still he contends we must do it for the sake of our professional practice. He writes, "it is a task that leaders of every educational institution must take up if they wish to strengthen their institution's capacity to pursue the educational mission" (p. 75). Why? Because to educate is "to guide students on an inner journey toward more truthful ways of seeing and being in the world," and how can this mandate be fulfilled if the guides themselves are not willing to scout out that inner terrain?" (p. 75).

Palmer (2003) writes that when we share our vulnerabilities with one another, our weaknesses, difficulties, and hardships, "we meet as fellow travelers and offer encouragement to each other in this demanding but deeply rewarding journey across the inner landscape of education – calling each other back to the identity and integrity that animate all good work, not least the work called teaching" (p. 76). It is my hope that this dissertation, which sounds my own depths, will serve in some way to encourage

fellow travelers on the journey across the landscape of education by contributing to the kind of conversation for which Palmer and others (including Purpel, Prakash, Buley-Meissner et al., Haggerson, Miller, Starkings, and Huebner) are calling and in which they are already participating.

David Purpel (1999) begins his essay, "Moral outrage and education" by saying that although the educational project of the twentieth century "has shown impressive accomplishments in both scope and magnitude," and has been characterized by "incredible scientific and material achievement," it has also resulted in "enormous spiritual devastation" (p. 58). He writes it has been "a century when smallpox was eliminated and genocides were perfected,[4] when we have come to believe in the big bang theory for both the beginning and end of life, when God died a most untimely death" (p. 58). He goes on to say that,

> We still have far too many poor, far too many rich; we have far more hatred, bigotry, racism, sexism, and classism than we say we want; and we have a culture that emphasizes achievement, competition, conquest, and domination at the expense of compassion, caring, community, and dignity. The abomination of homelessness persists, but it has vanished from the media and political platforms except for those that promise to shield us from the unpleasant presence of those who have no shelter. Poverty persists and increases, but instead of a discourse of poverty we have a discourse of welfare; instead of a war on poverty we have a campaign for middle-class tax relief. There is a growing gap in incomes, a widening gap of trust among racial and ethnic groups, increasing homophobia, xenophobia, and whatever phobia it is that covers fear and loathing of the other. This is a dismal record indeed for a talented and enterprising people and a shameful state of affairs for a powerful and wealthy nation that claims sacred status, one explicitly founded on the principles of liberty and justice for all. The added shame of this situation is that our educational system has contributed to, and colluded with, much, if not all, of this. ... The very people who have brought us to our present plight are among the

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[4] Of course, this essay was written prior to 9/11, i.e., prior to the bringing to light of the fact that small pox had not been eliminated, but only confined to research laboratories.

brightest, most articulate, most creative, most imaginative, and most reflective people in the land. (p. 59).

It would seem, he suggests, "that we need to reconsider what we mean by a 'good education'" (p. 59).

Purpel indicates that the work that has been done by a variety of critical theorists in education is important in that it both challenges the dominant discourse of "achievement, competition, and standardization," and points to the need for the public and the teaching profession to reexamine the relationship between our highest aspirations and the current constitution of public schooling. Nevertheless, he argues, critical theory is weak in that it neither articulates nor celebrates any kind of moral or spiritual grounding that could provide the energy and hope that is needed to sustain those involved in the struggle of education for social justice. He writes, "Intellectual insight, critical understanding, and theoretical power are surely necessary but clearly insufficient to a pedagogy of transformation because what is also needed lies in the realm of the spirit" (p. 60), namely faith, hope, commitment, passion, and devotion.

Purpel tells of his own commitments and shares part of his own 'sorting-out' process because, he writes, "I believe that the process of sharing individual quests can greatly contribute to the task of reflecting on both our differences and commonalities" (p. 62). He writes that he came to a place where he realized that he would not be able to respond in depth to the question, "To what should I be committed?" without first being willing to accept some "starting place, a point of departure, a fundamental frame of reference" (p. 63). For Purpel (2003), the term "spiritual" refers to that which gives life or breath to, that which inspires, and that 'fundamental frame of reference' or

'starting point' is *Torah*, "the teaching" (Heschel, 1976), and the Jewish religious traditions that have grown up around it. For Purpel, the value of having such a tradition upon which to draw inheres in its provision of a framework, a point of reference from which to respond to the various social and political concerns that engender in him moral outrage.

Purpel describes the sources of social injustice as being both individual and systemic, and, he writes, "schools do not exist to thwart the will of those in power, so if we want to change society, it is simply neither fair nor wise to ask the schools to be in the vanguard" (p. 68). If we as educators want to be involved in the work of social transformation, Purpel suggests that that we need to involve ourselves in other broader cultural movements, such as the growing phenomenon of spiritual seeking that cuts across class, religions, and ideologies. This recommendation he makes is grounded in his belief that "the transformation that radical educators seek is fundamentally spiritual in nature" (p. 68), that is, concerned with that which animates, breathes life into, and sustains us as human beings. According to Purpel (1999), "educators need to address seriously their own views on what is of ultimate concern in order to explore the moral and spiritual commitments that ground their educational orientation" (p. 74). That is precisely what I seek to do in this dissertation.

Like Purpel (1999) and Palmer (2003), Prakash (1999) writes about the moral and spiritual dimension of education, only her focus is not so much teaching, but research. In her essay, "Understanding ourselves: Beyond information explosion, hypertext, or mechanical memory," Prakash (1999) focuses on the research agenda in education, and makes some suggestions about how it might be improved. While she does not denounce

as unimportant information or seeking and demonstrating mastery of a topic, she contends for a research agenda that is more encompassing, one which takes better account of the humanity of the research enterprise. Prakash decries the way we have exalted and prized abstract information, and, not unlike Palmer calling the teacher back to his or her identity and integrity, Prakash calls the researcher back to the development of human understanding.

Prakash (1999) emphasizes the importance of humility in doing this kind of research, contending that in order to understand something, "one must literally 'stand under' – humbly, fully, and deliberately conscious of one's own incompleteness" (p. 152). Questions she puts forth as worthy of consideration for research, questions that are fundamentally moral and spiritual in nature, include, "What must I know and understand in order to live a good life? What can I do to be a good mother for my daughter, a good teacher or neighbour or citizen? What is the nature of "good work"? What is worth teaching and learning for the creation of communities that support and nurture all their members? … What are people for?" (p. 151). By way of exploring some of my own vulnerabilities and weaknesses, this dissertation addresses indirectly some of the questions Prakash raises.

Buley-Meissner, McCaslin Thompson, & Tan (2000) draw attention to the inequities entrenched in North American society, and suggest that public education is both representative and simultaneously constitutive of existing race, class, and gender disparities. They point out that while many contemporary critics of education contend that changes are needed to challenge both the explicit and implicit assumptions which frame education in North America, these theorists are bogged down in the cynicism and

fragmentation that is characteristic of interpretivist perspectives. Buley-Meissner et al. suggest that the lack of effectiveness in terms of bringing about desired educational reforms and social transformation is the result of "a failure to ground political critique in moral possibility" (x). According to the authors and editors of this collection, "it is time for critical theorists and pedagogues to pose the eminently practical and ultimately ethical question of what constitutes 'the good society'" (p. xi).

This volume of essays challenges predominant assumptions within academe, namely, "that open discussion of spirituality should be silenced rather than encouraged; that religious beliefs should be discarded rather than examined or deepened; that 'higher' education in particular means moving beyond faith to reason" (p. 1). They ask, "*If pluralism, diversity, and inclusiveness are guiding concepts of educational reform, why are students so often silenced into intellectual conformity* [my emphasis]?" Likewise, this dissertation challenges the prevailing assumptions about spirituality in academe, and asks the same question concerning intellectual conformity.

Haggerson (2000) contributes an autobiographical account of his own professional life "that began as a high school teacher in 1949 and continues today as a professor emeritus whose mission is to 'open minds of human beings around the world with love, kindness, and knowledge'" (p. 1). The book is organized around thematic stories and pieces of writing from various points in the author's life, upon which he then reflects and muses further. In these musings, Haggerson writes that he

> ... searches for roots, core categories, essentials, prototypes, stereotypes, assumptions, beliefs (as part of teaching, administering, serving, and inquiring); makes judgments about findings, tries to replace dysfunctional myths with the seeds for building more pertinent myths for the time ... uses hermeneutic imagination, demythologizes, amplifies ... [reports] in poetic ways, poems, narratives, stories, symbols, and metaphors ... [goes]

> beyond the empirical to the spiritual, the philosophical and the phenomenological. (p. 5)

Like Haggerson's work, this dissertation is organized around thematic stories and pieces of writing from my life over the last ten or so years and goes beyond the empirical to the spiritual.

In his essay, "Education and the soul," Miller (1999) decries the machine metaphors that have long dominated our understanding of education. In such a climate, asserts Miller,

> ... little room is left for the soul in our schools. Although most subjects have a soulful quality, the arts, which in many ways are the most conducive to the soul's development, are often made a marginal part of the education program and are sometimes removed entirely from the curriculum. (1999, p. 210)

Such is the case in a system of public education that seems increasingly to have at its core an instrumental rationality. As a remedy, Miller (1996; 1999) makes a case for soulful learning, offering what he calls a curriculum for the inner life. He recommends guided imagery, meditation, dreamwork, and 'soul journal' keeping, where students are encouraged to "explore their deepest feelings" (pp. 215-216).[5]

He writes about how the arts and the environmental education curricula lend themselves to 'soulful learning,' and he describes the 'soulful teacher' as one who personifies presence, mindfulness, and caring in the classroom. He writes,

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[5] Miller acknowledges that he has implemented these practices in his graduate classes. Indeed, he acknowledges that since 1998, he has made meditation a requirement in the courses he teaches at the graduate level. He also writes that his graduate students have implemented them in their secondary school classrooms. I must say at this juncture that I disagree with this practice. It is not respectful of the religious diversity that presents in our classrooms. For practitioners of some faiths, participation in the kinds of meditation practices and guided imagery exercises that he requires of his students, or that his students require of their secondary school age students would compromise their walk of faith.

> We have had enough of machine-like approaches to education that deaden the human spirit … Education has lost its way; we need to look to the soul to recover and remember our 'original relationship to the universe.' (p. 219)

Miller (1996) contends that we,

> … live in an age of polarity at every level of society. On the one hand, many of us, including much of the media, reinforce violence, hatred, greed, and fear. Fear and greed infiltrate into every corner of society so that the school system is not a place for people to gain wisdom and compassion and to learn how to live with joy, but a place where students learn grimly to compete so that they can eventually compete in a global economy. (p. vii)

In contrast, he suggests, there seems to be a small but growing number of people who (outwardly at least) reject greed and fear as the dominant motivators in life. These people have put such books as *Care of the Soul* by Thomas Moore on the Best Seller list. Miller writes that his hope is that we in education can overcome such polarities.

Like Buley-Meissner et al. (2000), Miller (1996) discusses social fragmentation, the symptoms of which he claims include: urban violence, addiction to various kinds of drugs, and various forms of abuse. Miller attributes these 'symptoms' of social dis-ease to "people feeling unconnected to each other and cut off from valid forms of community" (p. 1). Another form of fragmentation Miller identifies is self-fragmentation. Like Palmer (2003), he suggests that we are divided within ourselves, and that education, especially higher education, has done much to sever the head-heart connection (Miller, 1996; 1999). Miller goes on to say that fragmentation is also found in our education system, in the division of knowledge into subjects, units, and lessons. "And yet," he points out, "students can often not see the relationship between these subjects, the relationship between facts within a subject, or the relevance of the subject to life" (p. 2).

Miller (1996; 1999) argues for a curriculum that is characterized by "balance, inclusion, and connection". He suggests a need for balance between focus on the individual and the group; content and process; knowledge and imagination; the rational and the intuitive; the quantitative and the qualitative; technique and vision; assessment and learning; and technology and program. He also talks about the need for balance in terms of focus on the whole and the part. He then goes on to talk about inclusiveness in terms of orientations toward curriculum, suggesting that there is a place in education for all three orientations: transmission, transaction, and transformation.[6]

Like Miller (1996, 1999), Buley-Meissner et al. (2000), Prakash (1999), Purpel (1999), and Palmer (1998; 2003), this dissertation holds that social-, self-, and curricular fragmentation are highly problematic, and that there is a need both in education and in teacher education for a responsive curriculum and pedagogy that balances a focus on the self with a focus on society, on the individual and the relational, the rational and the intuitive, the socio-political dimensions of life and the spiritual. It is my hope that this dissertation strikes such a balance.

Like Miller, Starkings (1993) 'bucks the trend' of the "increasing specialisation of knowledge in the contemporary world and the corresponding fragmentation of the curriculum into a variety of separate specialisms (p. i)," a trend which Starkings believes leads teachers into discussions not so much about what is common in education, but "what is distinctive about their teaching that merits a separate place in

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[6] Transmission is that orientation which most closely resembles 'traditional' approaches to curriculum, subject-centred, teacher-directed lessons with an emphasis on memory work, skill development, and information transmission, from a knower (i.e. the teacher) to the unknowing (i.e. the student). Transaction is that orientation which is more dialogic in terms of the student-teacher relationship, and which emphasises inquiry and problem solving. Like transmission, it is primarily concerned with the development of the intellect. Transformation is that orientation which "acknowledges the wholeness of the child," and aims at "the development of the whole person" (Miller, p. 7).

the curriculum" (p. i). Like the previous authors cited, Starkings holds that there is a moral and spiritual dimension to education. His book specifically addresses issues concerning what he calls "religious education."

Refusing to reduce religious education to "a standard diet of cultivated agnosticism" (p. 134) that amounts to nothing more than multicultural information or a catalogue of external behavior in rites, rituals, and festivals, and arguing against religious education as description under the guise of "objectivity," Starkings, like Purpel (1999), suggests that it is important to convey to students of all ages "the inspiration that moves religiously committed people, the ways in which they engage with the world, the passion that underlies their pursuit of holiness and truth" (p. 135). Drawing on the work of Hammond and Hay et al. (1990), Starkings suggests that religious education "Must honestly present religion for what it claims to be – the response of human beings to what they experience as the sacred … [and] religious educators must help pupils to open their personal awareness to those aspects of ordinary human experience that religious people take particularly seriously" (Hammond, Hay, et al. in Starkings, 1993, pp. 135). Starkings addresses concerns regarding indoctrination by suggesting, "the claim for widely and deeply felt personal experiences to be represented in education is a counterbalance to the *institutionalized indoctrination of secularism*" [emphasis mine] (p. 135). I could not agree more.

Another voice that has contributed to this ongoing conversation concerning spirituality and education is that of Dwayne Huebner. In his essay entitled, "Educational activity and prophetic criticism," Huebner (1991) reconceptualizes education as being "part of God's creative work" (as opposed to a human activity), the purpose of which is

to serve humankind. He argues that the chief work of teaching is getting one's 'self' out of the way. He writes,

> In serving humankind, rather than God, the human activity associated with education frequently increases our alienation from God, legitimates and covers over our golden calves, maintains the structures of bondage to human powers, restricts or limits our freedom as God's children, and inhibits our ability to participate in God's healing love. By claiming education as something that human beings do, we fail to recognize the educational significance of prophetic criticism, of exorcism and forgiveness, and of love. (p. 396)

Huebner (1991) poses and addresses the question, "How can the claim be supported that education is God's work?" – a work with which human ends all too frequently interfere. He answers by suggesting that education happens because we are confronted by the other, because we are loved by God, because God attends to our healing, and because creation is still happening, in and through us – individually and collectively. Huebner (1991) responds to the questions, "If education is God's enterprise, then how do we participate with God in that enterprise, rather than claim it as our own?" (p. 397), and "How can we prepare the Way, rather than get in the way?" by referring us as readers back to the two great commandments of the Holy Scriptures,

> Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children … (Deut. 6:4-7);
>
> … you shall love your neighbour as yourself (Lev. 19:18);
>
> There is no other commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:29-31)

Huebner (1991) goes on to note that the chief impediment to our obedience to these commands is that,

we have too much human junk and debris cluttering the human world ... We participate with God in God's educational enterprise by clearing away the clutter and debris. ... to name our idols, to call ourselves and our friends to repent of the habits which separate us from God, and to praise God's mighty works in our midst. (p. 398)

In other words, for Huebner (1991), the purpose of education is,

> ... not to construct more effective learning environments and educational theories, but to de-struct that which gets in the way of acknowledging and praising God. If education is God's enterprise, then we must empty ourselves so God can work. (p. 398)

Not unlike Palmer (1998; 2003), Huebner (1991) points out that we do not want to hear this, that we want desperately to remain in control of the educational enterprise, or, perhaps more aptly, we want desperately to maintain our illusion of control over it. We do not want to surrender, to lose the lives we have so carefully constructed for ourselves, all the while holding God off, keeping Him at bay. But, Huebner (1991) suggests, "we must be willing and able to see all of this as possible folly" (p. 398).

On Huebner's (1991) account educators need to be not merely the proclaimers of this message, but also the hearers of it (and I would add the doers of it as well). For too long, Huebner (1991) writes, educators have believed that if we could just educate the children and young people to live rightly, then we could clean up the "idols and sinfulness of the world," whatever we may ascertain them to be. But what of the teacher and/or the teacher educator? He writes,

> We tied heavy burdens on children and youth, in the form of catechisms, boring classes, textbooks. We loved to have the places of honour [or loved to hate them], to be greeted with respect in the marketplace, and to be called teacher. (p. 399)

Instead, Huebner (1991) suggests, the call of a teacher is to clean up his or her

own act, so that all with whom we come into contact in our daily lives, including our

students, their families, our colleagues, and our superiors,

> ... can feel the comforting warmth of the Holy Spirit, can see the radiance
> of God shining through our work, and can hear the Word in our language.
> (p. 400)

Huebner (1991) closes the piece by saying,

> God educates. We don't. But God can educate only if we hearken to
> John's call, "Prepare ye the Way!" We participate in God's educational
> work by bringing under criticism [i.e. under the scrutiny of His light] our
> self-made world, and by proclaiming God's presence. ... We are but the
> Teacher's servants. (p. 400)

This dissertation is an exemplar of precisely the kind of work for which

Huebner (1991) and the others whose works I have discussed at some length here are

calling. It renders visible the process by which the clutter and debris of the life which I

have been given is being cleared away, by which I am naming and smashing my idols,

and through which I am calling myself and my friends both to repent of the habits

which separate us from God, from each other, and from ourselves, and to praise God

for His mighty works in our midst.

A topography of the study

With that end in view, allow me to map out the terrain of this dissertation.

Chapter 1, the first part of the testimonial narrative, is a more or less standard or

straightforward critical reflection (Barnard, Muthwa-Kuehn, Grimmett, 1998) on some of

my own practices as both a teacher and a researcher. In the main it is an account of the

process of political conscientization I went through. It catalogues some of the lessons I

learned, both in the course of an intensive independent study that I undertook as part of

my doctoral studies, and over the course of several years of involvement in two research projects. Chapter 2 consists of two papers that I co-authored as part of my work on those two projects. In Chapter 3, I discuss the shifting foundations of this longitudinal inquiry and the various techniques and traditions of inquiry upon which it draws. In Chapter 4, the testimonial narrative continues. It is an account of the crisis of confidence that was precipitated by my political consciousness raising experiences, and of the process of spiritual conscientization I subsequently underwent.

In Chapter 5, I discuss some of the implications of my newly found confidence for my practice as a teacher. In this chapter, I revisit my first practicum and suggest how it might have been different, and I offer accounts of some of the challenges I have faced in the classroom since my 'spiritual regeneration.' Chapter 6 illustrates by way of example (versus description) how my research is now informed by both the political and spiritual transformations I have undergone and am undergoing. In Chapter 7 I offer a summary of the study and address a variety of questions that have been raised about it.

There is a way that seems right to a man,
But its end is the way of death.
(Prov. 16:25)

Chapter 1

I did it my way: A retrospective of learning to teach

During the course of the one year long post-baccalaureate teacher preparation program I went through between 1994 and 1995, I was enrolled in nine university courses,[7] one of which was a *practicum*. The ten week long *practicum* was divided into three distinct segments: one four-week block part way through the first term, and two three-week blocks during the second term. During the first block of time, I was assigned to teach both English and Community Service at a secondary school in an upper middle class neighbourhood. Most, if not all, of the students enrolled in this school were college or university bound. There were no basic level or vocational programs at this school, and, I was told, no students who would be suited to such programs. Prior to my placement, I was told that it was probably the 'easiest' school to be assigned to; however, I found the opposite to be true.

I spent the second block of time set apart for the *practicum* teaching a course called the Individual and Society at an adult education centre. At this facility, there was a very high population of former dropouts, welfare recipients, and recent immigrants. I found the experience teaching at this centre to be most rewarding. The third block of time, I spent teaching English at an inner city school. There were both vocational and

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[7] I studied philosophy of education, adult education, computers in education, education psychology, education history and policy, and theory and methods particular to the teaching of English, the teaching of reading and writing in the content areas in secondary school, and the teaching of a subject called the individual and society.

fine arts programs at this school, and although it was challenging, I felt that I had a good experience overall.

In the latter two practice teaching components of the program I had associate teachers who seemed to me to have been very supportive. In the former, I did not feel at all supported. The associate teachers I had did not appear to me to be too interested in helping me to learn to teach. They seemed rather to operate out of a 'trial by fire' philosophy, and I chafed at it. I had no frame of reference for how to stand in the firestorm, and I got burned.

Despite the fact that I had had some very positive practice teaching experiences, and that I had learned quite a lot, at the end of the one year long program, I did not feel that I had been adequately prepared for classroom life. That is to say, I did not feel ready to teach. I was afraid – afraid my teaching would not please my administrators; afraid my students would not like me and therefore would not be motivated or inclined to learn from me; afraid that more situations would arise, either that I would not be able to handle, or that I would handle badly. I was afraid of making mistakes, afraid of failing, afraid people would think poorly of me, afraid of being an object of ridicule, afraid of being exposed, unmasked as a fraud, unqualified (despite the letters behind my name indicating otherwise) and incompetent (despite the many letters of reference which had been written in my behalf by experienced practitioners who had observed my work with students).

As I look back over the journal I kept during my first *practicum,* I can see that I was dreadfully plagued by various forms of fear, anger, discouragement, and so on, and that I was subject to emotional extremes ranging from euphoria to dejection, sometimes in the same class! The time was characterised by high peaks and deep valleys, feelings of

incompetence, inadequacy, and anger. As I look back, I am appalled at my own self-centredness, at my preoccupation with my own self-image (especially, how I looked to others), my feelings, with whether or not *I* was being successful, whether or not *I* was making a difference in the lives of the students, and whether or not *I* was being treated fairly by those in positions of authority over me.

I would begin a day with great expectations about how things might turn out, and then be deflated when things went badly. This pattern repeated itself over and over and over. Caught up in it, I could not see it. And had anyone tried to confront me about it at the time, I would almost certainly have balked at the suggestion and hardened my heart even more. It is embarrassing for me to look back on these writings, and to realize where I was *at the age of 32 years*! Part of me would like to be able to say that things got better with time, as I grew into my role as teacher, but that is not the case, at least, not right away.

As I look over the journals I kept and papers I wrote during the first 4 years of my doctoral studies I can see that the troubles of my heart only enlarged. Further, I remained self-centred, preoccupied with my own achievement and self-image, with trying to win the acceptance and approval of others (peers and those in positions of authority over me), with trying to 'make sense' of my own experiences, and with blaming others for my sorry state. This one treated me poorly. That one snubbed me. This one demanded too much of me. That one seemed to have made inappropriate suggestive remarks to me. These ones squeezed me out of the 'inner circle' because I turned out to be something other than what they had been led to expect. Those ones hated me because of my lifestyle. And so it went, and so it would undoubtedly have continued to go, had something quite drastic

not taken place, and had I been left to continue in my own lofty speculations and vain imaginings.

What did change during the early years of my involvement in the Ph.D. program was that I began to acquire the intellectual tools to more convincingly justify myself (to myself at least), to argue my case, to defend my 'rights', and the rights of those with whom I sympathized and identified. And I wielded these tools, albeit awkwardly, as weapons either in 'self-defense' or in order to gain control in settings in which I felt both worthless and powerless. As I write this, I am reminded of the story of David trying on King Saul's armor when he was about to go up against the Philistine giant, Goliath (1 Sam. 17:38-50), only, David was wise enough to know that he could never succeed wearing Saul's armor. I, on the other hand, fooling no one but myself, must have looked pathetic, trying to move about in this cumbersome outfit, wielding a sword and shield which were not at all suited to my small, ordinary frame.

What does not appear in the journals is a parallel tendency, to which those closest to me over the years would attest, that is, to criticism, deprecation, and condemnation of self. I cannot count how many times over the years I have been told, "You're much too hard on yourself." I now recognize this pattern of behavior as a kind of false humility; at the root, it is still self-centred. Somewhere along the line, I had learned that as long as I was my own worst critic, I could pretty much count on others backing off being critical of me, and that was something that had eaten at me at least since I was six years old.[8] But this self-defensive posturing of mine took its toll.

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[8] In the comments section of my first grade report card, my teacher actually wrote that I did not respond well to criticism, that she could "see daggers" in my eyes.

Underneath it all were feelings of emptiness, worthlessness, and at the core, a deep-seated fear of rejection. So important to my sense of worth as a person was the opinion of others, so important to me was it that I be seen favorably, as this and not as that, that if people expressed to me that they thought highly of me, then I thought that must mean I was OK. But if someone expressed that they did not think very highly of me, or that they were displeased in any way with my performance, then I thought there must be something seriously wrong with me. I spent an awful lot of time flapping furiously about in the cloud of confusion that results from depending for one's very identity on the shifting winds of human opinion.

As I look back, I shudder to think of the amount of time and energy I expended over the years trying to win or earn love and the approval of others. And upon reflection, it seems most reasonable to say that my sense of unpreparedness to teach had more to do with my own feelings of personal inadequacy and sense of professional impotence than with the teacher preparation program I had experienced. But I digress. Let me get back to the teacher preparation narrative.

Response-based pedagogy: A seemingly kinder, gentler way of preparing teachers

During the two year long period between my graduation from the Bachelor of Education program and my entry into doctoral studies, there were few, if any, jobs available for new teachers in my home province of Ontario. I reasoned therefore that since the time was going to pass whether I did something with it or not, I might as well pursue additional qualifications which would improve my chances of employment when

jobs did become available. So, during the first of these two years, I began and completed my Master's Degree in Education.

During that year, I worked as a Graduate Teaching Assistant in the Department of Education Policy in the Faculty of Education where I was studying. I enjoyed very much both my studies and my university teaching experience that year. My courses introduced me to new and exciting ideas, and afforded me a forum in which to dialogue with others about them. The adult students in my classes were bright, energetic, and highly motivated to achieve – quite a contrast from the secondary school substitute teaching experiences I was having that same year. As a consequence of these positive experiences of university research and teaching, the negative experiences of 'teaching on call,' and a rather insignificant-seeming encounter with a friend,[9] I decided that I might like to pursue a Ph.D. and become a university professor. My colleagues were highly supportive of my aspirations. I spent the next year employed as a sessional instructor in the department of education policy in the Faculty of Education from which I had graduated, and I applied to, and was accepted into a doctoral program in the field of education.

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[9] In order to help my friend out with her undergraduate thesis research, I consented to participate in an interview about my experiences of having returned to school as a "mature student". During that conversation, I made an off-hand remark about not being 'an academic.' My friend responded, "Yes, you are." The comment touched me. I was flattered. I was hooked. I had never before thought of myself in such a 'light'. The thought, which was very attractive to me, grew in my mind, and I began really to conceive of myself as having 'what it takes' to pursue that lifestyle. As I look back, I can almost see my ego inflating! I am reminded of an image from an old episode of *Bugs Bunny* – in it, Sylvester the Cat, in his relentless pursuit of Tweety, dons an old-fashioned wet suit, and, under the pretence of trying to rescue the little bird from the advancing tide, turns on the oxygen pump and strides off into the water. Somehow, rather than feeding air into the helmet, the machine feeds air into the suit, and it inflates and inflates and inflates and inflates until it can expand no further. BAM! Poor old Sylvester flies around erratically as the suit deflates and he crashes to the ground. As I reflect on the image, it seems an apt metaphor for the ego-deflating experiences I was about to have.

A 'kinder, gentler' way: Implementing response-based pedagogy in a teacher preparation context

Driven by my own sense of unpreparedness to teach and my disgruntledness with the teacher preparation I had received, I was determined to see to the improvement of the quality of teacher preparation programs everywhere for the sake of those who would come after me – a worthy and noble (if a little lofty!) seeming goal. What seemed to me to be lacking was a caring/nurturing context in which to learn to teach, and a forum in which students learning to teach could think through *a priori* some of the kinds of thorny social issues and uncomfortable situations that would almost certainly crop up in classroom contexts.[10] Two of the courses I had taken in instructional methods (for the teaching of English in a secondary school context, and for the teaching of reading and writing in the content areas in a secondary school context) introduced me to a reader response based approach to teaching, an instructional approach which seemed promising in terms of ameliorating teacher preparation in the way I and a number of like-minded peer and senior colleagues thought it needed to be improved.

The understanding I developed of this instructional approach during those courses, and over the course of my Master's studies was informed by: a) my readings of Smith (1985; 1988), Holdaway (1979), and Cambourne (1988), all of whom write about practices of reading and how they develop; b) my readings of Rosenblatt (1978; 1984), Probst (1988), and others, regarding the use of response writing in the secondary school English classroom; c) classroom discussions about response based teaching which were part of my teacher preparation; and d) my own experiences of learning through the

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[10] My sense of the need for such conditions grew out of the experiences I had had during my *practica*, in which I had been confronted with and flummoxed by issues to which I had never previously given a second thought.

various practices of response writing. Having studied this instructional approach for two years, and having experienced it directly as a student in one context, I was curious to ascertain whether it might prove effective as a means to enable preservice teachers to grapple with texts that would on some accounts be classified as "non-literary," specifically, education policy texts and prosodic explications of them. I should state here that when I began this inquiry, I had no "research" intent *per se*; rather, I was merely interested in reflecting on my own teaching practices in order that I might become a "better" teacher,[11] better equipped to enable students to become sufficiently familiar with and critique a particular body of scholarship and to enable them to grapple with some of the kinds of issues and questions that would come up for them in their *practica*.

The questions guiding my pedagogical inquiry at the time were: 1) Can this instructional approach be *made to work* in a context other than that within which it had emerged, and other than that for which it was intended (that is, the study of education policy texts and scholarship in a preservice teacher preparation program vs. the study of literature in secondary school classrooms)? 2) What do I mean when I say "made to work"? 3) What end am I hoping to accomplish and how will I know whether I have been successful? 4) What might all of this mean in terms of my own future teaching practices?

Prior to embarking on this inquiry, I consulted at length with a practitioner-mentor from the Faculty of Education where I was to be employed as a sessional instructor in the department of education policy studies. This mentor was a veteran English teacher of 30-plus years, who had spent fifteen years preparing new teachers of

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[11] I.e. better than I was at the time, and better than those who had seemingly failed me, that is, failed to establish and maintain the kinds of conditions that I and others with whom I consulted deemed most conducive to learning.

English for life in schools. I admired his work greatly. Also, as an assignment in partial completion of a course I was taking, called "The theory and practice of university teaching," I worked out a preliminary pedagogical plan. In this paper, I articulated my vision, discussed the design of the course, and formulated my approach to instruction, including the organizing principles and practices upon which classroom discussions would be based and how I planned to engage the students in my sections of the course.

The term began, and, having obtained approval from my superiors, I executed my plan. Although things got off to a bit of a rough start (as one might expect when one introduces a 'new' approach to instruction into a well established team-taught course of study, and in so doing, requires students in several sections of that course to do a considerably greater amount of writing than students in other sections of the same course), in the end, the project seemed to go well according to the assessment criteria I had set forth. These criteria included: a) a qualitative evaluation of student performance on response/reflection tasks throughout the term; b) an evaluation of student performance on midterm and final essay examinations; and c) student self-reports, that is, written accounts of the students' sense of the merits and limitations of the instructional approach as I had implemented it – for example, whether, and if so how, it had facilitated and/or hindered their getting to grips with the requisite core content.

When the course was over, I checked the substance of the student self-reports about the instructional approach (which had been written during the school year, and in which the students were identified to me) against the qualitative anonymous course and instructor evaluations to see whether there were any significant discrepancies. While I could not identify who wrote what in the anonymous evaluations, it was possible for me

to ascertain that there was no significant disparity between the two sets of comments with respect to the instructional approach implemented.

As I engaged in the assessment of the instructional approach and my implementation of it, I began to see research potential in what I had been up to as a "teacher". In other words, I found myself, as Reimer (1977 In Adler & Adler, 1994) says, "ensconced in a setting" and I decided "opportunistically" to make a study of it. I went through the process of proposal writing, ethics review, obtaining students' consent (to use excerpts from their responses and reflections for illustrative purposes), and I obtained institutional approval to proceed.

In sum, I had identified a pedagogical problem: a concern over a perceived lack in the teacher preparation program, a contradiction in the course I had been hired to teach, between the means by which the students were asked to come to grips with the course content and the means by which their "progress" would be evaluated.[12] Second, I selected from an array of possible instructional approaches an approach that I thought would be suitable to address the problems identified. My decision was based not only on the testimony of an experienced classroom practitioner and on my own experiences of having learned by this means, but also on my analysis of research accounts regarding the efficacy of this instructional approach in one setting, that is, in secondary school English classrooms. I posed a question: Could this approach to instruction, which had emerged and had been shown to be effective in one learning context, be imported into another and implemented successfully? I found that it could, and I wrote up a preliminary report of my findings. Prior to presenting the report at an academic conference, I presented it to

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[12] There was no written work required of students all term long, and yet 80% of their final mark would be determined by their ability to write coherently and comprehensively about the course content under the duress of examination conditions.

those of my students who expressed an interest in implementing this approach to instruction in their own classrooms.

My presentation to students involved an informal discussion of several of the presuppositions that underpinned my reader response-based approach to instruction at that time. I also shared with the students some of the challenges I had experienced in taking this approach to instruction. I talked about some of the difficulties associated with relinquishing control in the classroom, in particular, the unpredictability of what might come up in the journals and in classroom discussions. I talked about the anxiety I had experienced, which derived from my own uncertainties about the approach, my own ability to implement it and to 'make it work' under the circumstances.

I spoke of the personal investment required of any teacher who would take this approach to instruction, that it is time consuming, emotionally taxing, and demands continuous, honest, transparent, self-reflection, the discernment to recognize when you have lost your 'objectivity,' and the courage to admit it, and the willingness to step back and start again when responding to student writing. I talked about walking the fine line between mentor and evaluator. And I spoke of the importance of commitment to the approach, to seeing it through in order to get the most out of it, and of the centrality of classroom climate, that there must be established an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust, tact, diplomacy, and sensitivity, in which it would be 'safe' to take risks, to move beyond one's comfort zone.[13]

Finally, I spoke to them about the benefits of response-based pedagogy as I saw it: that it provides a forum in which to explore and test ideas, and to shape a point of

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[13] I was quite proud of my efforts and my accomplishments in this area.

view; that it promotes connection-making; that it both promotes initial engagement with the texts, and builds a platform for discussion in class; that it also promotes the development of written self-expression. I talked about how reflection writing makes it necessary for individuals to rethink their initial responses in light of a class discussion; that it had provided them and me with snapshots of their thoughts, a record of their point of entry into the teaching profession.

I spoke of the potential this instructional approach had to promote awareness of one's own worldview, how it came to be, and how that worldview informs what we do in the classroom.[14] And I talked about how, although arbitrarily assigned, response and reflection writing serves to give students some control over the form, shape, and direction of their own learning. (For example, some students used their journal to practise, and to receive formative feedback concerning writing up substantiated arguments and/or case studies). I took account of their responses to this presentation as I wrote up the report of my findings, which I would present at the 1996 Canadian Society for the Study of Education Conference at Brock University, St. Catherines Ontario.

With what seemed like the bulk of my empirical research behind me, I arrived in the doctoral program ready to bolster my theoretical framework and to finish writing up the study I had already done, and, perhaps, to build on it: e.g., to test further the efficacy of this pedagogical model in yet another context. I was bound and determined that I would be finished the Ph.D. in a maximum of two years. However, upon beginning my

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[14] I was not at that time as disposed to insist upon students' problematizing their own frames of reference as I would become upon completing my self-imposed program of reading and study during my doctoral studies. Indeed, I would become quite antagonistic about students problematizing their frames. But I am getting ahead of myself.

new program of studies, I found that perhaps there were some things I had not considered.

An unanticipated twist: Reconsidering my 'kinder, gentler' way.

Within three months of writing up the report and presenting it at the conference, I found myself repositioned institutionally. I had exited the institutional space of "instructor" at one institution and re-entered the space of "student" at another. No longer was I the teaching and evaluating subject; I was now subject to these teaching and evaluating practices. I was no longer the authority in the classroom, but rather, subject to authority, and I chafed at it. Ironically, I found myself rather unhappily on the receiving end of a response based approach to instruction which bore a striking resemblance to the one which I had implemented, in a context where I knew very little about the instructors, and even less about the context into which I had entered.

Further, I did not comprehend the instructors' expectations of those of us who were enrolled in the class.[15] It did not take very long for frustration to set in. Immediately, I was made aware of the structures of institutional power, and of the influence of institutional and social positionality on how one experiences ongoing "relations of ruling" (Smith, 1987) and practices of power within hierarchically organized institutions. But I had no such names for my experience at that time.

In retrospect, I marvel that I did not anticipate what it would mean to cross the institutional space of 'the desk' again, that is, from instructor to student. What quickly

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[15] It is important for me to say at this point that I do not blame the instructors for my own lack of understanding concerning their expectations. I am convinced that communication is a more than one-way enterprise, and that the listener/reader bears as much responsibility for what she or he hears and understands, or doesn't hear and understand. I shall have more to say about this later on in my discussion of the practice of 'testimonial reading'.

became apparent was that during my tenure as instructor, I had "forgotten" about the institutional power that is vested in all who occupy the institutional space of "teacher", regardless of how "democratic" we might like to imagine ourselves to be in practice. It is easy to be ignorant of power when one does not feel oneself to be subject to it. This does not mean that power is not operative, only that one is not aware either of its source, its operation, or its effects. Also, it is interesting for me to note as an aside that the concerns which I expressed regarding the response-based approach to instruction to which I was now subject were the very same concerns which some of my own former students had expressed to me during my tenure as sessional instructor.

At the same time that I was being reacquainted with the relations of power that are characteristic of hierarchically organized institutions, I was being exposed to world views and knowledge which differed significantly from what I had brought with me. In other words, I was brought face to face with the magnitude of my numerous and varied ignorances. Consider the following personal examples.

Snap.

I was 30 years old when I heard for the *first time* that during the Second World War, Canadians of Japanese ancestry had been stripped of their property and interned in prison camps, in Canada. I was older still when I first learned of the abuse First Nations children had suffered in residential schools. How could this have been when I had grown up and been 'educated' in Canadian schools?

Snap!

When I began my doctoral studies (after no less than 13 years in a Canadian public school system, two years of community college, and six years of full-time

university study), I had no acquaintance with Black history, save for what I had seen depicted on television programs. I had, of course, heard about the work and works of Dr. Martin Luther King, for example, but I had never read any of those works. Neither had I ever studied the philosophies underpinning them. Nor had I ever studied in any depth the contributions his thought and actions, or the thought and actions of any other African-Americans had made to North American society. These works, and scholarly works about them, or works like them in substance, were not required readings in any of the courses I took; neither were courses which might have focused on them recommended to me at any time that I sought academic counselling.

Whether such courses were even available at the time I was enrolled in university I do not know. And even had they been, I can almost certainly say that unless they were strongly recommended to me either by a faculty member, or by a fellow student who had taken them and found them to be richly rewarding, I would not likely voluntarily have signed up for them. How could *this* have happened?

SNAP!

I knew even less about international affairs. For instance, I had heard about the Apartheid regime in South Africa, and knew in the mid 1980's that there was an international boycott on exports from that country. I had heard that the system of government in South Africa was unjust, and that meant that I could not in good conscience buy the South African wine I had tasted and enjoyed, but I had learned nothing about the apartheid regime itself, not even in the university course I took, which was entitled, "The History of the Modern World". My sole interest in the 'problem' was how it affected me and my rights as a consumer. How could *this* have happened?

CRUNCH!

I knew a little bit about Women's studies, enough to be suspicious of it, for I had been advised, both as an undergraduate and as a graduate student, 'not to bother with that gender stuff.' But my own experiences as a new arrival to the Ph.D. program, and a visit to a women's shelter on the downtown east side of Vancouver, resulted in my becoming *very* interested in this body of scholarship. Suddenly, I began to feel very ill at ease about my former practices as both teacher and researcher.

These (and many more) incidents of political "conscientization" (Freire, 1970) took place in the span of only one year, and precipitated within me a condition which Callen (1997) refers to as "self-regarding moral distress," that is, distress at one's own complicity in practices of oppression. While I realized that I could do nothing to change my history, I believed I could certainly change something in the present, and, hence, the future – I could change myself. I could get 'educated'. I could become a different kind of human being. And so my journey to become a 'better' teacher became a journey to transform myself into a 'better' kind of human being, that is, better than I had been before, and better than those whose seeming callous disregard for the well being of "the other" had recently become known to me.

Saving Kathleen Barnard: 3 steps towards self-transformation

I began to read even more voraciously than I had in times past, as if trying to make up for lost time, drawing on a wide variety scholarship including, but not limited to: educational psychology literature, especially that branch of study regarding children who 'deviate' from what is considered "normal" in terms of the ways in which, and rates at which, they learn in formal settings (e.g. elementary and secondary schools, colleges,

and universities); socio-cultural vs. individualist theories of learning; cultural studies literature; women's studies; gender studies; post-structural literary theory; post-colonial theory; and various materialist analyses of power and social class, branches of scholarship with which I had formerly been counselled to have nothing to do. Interestingly, my whole-hearted engagement with this body of literature would eventually result in my being subtly and not so subtly counselled to have nothing to do with another body of literature. But I am getting ahead of myself. Allow me to share some of the lessons I learned over the course of my independent study of the scholarship I had formerly been counselled to avoid.

Gleanings from the literature: Shattered myths, broken dreams, and 'new' hope

1. Life is not fair: The myth of meritocracy

During my first semester of doctoral studies, I heard the story of a woman who had been registered in an education administration course. She would prepare for class, participate actively in the class discussions, and yet, every time the class met, immediately following their break, she would feel as though she were somehow missing something. She could not figure out what had happened. Prior to the break, she was right there with her male colleagues and her male professor, engaged in the conversation and following the train of thought with no trouble at all. But after the break, well, it seemed as though the conversation had moved along without her. What was happening?

One evening it dawned on her that at the break her colleagues would head off to the washroom and the conversation would continue in there. By the time the class reconvened, the conversation had indeed moved on without her. She decided then that

drastic action was in order to bring to the attention of her colleagues her concerns, and to do so in such a way that they could not possibly dismiss the problem as non-existent. So, the next time the class met, when the men filed into the washroom at the break, she filed right in behind them. I would love to have been a fly on the washroom wall that night!

As I listened early on in my doctoral programme to a visiting professor/ administrator relate this story of her lived experiences, I began to come to an understanding that perhaps things were not as equitable in education as I had been led by some of the literature to believe, and that perhaps there were significant gender issues which ought to be addressed. I had heard stories about women seeking positions of added responsibility in schools missing out on opportunities for employment, promotion, and so on because they were just not in the right places (e.g. attending sporting events, playing racket ball, golfing, and so on) at the right time, that is, during which informal yet key conversations would take place, and business would be transacted. And I had heard stories of how when these issues were brought by the women to the attention of their male colleagues, they were dismissed as insignificant or non-existent. No one, it seemed, was listening. No one was taking the concerns of these women seriously.

Although I had been warned by some to steer clear of gender oriented 'scholarship,'[16] I began to sense that perhaps there was a need to become more familiar with it, and with the issues it was addressing. Still, I would not likely have delved too deeply into it had I not been required to read it (something at which I chafed, perhaps as much because it was required of me as because of the content), and had I not

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[16] I do not ascribe any malice to the individuals who so advised me. Neither do I regard their counsel as any kind of deliberate attempt to 'keep me in the dark,' as it were, to the very real gender issues in education. Rather, I view it as a genuine concern for my welfare, given the general 'chilly climate' which women engaged in gender related scholarship typically experience.

simultaneously found myself experiencing some of the same kinds of things I was reading about. As I probed more deeply into this body of literature, I found that similar concerns were being raised and discussed by members of other "minority" groups (that is, minority not necessarily in terms of numeric representation, but in terms of social power relations), groups such as persons of lower socio-economic status, people of colour, people of First Nations heritage, Francophones, immigrants, people with disabilities, and so on.

The program of intensive reading and writing which I undertook, which initially comprised articles and books that were required reading in the doctoral program in which I was enrolled, in combination with my own lived experiences (e.g., of inclusion because of what I disidentified with, of exclusion because of what I identified with, of not being heard and not being taken seriously, and so on), enabled me to empathize, to identify with the concerns expressed by the writers of this growing body of politicized scholarship. As I read, I found myself agreeing with some of the recommendations made concerning the redress of these systemic inequities, for example, about the need for an inversion of power relations in order to 'level' the playing field. I became convinced that while there may be some merit to the idea that capability may have something to do with hiring, firing, promotion, and so on, there is so much more to it than that. My belief in a purely meritocratic social system was shattered. I had long believed that life was not fair, but I had never before dreamed that it was so devastatingly and systemically inequitable.

2. The myth of the autonomous individual and the misnomer of 'individual' achievement

My own experiences over the past five years and the scholarship with which I have engaged (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wertsch, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978) also caused me to wonder whether the terms "individual achievement" and "independent learning" might not be misnomers. After all, is not all learning both social and cultural in nature? No one learns or achieves by oneself in a vacuum. No book, journal article, or academic paper has ever truly been "single authored." Peer editing and review, professional editing, formal and informal conversations with others, present and past readings influencing thought in this or that direction, media influence, what one does in one's leisure time, background experiences, upbringing, and so forth, all of these things inform these cultural products. Our thinking, speech, writing, and other forms of representation are far more influenced by external forces than many of us are willing to admit (Bakhtin, 1986; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991).

Consider the observations of the Russian literary critic, Bakhtin (1986), concerning speech utterances, speech genres, heteroglossia, and ventriloquation. He writes,

> ... the unique speech experience of each individual is shaped and developed in continuousand constant interaction with others' individual utterances. This experience can be characterised to some degree as assimilation – more or less creative – of others' words. ... Our speech, that is, all our utterances (including creative works), are filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of 'our-own-ness.' ... Each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the communality of the sphere of speech communication. Every utterance must be regarded as a response to preceding utterances of the given sphere. (pp. 89- 91)

In other words, according to Bakhtin, speech develops only in the context of relationships with others. He suggests that what we say is largely made up of the words of others. I recall having read he suggests that somewhere between 50-80 % of our speech is not our own, and as I observe my own children learning to speak, and listen to the patterns of my own speech and the patterns of members of my own family, I am convinced of the veracity of his assertion. This observation raises a number of questions, whose words *are* in our mouths? When? What kinds of words are they? How did they get there? Why these words and not others? What mediates what we will and will not say?

Furthermore, I arrived at the conclusion that what one learns has less to do with what is intrinsically, inherently valuable and desirable in and of itself, and more to do with what is available and what is treasured, valued, needed, and/or privileged by and within the milieu in which one grows and develops. For example, a child raised in an English-only speaking home and culture will not spontaneously begin to speak French, Cantonese, or Zulu unless that language is introduced into that milieu, and is demonstrably valued by members of that community, or unless she or he receives the gift of speaking other tongues as did the apostles in the days of the early Christian church. That is to say, one must ordinarily have access to a language in order to learn it, and one must ascribe some value to the learning of that language.

Likewise, a print oriented culture will place a high premium on literacy, perhaps privileging it over orality or visual representation. A culture which treasures the relationships among its members will foster and cultivate different capabilities than will a

culture which privileges athletic ability, business acumen, and intellectual prowess over relationships,[17] and so on.

3. *The myth of Western Modern Progress*

There is an old expression, "One man's trash is another man's treasure." A similar sentiment might be "One man's progress is an 'other's' oppression." My readings and experiences to date have convinced me that there is truth in these utterances. Certainly, "progress" has not benefited all equally. Surely, it has not benefited our environment which is groaning under the weight of all of the toxic waste being dumped into the atmosphere by the various machines of progress, the spills of various kinds of toxic products into its waters, and the garbage being thrown 'away'[18] by an increasingly consumption obsessed society. And surely, not all peoples have 'benefited' equally. Families in Africa, for example, have not benefited by the presence of the diamond industry that has forced the separation of family members, one from the other, and broken down community life. And can we really call the labourers in sweatshops in China, Taiwan, and Central America the "beneficiaries" of "progress"?

How about the little girls who are sold by their own families out of desperation or greed into prostitution in a variety of countries worldwide, whose services are purchased not only by men from those countries, but by visiting 'officials' from the 'developed,' and 'civilized' nations? Consider the following story of the burgeoning child sex trade in the Dominican Republic. Not all tourists go there just for a winter retreat.

> Some Dominican tours are marketed overseas to those seeking sex with
> children. While the exact number is not known, a 1995 study by ECPAT,
> an organization dedicated to eliminating the sexual exploitation of

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[17] Note, this is not to suggest that these three are necessarily incompatible (though they might be), only that what is privileged and valued will strongly influence what is (and is not) learned.

[18] Just where is this 'away,' anyway; away from what; to where?

children, estimates that 30,000 to 57,000 adults come to the Dominican
each year and engage in sexual activities with children. Most of them are
from England, Italy, Germany, the United States, and Canada. (Seignior,
2004, p. 18)

And that is only one such 'hot spot'.

What about the children in Mott Haven, a community in the Bronx, New York

who are living next door to an incinerator of hazardous waste because a more affluent

neighbourhood lobbied successfully not to have it built in their back yard (Kozol, 2001)?

What about the tens of thousands of children worldwide who die every day because they

do not have enough to eat or clean water to drink? Consider, for example, that while

between four and five thousand people were killed in one day on 9/11, more than 30,000

children die everyday worldwide because of starvation (Campolo, 2001). This is

appalling. Poverty remains a stark reality, even in 'affluent' nations, although as one

professor has pointed out on several occasions (Bai, personal communication), the

standard of 'poverty' is much 'higher' in the 'have' countries than it is in the

'developing' nations.

Still, for all of our so-called 'progress,' are we really better off than our historical

counterparts in terms of our relationships with one another? Surely, when one speaks of

"progress," one must ask the question, progress in terms of what? While it is true that we

seem to have extended the length of some lives with advances in industry and

technology, what about the quality of lives? Have we advanced morally? Are we not

still selling our fellow creatures, our brothers and sisters in the human family, into

various forms of slavery? Deceiving each other in order to save face? Treating each

other with varying degrees of unkindness? Defrauding each other in order to prosper

materially? Climbing over one another to 'get to the top'? Prostituting ourselves to get

ahead materially, whether we are selling our bodies or our minds? Being untrue and unfaithful to one another in our personal relationships?

Are we not still stealing, dishonouring, coveting, murdering, and so on? Has our technical know-how given us more compassionate hearts and loving hands toward the very young, the very old, the sick, the infirm, the mildly to the profoundly disabled, the imprisoned, the dying, the proverbial "widows and orphans"? If we are no closer to having dealt with these ancient problems, how then can we legitimately speak of "progress"? What good have all of the storehouses of social scientific 'knowledge' done the world, 'knowledge' which is largely accepted today, and then disproved tomorrow, 'knowledge' over which there is little agreement in the academy?

4. Not all it's cracked up to be: An alternative perspective[19] on social science inquiry

There was a time when I had tremendous confidence in the knowledge claims of social scientists and those who work in the applied fields (e.g. education, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and so on) within the domain of social science; however, my encounter with "alternative perspectives" on social science inquiry shattered my faith in the "knowers," the "professionals," and the "experts" to such an extent that when I arrived at the brink of a breakdown, I could not bring myself to seek their counsel.[20] Allow me to share with you some of the insights into social science inquiry that contributed to the undermining of my confidence in its claims to truth.

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[19] Nb as the context of social science inquiry changes, what was in 1987 an "alternative perspective" in social science research is fast becoming a 'mainstream' perspective.

[20] In retrospect, I am thankful for this today, for had I found someone to trust, I might not have cast myself on the mercy of the Lord.

Consider that the established way of reviewing the literature within the discipline of the social sciences is to pose the question, "What does previous research tell us about x or y?" The aim of such a literature review is the advancement of scientific knowledge *within the received rules* of social scientific practice. In undertaking such a review, one sets out to identify, describe, analyse, and assess a comprehensive sample of studies pertinent to the research question one has in mind to answer. The studies are examined as to their merits and limitations, to see whether they do or do not adequately adhere to 'the scientific method' of inquiry, as the researcher attempts to identify gaps and fissures in the literature with a view to locating his or her own work, to reveal formerly unrealized disputes, and/or to resolve theoretical disputes. In sum, the purpose of a typical social science literature review is to summarize what *is known* about a given subject, and to make visible what has yet to become known.

Kitzinger (1987), however, performs a different kind of literature review. Rather than review the literature in order to summarize what is known and to make visible what has yet to be 'discovered' about her particular area of study, she undertakes to examine the literature to see what it might reveal and/or conceal about the practice of writing social scientific accounts themselves. She identifies five characteristic features of social scientific writing, which, on her view, serve to render invisible a variety of discrepancies and dependencies, the concealment of which serves to reinforce and perpetuate the then (and still) widely held notion of social scientific inquiry as objective, neutral, impartial, and disinterested. The five rhetorical strategies to which Kitzinger draws attention are: the 'up the mountain' saga; the mythologizing of expertise; the rhetoric of scientific

method; the practice of utility accounting; and the deployment of practices of textual persuasion to full literary effect.

The 'up the mountain story'

On Kitzinger's (1987) account, there is both within and outside of the social sciences a long-standing history of skepticism regarding the 'findings' and the interpretations of findings in social science (vs. hard science) research. Within the realm of social science inquiry, each study claims to bring the world closer and closer to 'the truth' about the social world, or, at least, further and further away from falsity (pp. 4-5). Kitzinger notes how social science literature reviews routinely exude confidence about the future work of social scientists. Historically, they have implied an optimism regarding the role of social science research in terms of its capacity to bring about the 'betterment' of society as a whole. More recently, such research has become more and more concerned with improving the lives of either the participants themselves, or the social groups with which they are thought to be identified.

She claims that the 'up the mountain' story serves in effect "to illustrate the superiority of contemporary over past research … [I]n its most gracious form, present-day scientists may be dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants, but can see further for all that" (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 8). That is, if it is not decried or dismissed entirely as bad or inept, past research is regarded as necessarily flawed by way of errors of either commission or omission, which future research will almost certainly identify, and for which it will correct. "Ironically," Kitzinger (1987) writes in conclusion, "social science's admittedly bad track record of research … is used to justify the need for yet more social science research" (p. 10).

On her account, the up the mountain saga of social science need not be read as the one true story of social scientific development, arrived at by way of impartial and disinterested inquiry, uninformed by bias or world views, and told from an objective, neutral, standpoint. It might just as easily be read as "a selective and partial account" of scientific development that serves primarily to enhance the image of science. On this reading, the story of scientific development as told by both scientists and advocates of science, is just that: a story. I.e., it is in no way inherently superior to any other kinds of stories one might hear or tell.

The mythologizing of expertise

According to Kitzinger (1987), one of the most persuasive features of scientific accounting is the explicit contrast that is made between so-called "scientific" and "lay" conceptions. 'Common sense' or 'folk wisdom' is actively discredited on the grounds that it is necessarily and fatally biased, based as it is on myths, stereotypes, ideologies, and so forth, whereas scientific accounts are upheld as being untainted, true, factual, faithful and accurate representations of reality – that is, they tell it like it (really, truly) is. On Kitzinger's analysis, underlying the assertion of the cognitive supremacy of "accurate scientific conceptualizations" over common myths, stereotypes, and prejudices (so-called) is a belief that the topics dealt with within the discipline of social science are more controversial than those treated within the various domains of the so-called hard sciences. Kitzinger notes that with scientific expertise comes the power to define reality. How has science attained this power? Quite simply, she answers, with an assertion of access to knowledge that is denied to 'ordinary people.'

For those who might contest that this view of social science (i.e., that it is the only legitimate purveyor of 'the truth' about the social world) is moribund and holds no longer, consider the following anecdote. I offer it as evidence of the continuity of this belief within mainstream social science. At a recent (1997) conference held to disseminate preliminary findings about the impact of immigration on Canadian urban centres, many of the presenters talked about (and many in attendance at these talks nodded their heads in agreement regarding) the importance of producing, and making available to the general public, better, that is, more accurate knowledge about and faithful representations of 'immigrants.' Underlying this call for yet more information to be produced by social scientists (as opposed to lay people or the immigrants themselves) *about* "immigrants", is a belief that if only 'those people' (i.e. that subset of the general 'non-immigrant' or even immigrant public who believe the myths and stereotypes about immigrants) could be shown "the truth" (and convinced by way of reason of its veracity) about 'those (other) people' (i.e., immigrants), we could all live happily ever after in harmony in Canada, and in so doing, set an example for the world.

On Kitzinger's (1987) account, it is precisely this kind of "careful and recurrent differentiation between what ordinary people 'think' (or accept 'unthinkingly') and what scientists 'know' [which] serves to reinforce the image of science as the only legitimate purveyor of valid knowledge" (p. 11). In other words, one of the conditions of possibility for the accomplishment of the mythologizing of expertise is that "all other versions of reality must be seen as whimsical and arbitrary and, above all, in error" (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 11). Implicit in the condemnation of 'ideology', 'theology,' 'folk wisdom', and 'common sense' that is characteristic of social scientific accounting is an assumption of

the purity, authenticity, and truth of *knowledge discovered* by *real* scientists. This is not to suggest that folk wisdom, myths, stereotypes, bias, desire, and ideologies do not exist, or that they are never problematic. Rather, it is to point out that social scientists are no more capable of 'bracketing out' or 'controlling for' these in/forming influences than is the layperson.

The social scientists to whom Kitzinger (1987) refers, seem to imagine themselves to be capable of 'bracketing out' the biases, ideologies, and desires which necessarily inform their very own day to day social practices and the overlapping social practices in which they engage as researchers, including but not limited to: taking decisions regarding what is (not) important to study; formulating questions; recording observations; and interpreting further that which has already, of necessity, been interpreted, i.e. conceptualized. Kitzinger (1987) writes, "Overall, social scientists are quite willing to admit that they or, preferably, their colleagues, have failed, on particular occasions, adequately to transcend the 'folk knowledge' or 'lay understandings' to which they as ordinary social participants are privy. What they are *not* usually prepared to do is to accept the characterization of social science itself as ultimately based on and deriving from these folk or lay versions of reality" (p. 13). And herein lies the problem, on Kitzinger's account.

The third strategy Kitzinger identifies in the construction of social scientific accounts is the invocation of 'scientific method.' Underlying the contrast between scientific research and lay inquiry is "*a faith* [my emphasis] in the superior efficacy of the scientific method" (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 15) as it applies to coming to know (about) the social world. The merits of the scientific method of inquiry are widely purported and

believed to include objectivity (already, a demonstrably problematic notion) and a capacity to distinguish absolutely between truth and falsehood. The rhetoric of the scientific method, according to Kitzinger, "enables the presentation of science ... as a neutral, apolitical domain of technical expertise, advancing inexorably and dispassionately towards objective and verifiable truths about the nature of reality" (p. 15). Put another way, results deriving from 'scientific' inquiry (versus any other, i.e. lesser, form of inquiry) are widely believed to be dependent not upon subjective prejudices, but rather on objective and impartial procedures carried out by individuals capable of (or at least willing assiduously to attempt) bracketing out their experiences of the social world into and about which they are inquiring.

Kitzinger (1987) goes on to explain how social scientists who take as given the inherent superiority of the scientific method of inquiry over all other models of inquiry police their practices (and, in so doing, also serve to perpetuate the mythologizing of expertise). One of the ways in which this policing is accomplished is by simultaneously privileging certain pre-approved practices, techniques, and methods and undermining the legitimacy of others. Kitzinger (1987) writes, "Like the Azandi, who 'explain away' apparent incongruities or failings in the predictions of their magic oracles by saying that a taboo must have been breached, or that sorcerers, witches, ghosts, or gods must have intervened (Evans-Pritchard, 1950), social scientists explain away the perceived failings of research in their field by saying that standards of objectivity must have been breached, or that statistical inadequacies, sampling errors, procedural failings, or logical mistakes must have intervened" (p. 18).

In other words, on Kitzinger's account, both sets of social practices have built into them a means for explaining away perceived 'error', and in both cases, the means of explaining away this error leaves the fundamental principles upon which the systems are predicated not only intact, but unquestioned. To put it another way, both systems have built-in self-defence mechanisms, and in both instances, they are effective rhetorical devices. To account for this practice of accounting, Kitzinger (1987) suggests that since both the general public, and academics (especially hard scientists and philosophers) are reluctant to confer the status of 'science' on social science, the tension, resulting from the desire of the social sciences to lay legitimate claim to the name science, gives rise to "comparatively more overt and conscientious efforts" to depict their work as worthy of the name science, i.e., to spell out explicitly just how it is that their work measures up to the standards of inquiry set by science. Textual invocations to/of the scientific method constitute just one of the means by which social scientists lay claim to legitimacy.

Utility Accounting

Another of the rhetorical means by which social scientists attempt to justify their work is the practice of utility accounting (Kitzinger, 1987). The story goes something like this. Unlike the research(ers) of 'the (now) bad old days', which(who) admittedly exploited, oppressed, and degraded their participants (be they women, people of colour, people with disabilities, people of little monetary means, lesbians, gay men, people of a national, ethnic, and/or cultural heritage different from that of the researcher, and so on), contemporary researchers and research purport to be helpful to society and/or humankind in general, and/or to be supportive of, helpful to, and even advocates for their participants. According to Kitzinger, the representation of research as 'useful' to society

is commonplace throughout the social sciences generally. Further, such claims are not unique to that body of work that has come to be called 'advocacy research'. Consider the field of educational research.

Within this field, study after study, book after book, whether within the domain of education psychology or sociology, statements are put forward and/or are taken up as promising answers or solutions to this or that classroom, school, policy, administrative, come-what-may educational 'problem'. Here are just a few examples. Readers should keep in mind that it is not my intent here either to agree or disagree with any of the following accounts. Rather, I mean only to illustrate that utility accounting is a common practice in the write-up of research in the social sciences, and in educational research in particular.

> *Critical pedagogy and cultural power* is a text that should prove to be of considerable value to educators who want to analyze the multifaceted way in which educational processes work ... (Giroux & Freire, 1987, p. xvi)

Herrnstein and Murray's (1994) *The Bell Curve* promises nothing short of saving America itself: "America can choose to preserve a society in which every citizen has access to the central satisfaction of life" (p. 551). To do so would only mean acknowledging that the economic disparity that is increasingly coming to characterise American society can be explained by natural differences in 'intelligence,' about which nothing can be done, and that it would be better for all if such misguided initiatives, such as 'Head Start' and/or 'Affirmative Action' programs, were abandoned in favour of leaving people alone to "find their own 'valued places in society' according to their abilities" (Fischer et al., 1996, p. 224 writing about *The Bell Curve*, Herrnstein & Murray, 1994). Fischer et al. (1996) take on the arguments put forward in Hernstein and Murray

(1994) and propose that the larger societal purpose their own work serves is to repudiate the work of Herrnstein and Murray (1994), and, in so doing, provides better, i.e. more objectively obtained and more accurate, information that will lead to better (i.e. more informed) decisions with respect to the engineering of American society. In other words, not unlike Herrnstein and Murray (1994), Fischer et al. (1996) promise no less than that their work may save America itself.

There are, of course, many more examples of 'utility accounting' to be found in the educational research literature in particular, and in the social sciences literature in general. One need only skim through proposals for studies, abstracts, introductory and/or concluding paragraphs of most published articles, and/or the prefatory, introductory, and/or concluding sections of books to find statements about how this or that study hopes and/or promises to be of use, whether to society at large, to the research participants, and/or to the social groups with which they identify. The examples cited above stand as illustrative examples of what utility accounting can look like, i.e. that it "includes references to the presumed usefulness of the research to the … helping professions in terms of enabling them to make 'informed decisions'" (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 21). Also, they serve as evidence that utility accounting continues to be a common practice in social scientific reporting. Finally, they serve to illustrate that so-called 'advocacy research' is not the only strand of inquiry which purports to 'be of use'. Most if not all social science research makes use of the rhetorical strategy of utility accounting.

Textual tactics

Finally, Kitzinger (1987) considers the role(s) played by various tactics of textual persuasion. She writes about the ways in which titles, the use of the third person, the use

of the passive voice, specialist vocabularies, and occulocentrism work to in/form or structure a reader's 'reading' of the texts. Titles, for example, may pose questions that by virtue of the way they are worded restrict the range of possible answers a reader might conceive of and/or proffer. Kitzinger points out the ways in which grammatical and lexical practices can and do function to contribute to the production of an aura of objectivity and to permit the use of language as camouflage. Both of these ends serve in effect to make the author of the study, the myriad social practices that are conditions of possibility for the research, and the practices of reporting disappear, and, in so doing, give an impression that "the facts are literally speaking for themselves" and that anyone else of similar intelligence who followed strictly the same procedures would arrive at the same result.

Lastly, Kitzinger (1987) demonstrates how occulocentrism enables social science to present itself as "making visible the invisible, exposing the hidden and concealed, shedding light on those dark corners that have been shrouded in ignorance, and exposing reality for all to see" (p. 25). On her account, these practices constitute conditions of possibility for such texts as the 'discovery account,' which claims to reveal some aspect of reality which was formerly concealed, "but which has an existence independent of the act of perception. … The apparent objectivity of science, and the superiority of its method of knowing about the world, is thus created through a series of purely literary devices which construct the image social scientists choose to convey" (pp. 26-27).

Kitzinger concludes her discussion of the five rhetorical means by which both the institutional power base and the status of social science, i.e., as the sole, legitimate "purveyor of valid knowledge about the social world" (p. 28), is reinforced, by

emphasizing that she does not mean to suggest that those who participate in the practices of social science research purge rhetoric from their work. That would, after all, not be possible. Neither does she suggest giving up that work altogether. Rather, she concludes that since all scientific writing is necessarily rhetorical, "The question is not *whether* [emphasis original] to use rhetoric in scientific writing, but *how* to use it, in whose interests, and how to recognize and analyze its use" (p. 31).

Now, I do not mean to suggest that I agree with all that Kitzinger (1987) and others who share her perspective have written; however, let me say that my encounter with these perspectives on social science inquiry shook to the very core my faith in the "professionals," the "experts," the legitimated "knowers" in society, and in the "knowledge" in which they traffic. Indeed, it shook to the core my confidence in the very disciplines of inquiry themselves. This deep shaking coupled with my own observations of how decisions are made regarding the funding of research and of how there is no agreement, only endless debate in scientific, psychological, sociological, anthropological, and philosophical circles concerning what Noddings (1999) calls 'the big questions' of life, and coupled with my own face to face encounter with my complicity in the oppression of others precipitated within me a crisis of faith. If I could not trust myself, and I could not trust the knowledge of the 'experts,' the 'professionals,' then in what or whom could I reasonably place my confidence, my trust, my faith?

5. *Permeable membranes vs. fixed boundaries*

Another interesting notion that I came across over the course of my reading was the idea that many of the boundaries, distinctions, and classifications, which historically we have taken for granted are more permeable and less fixed than they first appear. The

lines of distinction between such seeming oppositions as "literary" and "non-literary" or "rhetoric"; "fiction" and "non-fiction;" "poetry" and "prose;" the literal and the figurative, and between various disciplines of inquiry and so on, have been reconceptualized in such a way that they are no longer seen to be necessarily solid, but rather, permeable. Consider the image formed by the old dot-matrix printer. At first glance, the lines forming the letters appear to be solid; however, if one expands the image, one finds that the lines are really only dots compressed within space. That is to say, the lines are not solid at all, but made up of many tiny dots with minute spaces between them, like the semi-permeable membrane of a cell.

People engaged in cultural studies have begun to suggest, likewise, that the lines of gender, ethnicity, culture, race, class, dis/ability, and so on are not as clear and distinct as they may at first appear, and, consequently, that identity is not fixed and static, but fluid and dynamic. For example, Yon (19..) writes that culture is not a fixed entity; rather, it is "a matter of debate about representations and the complex relationships that individuals take up in relation to them (p.9). Further, he writes, identity is a "process of making identifications, a process that is continuous and incomplete…It is a constructed and open-ended process" (p.13). That is to say that formerly assumed "naturalized" classifications have been shown to be less fixed than was previously thought. Indeed, even the distinction between research/not research has been challenged[21] and many new, interdisciplinary forms and modes of inquiry are gaining more widespread acceptance.[22]

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[21] See Denzin & Lincoln (2000); Kitzinger (1987); Lather (1991; 2001),
[22] See Denzin & Lincoln (2000; Ellis & Bochner (2000); Gergen & Gergen (2000); Lincoln & Guba (2000); Miller et. al. (1998); and Smith & Deemer (2000).

Lessons learned: A summary

As I lived, read, and wrote, an awareness of the haughtiness of the Modern

Western mindset in which I was steeped, (which pooh-poohs the belief systems of

members of "other" cultures)[23] began to dawn on me. It was by way of being brought

into contact with people from cultures other than my own (e.g. people of First Nations,

Chinese, African, Philippines, Indian, Sri Lankan ancestry and so on) and learning to

listen humbly with both my head and my heart,[24] that I became enabled to reconsider my

own history, that is, of regarding "their" way of viewing life as "primitive" and "our"

Modern Western (which is to say secular materialist) way as "sophisticated" and

ultimately superior. I am becoming more and more aware of how the hegemony of

rationality and the Modern Western Scientific paradigm of inquiry make it all but

impossible for those who are raised up to think in these ways even to conceive of the

possibility that there might be another way of understanding, inquiring, and coming to

knowledge.

I am slowly, and painfully but steadily unlearning the racism and ethnocentrism

which were (and which remain) so deeply embedded in our common discourse in North

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[23] That is, other in relation to 'the Modern West'.

[24] Hansen (2001) describes this quality of open-mindedness and open-heartedness. He writes, "Open-mindedness connotes flexibility of mind. It describes a willingness to consider, and even to seek out, contrasting viewpoints and different ways of tackling a task. ... Open-mindedness means retention of the childlike attitude ... The "childlike attitude" calls to mind a sense of curiosity, of adaptability, of receptivity to new suggestions and ways of thinking and acting. It means avoiding a finalized judgement of the world and its people and events. It captures, from another angle, the amalgam of *naivete* and thoughtfulness ... Open-mindedness comprises a blend of the active and the passive. ... Open-heartedness is neither sentimental nor Pollyannaish. Where open-mindedness signals intellectual receptivity, open-heartedness emphasizes emotional receptivity. Both qualities augment human connection and understanding, because intellectual receptivity may depend upon emotional openness, and vice versa. Students may have a hard time with a new subject, a new idea, or a new classmate unless they come to grips with their emotional, not just intellectual, posture. Teachers attuned to such matters can help students make the transition. Teachers may have an equally difficult time with new ideas, new outlooks, and new people. Their students often come to the rescue in unanticipated ways (and often without knowing it). Open-mindedness and open-heartedness keep teaching and learning dynamic" (pp. 51-53).

America, in our ways, and in our very laws – slowly because of the height, and breadth, and width, and depth of the entrenchment of these world views in our ways of thinking, talking, and being here in North America.

My readings of feminist scholarship brought me to an awareness of the cracks and fissures in the foundations of Modern or "Enlightenment" thinking, and of the fatal flaw in the Enlightenment project – the assumption that objectivity is possible. One feminist scholar calls this "the god trick", that is, assuming the seat of the all-seeing, all knowing One, as if it were possible for any human being to do this. I also learned from this body of literature of the value of testimonial listening/reading (Boler, 1997; 1999) and writing, about which I will have more to say later on, and of the potential promise and some of the perils of self-examination for the purpose of coming to terms with the darkness in one's own heart, with the fear of difference that dwells there and "whose face it wears" (Lorde, 1984), that is, with one's own complicity in practices of oppression.

I began to learn about materialist analyses of power from the writings of Foucault, specifically, of the historical shift in the governing of 'man', from sovereign power to disciplinary power, and of the insidiousness of so-called 'democratic' classroom practices which, while promising to liberate and empower "the oppressed", serve instead further to oppress people who are already marginalized. An illustration of this phenomenon can be viewed in the video, *Summerhill*. It is an account of an experiment of sorts in 'alternative education,' in which the students play a significant role in setting the curriculum and the 'code of conduct' (for lack of a better term) for the school. In this film, which seems to have been made in such a way as to portray this 'progressive' approach to schooling in a favourable light, there is a scene in which the students are participating in a discussion

regarding some matter of concern to the school. The particular focus of the discussion eludes me at the moment, but I recall well the tone of the discussion – a certain few very articulate individuals with strong personalities had much to say, while others sat silently by as decisions were taken that would impact the whole school. The narrator of the video went on at some length about the benefits of such a 'democratic' approach to schooling, but clearly, not all individuals were equally represented.

My readings of postmodern literatures have made me aware of the power of normalizing forces in the world and of some of the perils of comparison in education. I have learned that censorship is inherent in the curriculum selection process, and so I have learned of the importance of attending as much to what is absent from the curriculum as to what is present, to those who are silent as well as to those who speak out and speak well. I have become aware of the dangers of hanging simplistic labels on complex individuals, and of both the promise and the peril of introspection – of the need to "look down into that place inside ourselves where fear of difference dwells, see whose face it wears (Lorde, 1984), the importance of "getting to know ourselves a little" (Interview, 1997), but also of the danger of narcissism and morbid introspection.

Finally, I have learned a lot about pain – the pain of realizing the degree to which one is/has been oppressed; the pain of feeling powerless to do anything to ameliorate the situation for oneself and for others; the pain of realizing the degree to which one has participated in a system of relations which is oppressive to others; the pain of feeling caught in that system, of coming to awareness of one's own selfishness. And I have learned about the physical pain that comes from bearing these burdens in one's soul, from not letting go of the anger, the resentment, the bitterness, and the hatred that well up

inside as one bears witness to social injustice and the human suffering which derives from it, as one reads and/or listens to story after story of domestic violence, child abuse, child poverty, racial discrimination, hate motivated crimes, and the like.

During this time of intense reading I also worked on several research projects, one with Dr. Marvin Wideen and the other with Dr. Peter Grimmett. My work on these projects added strength to the deep shaking I was experiencing as a consequence of the reading in which I was engaged. The first project had as its focus "the impact of immigration on public education in British Columbia's lower mainland schools." The second took as its focus the preparation of teachers for life in classrooms characterized by diversity along a variety of lines, including race, class, gender, and dis/ability. I include in the next chapter the texts of two of the papers that emerged from these studies.

Chapter 2

Two papers and a commentary

The first paper presented in this chapter I co-authored with Wideen (1997). It explores some of the gaps between multicultural education policy and teacher practice in one of British Columbia's lower mainland school districts, and it raises questions about how new and longstanding residents of Canada can "disentangle ourselves" from the hegemony of an ideological construction of the other (in this case, 'the immigrant') as 'deficient,' 'culturally impoverished,' 'disadvantaged,' and so on. The second paper, which I co-authored with Muthwa-Kuehn & Grimmett (1998), examines in some depth dilemmas from practice and raises questions concerning how to open up spaces for both student teachers and teacher educators "to develop their own capacities for more equitable teaching practices."[25] In each of these two collaborative inquiries, I was challenged to examine not just practical dilemmas, but also the lenses through which I was viewing them.

I. Impacts of immigration on education in British Columbia: An analysis of efforts to implement policies of Multiculturalism in schools.

Setting the stage: The socio-cultural context for the study

The growing cultural and linguistic diversity said to characterise public schools in Canada today can, according to a number of scholars, reasonably be attributed to recent trends in immigration (Dirks, 1995; Fleras & Elliot,1996). Further, it is commonly

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[25] For the sake of brevity, the stories of Muthwa-Kuehn and Grimmett and the discussions thereof have been edited out.

believed that the arrival to Canada of persons from an increasingly wide variety of countries and cultures has given rise to a particular set of "new" challenges for those charged with the task of teaching children and youth. Many interested Ministry, district, and school personnel, as well as parents, advocacy groups, and members of various communities can be heard to claim that coping with an increasingly diverse student population is currently one of the greatest challenges to Canadian public schools. The main challenge, it would seem, is how best to prepare those who have emigrated to Canada for citizenship.

This challenge derives from a number of social conditions. Today, we commonly find in classrooms many students for whom English is not their first (or necessarily even their second or third) language. Indeed, we commonly find several language groups represented in a single classroom. Schools and school districts find more and more that budgets do not match the language learning needs of these students. Many teachers express concerns regarding incidents of violence in schools which may have been motivated by inter-cultural intolerance. And many debates have been sparked over the last decade about what and how to teach in a society characterised by cultural diversity.[26] Indeed, the entire educational community appears to have become intent upon getting to grips with issues of diversity and inclusion.

For example, in a recent review of the literature on learning to teach (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998) which one of the authors of this paper submitted to an American journal, the editorial staff insisted that the literature on multiculturalism be included in the review. Their concerns stem from an apparent trend in schools and

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[26] See Delpit, 1995; Ellsworth, 1992; 1997; Hirsch, 1987; Kohl, 1994; McCarthy, 1993; Roman, 1993; Roman & Stanley, 1997; Sleeter & Grant, 1993; Willinsky, 1990.

teacher preparation where an increasingly homogeneous population of teachers (young, white, middle class females) are teaching an increasingly heterogeneous population of students (Gomez, 1994). Both the Ministry of Education and school districts in British Columbia have responded to challenges such as these by developing legislation and policy to assist practising teachers who face daily the growing cultural, racial, and linguistic diversity brought about by recent trends in immigration.

This paper is based on a two-year qualitative study designed to examine the implementation of educational policies in British Columbia, which were intended to respond to these and other educational challenges thought to derive from the increasingly diverse population of students in classrooms. Our paper begins with a statement of the objectives we set out at the beginning of our research. We then describe briefly something of ourselves as researchers, how it was that each of us became involved in the project, and how we have proceeded individually and collectively. Our methodology section, a report of our findings, and a discussion of some of the plausible interpretations of those findings follow. We end with a reflexive critique of our work, and some recommendations for teachers, policy-makers, and further inquiry.

Objectives

We began our study thinking that policy statements at the provincial and school district levels would provide guidance for teachers working in increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse settings. We expected that those responsible for implementing the policy, including district and school staffs, would receive at the very least, information regarding new policy developments and some suggestions about how to go about putting the policies into practice within this sociocultural context. Specifically, we set out to:

a) identify and analyze the educational policy developed to assist schools and

districts with the education of "immigrant" children;

b) examine the steps taken to implement that policy;

c) examine the practices at the school and district level to determine how

provincial and local policies are being implemented; and

d) undertake a discrepancy analysis to ascertain the congruence between

educational policy, school practice, and "community" and "stakeholder"

expectations.

However, it quickly became apparent to us that any attempt to ascertain the

"effectiveness" or "ineffectiveness" of any efforts at policy implementation should rest

on a systematic critical analysis of existing educational policies as they pertain to

concerns which have been attributed to recent trends in immigration. As such, we also

set out to examine the immigration-related educational legislation and policy developed

at the federal, provincial, and school district levels, and to assess the degree to which

existing policy appears to serve the needs of particular communities and schools.

Our Background: Researchers as "research instruments"

Wolcott (1997, p. 332) notes that many of the practices of qualitative research:

observing, conversing, probing, recording, analysing, and interpreting, to name but a few,

make the researcher the research instrument. There are no 'innocent' (or neutral,

objective) inquirers, and no innocent practices of research (Fine, 1994). As stated at the

outset, this paper constitutes a cultural product, an outcome of the ongoing work of two

particularly, socially located, hence constituted and constituting human beings. We seek

no shelter in this account of our view of things, yet we recognise the impossibility of

giving a full account of ourselves as persons in this report. As such, before discussing

our methodology, *our* findings, and *our* interpretations, we offer a brief, necessarily

selective, description of our perspectives on this study.

Perspectives:

We came to the RIIM project with research interests that did not focus primarily on

questions of policy, immigration, or multiculturalism. Our attraction to the project derives in

part from our desire to support the work of teachers affected by the policy decisions at various

levels of government. As front line workers, they are required continually to adjust their

practices in response to challenges produced by ongoing changes to the set of socio-cultural

conditions within which they do their work. What policies, we asked, might be needed to

support their ongoing efforts to work successfully with students who are new to Canada?

As white, English speaking only, Canadian born individuals, both of us had also

identified significant gaps in our respective frames of reference, and a need, therefore, to

complexify our understandings of the realities with which students who are new to Canada

present: "whole worlds" which are too frequently ignored, and which are, as a consequence, in

danger of being lost entirely. What kind of policy might help to ensure that due consideration be

given to new students' complex histories, biographies, and already constituted (and newly

endangered) selves? Also, what might be required in terms of preparing beginning teachers for

life in particular classrooms which may or may not be characterised by cultural and linguistic

diversity? For, although Canada may properly be characterised as a multicultural nation, not all

classrooms are characterised by cultural, racial, and linguistic diversity.

Methodology

No research is 'value free.' No knowledge is neutral. Rather, all
knowledge flows from ... assumptions shaped by such factors as gender,

culture, sexuality, class, ethnicity, language, and religion. (Henry, 1997, p. 134)

This report falls more or less within the post-positivist paradigm of qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It is underpinned by the following assumptions. Ontologically we take as our ground a critical realist standpoint: that is to say, we assume the existence of an objective reality, but one which, given the inherently partial and perspectival nature of human perception, is only imperfectly apprehensible. Epistemologically, we take a modified dualist/objectivist stance. While we recognize the impossibility of absolute dualism, that is, a complete separation of the knower from the known, we hold to a notion of objectivity as a kind of regulatory ideal (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Methodologically, we take the view that more inquiry ought to be conducted in natural settings, in order to diminish the problems of context stripping and relevance which are characteristic of a more experimental approach to research. Consequently, we have collected more situational information, and have sought emic or insider persepectives in the hope that they might provide useful insider information regarding the particular communities of practice (teaching and policy-making) with which we are concerned.

In general, methods of data collection and analysis we deployed include: extensive (though not exhaustive) review of pertinent literature, acquisition and critical analysis of relevant legislation and policies, interviews, and 'naturalistic' participant observations (Wolcott, 1997). We undertook the study in three stages. First, we acquired and examined critically the legislation and policy documents developed at the various levels along with pertinent memoranda and position papers dealing with policy. This analysis was supplemented by interviews with key players who participated in the

development of the documents. We examine the policies according to the criteria for effective policy put forward by Knapp (1998). He suggests that for policy to be considered effective, it must be said to:

a) provide a "big" signal, that is, it ought to attend to matters concerning diversity, and
address the needs of a particular target group;

b) allocate resources, for example, for recruitment of human resources, for incentives, for
development of programs, for learning materials, and for program implementation;

c) outline mandates and requirements, for example, with respect to curriculum, learning
materials, "best practices", how to use funds, and how programs will be evaluated;

d) make explicit sanctions to be imposed for non-compliance, such as withdrawal of
funds, negative evaluation, etc.;

e) provide implementation assistance, for example, with the design and development of
appropriate programs, to promote cultural response-ability;

f) delegate authority, for example, from the Ministry of Education, to local districts, to
schools, to classroom teachers; and

g) establish information flows from the recipients of funds to the sponsor, from
institutions to the public, and among collaborating institutions.

The second stage of our inquiry, overlapping the first, involved a series of interviews with teachers, school district personnel, and school administrators to determine their expectations regarding education policy and practice. We take the perspective that the school provides the ultimate test of policy and its implementation. We view the policy developed at different levels as well as the expectations of different players as having relevance in terms of improving educational opportunities for students

new to Canada. As such, the interviews we conducted took the form of interactive conversations during which the participants were asked to outline their expectations for policy. Some of the participants were even asked to read and respond to portions of policy documents.

At the third stage we visited schools to observe teachers working with immigrant children to assess the degree to which the Ministry and district policy had been implemented. Following these three stages of data gathering and analysis, we have attempted to determine the congruence of policy intentions across different groups, and the value of that policy in terms of informing the community dealing with increasing diversity caused by a growing immigrant population.

Findings

When we began to examine existing legislation and policy, we assumed, perhaps naively, that policy statements at the national and provincial levels would provide guidance for teachers attempting to cope with the diversity they faced as a result of demographic changes resulting from immigration. We assumed that policy at the Ministry level would provide an impetus for implementation throughout the province on the part of the Ministry itself, universities, teacher groups, and other interested parties. As Knapp (1998) contends, policy should provide more than a mandate; it should provide a purposeful course of action. This would mean that the users of the policy, including district and school staffs, would receive instruction that would keep them informed of policy developments, and at least provide some suggestions about how one might go about putting the policies into practice. However, as Malen and Knapp (1997) point out,

"efforts to analyze policy developments are seriously complicated by the mysteries of social problems and the intricacies of public policy (p. 421).

We found that policy development in British Columbia does appear to have come some distance over the last two decades. The authors of The MacGregor Commission, which examined teacher education in British Columbia in 1950, declared diversity in the schools to be unworthy of consideration except in terms of how it might be eliminated. The Sullivan Commission Report resulting from the Royal Commission of 1988 in British Columbia identified student diversity as something to which teachers should pay attention. With the Multicultural Act of 1993, cross-cultural understanding, anti-racism, and the elimination of barriers became official policy. In the last decade, most school districts have responded to these 'big signals' and have developed policies on multiculturalism.

The legislation and policies we examined both live up to, and fall short of the criteria set forth by Knapp (1998), which we outlined above. Given the socio-cultural context of the McGregor commission and other assimilationist mandates as a backdrop, the "new" policies, that is, those drafted since the inception of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988, which made Canada officially bilingual and multicultural, have indeed provided a "big signal". No longer is diversity officially regarded as a problem to be resolved. Today, cultural and ethnic diversity, and the contributions made to "Canadian culture" by members of a variety of linguistic and cultural groups, are regarded, at least on paper, as worthy of celebration. In sum, over the last three decades, the direction of policy has shifted, from viewing cultural and linguistic diversity as a

problem to be fixed, to holding it up as a phenomenon to be celebrated. Clearly, a 'big signal' has been sent, and things have changed, formally at least.

Malen and Knapp (1997) also suggest that if a policy is to be effective in terms of bringing about a desired outcome, such as, in this case, the celebration of cultural and linguistic diversity, then the policy-makers must also provide tentative courses of action, education and training for personnel, and ongoing monitoring of the implementation. In these areas, the Ministry of Education appears curiously silent. Virtually no visible efforts are currently being made to assist districts, schools, and teachers with the implementation of the new policies which have been developed. Although those in the Ministry speak of the need for implementation, monitoring, and training to support the policy, and the like, their actions do not reflect their intent. In fact, we found little in the way of policy implementation to speak of. In the words of one district person, "… at best there is a framework, but there does not appear to be any clear policy direction or plan provincially, either from the Ministry of education or the Ministry of Multiculturalism and Immigration."

This apparent disregard for implementation stands in sharp contrast to bygone days in the province, when newly developed curriculum became the impetus for the development of government sponsored workshops and information providing activities across the province. Indeed, as recently as 1997 in the area of science education, the Ministry provided support for workshops across the province to encourage improvements in pedagogy (Wideen et al, 1998). But the implementation of multicultural policy has not been supported in similar ways. This would seem to tell us something about the priorities of government. While several explanations could be forthcoming, and perhaps

could provide a focus for further study, the perspective put forth by one of our participants seems to sum things up succinctly.

This seasoned secondary school classroom teacher who has also taught multiculturalism courses at the university level drew our attention to the tendency of policy makers to assume that policy can be implemented through what amounts to a series of technical adjustments, rather than through systemic change. Acknowledging the complexity of the social and educational challenges that derive from rapidly and radically shifting demographics, he said, "It's not like changing a couple of bolts on a car." Rather, he argued, proper implementation of the policy intentions would require changes of a kind that would be difficult to make happen in schools, given the complexity of school cultures and the interrelationships of the people at work within them. He did not believe policy-makers realized the implications of that.

One of the consequences of this lack of implementation at the Ministry level is a very loosely coupled system when it comes to addressing concerns about cultural and linguistic diversity in schools. We have found the linkages between the different levels of players (Ministry, district, and school) to be so weak that each level appears to be functioning independently of the others. This point was brought home to us repeatedly in the interviews we conducted. Clearly, policy had been developed at the ministry level. But that policy had not been implemented, nor did it appear to those in districts that much commitment lay behind it. Consequently, what occurred was a type of uncoupled system where the different parts seemed to be functioning separately. At each level, the different players were operating almost independently, and in many cases developing their own policy that met their own needs.

Discussion

Our analysis shows the schools and the various levels of government to be operating in a 'loosely coupled' system in which the separate parts operate more or less independently of each other. While the policy initiatives at the federal and provincial levels have sent 'big signals' about diversity, the implementation and policy action at the provincial level has been limited to the efforts of a relatively few individuals. What are the consequences of this?

One can view this lack of coherence within the province negatively. Loosely coupled systems can pose some serious problems. Consider the case of one school we visited in the lower mainland of British Columbia. This school boasts a strict but tacit policy that no language other than English is to be spoken in the school. For example, even though one of the teacher aids could speak the language of the ESL culture that made up some thirty percent of the school, she explained that she would only speak that language in case of an emergency. Yet when we interviewed people from the Ministry and raised that example, we were told that such a practice was both wrong, and in direct contravention of and provincial legislation and policy.

On the other hand, the lack of articulation can be seen in a positive light if we perceive value in the autonomy of school boards, schools, and teachers. On this view, in an 'ideal world', all levels of government and educators should be on the same page when it comes to such matters as (a) what it might mean to respect and value diversity, and (b) developing and implementing policy to assist teachers to teach in increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse settings. An example illustrates what can be accomplished by the 'good will' of teachers. In March, 1997, 18 students arrived from

Afganistan at the door of the one school district with no warning. The federal government who had arranged the entry of these families into Canada had not warned the District about their impending arrival. The settlement of those students was accomplished through the efforts of individual schools and teachers supported by the district. No assistance came from the federal and provincial groups. The example illustrates that schools and teachers can respond to problems arising from Immigration. In fact, the system may function more effectively without arbitrary rules and regulations set out by the central governments. Of course, had the system been less loosely coupled, "the problem" might not have arisen in the first place.

To be useful, those involved in the development of policy must begin to view teachers and schools as agents who construct their own meaning of policy around the perceived needs of their students and their understanding of broader issues. Research and policy must then serve more of an "enlightenment function" (Rist, 1994) intended to support the role of the autonomous school and the autonomous teacher. This perspective would also view policy development at all levels as necessarily an ongoing activity; for, as social conditions shift and change, policy development needs to be less cumbersome and more responsive.

Achieving effective policy and practice in such a milieu requires changes in thinking at all levels. Policy makers must stop looking at research to provide a quick fix. Researchers must seek to begin to measure research 'yield' in terms of engaging in spirited dialogue[27] not only with other researchers (through scholarly publications and

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[27] We intend here a sense of "dialogue" similar to that articulated by Bohm (1990) who writes, "A dialogue can be among any number of people, not just two. The picture or image ... is of a *stream of meaning* [emphasis original] flowing among and through us and between us. This will make possible a flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which will emerge some new understanding. It's something new,

conference presentations), but also with teachers, school and district administrators, and government officials. In turn, teachers, administrators, and policy-makers must take on the responsibility of informing themselves about some of the broader issues concerning the nation and the province, including, though not limited to, immigration, the problems and politics of representation, and differences which, in Canadian society as it is currently constituted, make a difference. Governments, too, have a role to play in the facilitation of this spirited dialogue across difference. One of the more obvious ways in which members of government might contribute to this process is by providing the requisite human, material, and economic resources.

We return now to the general question of what existing policies might mean in a provincial situation, such as British Columbia. Given the expectation that qualitative research ought to make suggestions regarding directions for future policy development, this question is not insignificant. Taking as given the apparent limited commitment of resources to policy implementation and support, one could legitimately ask whether the policy is being developed to deal with 'the problems deriving from increasing cultural and linguistic diversity,' or whether it is merely a form of window dressing which allows members of government to say 'we have dealt with that problem.' On this view, policy development might be said to serve a kind of symbolic function. As Perkins (1997) notes, "In the face of racism, the Charter of Rights and other antiharassment policies can guarantee only symbolically certain others their rights, providing their rights do not conflict with the greater 'good' and 'freedoms of society'" (p. 254).

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which may not have been in the starting point at all. It's something creative. And this *shared meaning* is the 'glue' or 'cement' that holds people and societies together" (p. 1).

Viewed in this light, existing policies might be said to be highly conservative in that they inhere that these certain "others" have certain rights only insofar as they 'do not conflict with the greater good and freedoms of Canadian society.' That is to say, the status of "other" is inscribed in the Charter, the British Columbia Multiculturalism Act, and so forth. The question remains, who is othered, and who is thought to constitute this Canadian society, the greater good and freedoms of which are not to be meddled with? Who is the invisible normative referent? As one of our Ministry informants pointed out, such policy may be worse than no policy at all because it creates the illusion that the problems of systemic racism, discrimination, et al have been satisfactorily resolved. Indeed, Spina and Tai (1997) suggest, "The rhetoric of equal educational opportunity often masks the pervasive economic, political, and social control inherent in the cultural and ideological practices of schooling." (p. 36). Perkins (1997) would not likely disagree: "For all the 'chilly climate' reports, and 'zero-tolerance' policies and other forms of antiharrasment measures, there still exists the denial of actual problems within academic institutions with their superficial notions of equality. Furthermore, many of these policies do not recognize or include racism, except in its most overt demonstrations" (p. 263).

And yet, according to Perkins, racism "is so normalized and rendered invisible, it functions as a kind of common sense, and a way of being that is rarely challenged even by those individuals who have had their consciousness raised. As such," she states, "it informs our daily practices and the very ways in which we see and organize the world" (p. 252). Similarly, Henry (1997) illustrates how conventional social "research, for the most part, has perpetuated white supremacist ideological thinking" (p. 133). Noting that

most mainstream psychological and sociological frameworks have participated in an 'ideological construction' of immigrant underachievement, she argues that in taking 'those children' as its objects of study, mainstream research and discourse among school teachers still reflects a language of theories of 'cultural impoverishment,' 'linguistic deprivation,' and notions of 'disadvantage,' 'underachievement,' and 'immigrant deviance.' She contends that the power of this worldview, which takes as its normative referents white, Anglo-Saxon, middle-class, Christian/Protestant males, is that it implicitly informs everyday thoughts, discursive practices, and actions in the world. As such, the question arises, can we afford to do away with, or do without such legislation and policy, even if it does serve only as symbolic, even if it does serve to reinscribe the very practices of othering it seeks to eradicate? Given existing social conditions, it would appear that we cannot. But clearly, drafting and disseminating policy is not sufficient.

How can we, as new and long-standing inhabitants of Canada, disentangle ourselves from the hegemony of such an ideology? And disentangle ourselves, we must; for, within this language of dominance lurks a discourse of pathology, deviance, and deficiency concerning all people who do not fit neatly into the normative picture. "A first step," according to Hoodfar (1997) "is for teachers to locate themselves within the structure of the society and the classroom" (p. 212). She contends that by focusing attention on oppression and discrimination, "less attention gets paid to the meaning of privilege" (p. 213). Instead, she recommends focusing on the meaning and implications of privilege. This, she suggests, would afford opportunities for reflection upon the ways in which all of us participate, however unwittingly, in systems and practices of oppression. Such reflection could reasonably be expected to contribute "to the process of

'unlearning privilege' and to developing the ability to listen and speak to other constituencies more effectively" (p. 213), which would in turn make working across differences more practicable.

These observations regarding working across difference also have implications for the acts of interpretation that are necessary when a teacher receives a piece of legislation or policy, and is expected to implement it. Consider, for a moment, that what you have just read is but a textual representation of a tiny fraction of some of the thinking that gave rise to this paper, thinking which was a consequence of many hours of numerous people reading, talking, arguing, experiencing, writing, thinking and rethinking, and so on. It is likely that you will have become aware, as you have read, of some of the assumptions embedded in this text. But as you became aware of these assumptions, did you also become aware of the paradigmatic assumptions, the interpretive frameworks, the understandings of the world which derive from lived experience which you brought to it as a reader attempting to "make sense" of what is represented here?

This is one of the dilemmas that teachers face when they receive new policy. While a given piece of legislation or policy may (or may not!) be intended to represent the interests of various and divers constituents, it is in fact nothing more than a textual representation of the ideas (some would say ideologies) of those members of a particular administration or government who were involved in the production of them. It may or may not respond to problems particular teachers working in particular classrooms with particular children would identify as necessitating an official response. Further, it may or may not represent the interests of the particular teacher, or of the particular students in a

given classroom or school. It may or may not even be comprehensible to a particular teacher why such policy is necessary. And yet even that teacher will be required to implement the policy, often without much in the way of assistance.

All texts are both open and subject to interpretation, and the interpretations which derive are contingent not only upon what is represented on the printed page, but also upon the frames of reference one brings to the print material. We contend that the policy-making and implementation enterprise has not yet taken sufficient account of the social situatedness of both the writers and the readers and implementers of policy, that is, how one's various and multiple social locations affect the meanings one is (not) able to come to when confronted with divers texts. Additionally, teachers, having *made* sense of the policies, have then to translate those understandings into practices which will then be subject to the interpretation of students who, coming from a wide variety of backgrounds, also bring divers assumptions, interpretive frameworks, and understandings of the life world which derive from lived experiences, to those social practices. In light of this, that any policy is ever "successfully" implemented (whatever that is taken to mean and by whom), is nothing short of miraculous!

Directions for future inquiry: Some questions we might explore

Beneath the "day-to-day practical problems" and theoretical skirmishes outlined above lie several fundamental questions about the mandate of public education in a modern multicultural nation-state. Do the public education systems in English-speaking Canada seek to assimilate "immigrant" children and youth to the traditions of some notion of a host society? If so, what are "the traditions" to which students are to be assimilated? What are the benefits? What are the costs? To whom?

Some concluding thoughts

In sum, again and again, over the course of this research and the on-going dialogues with researcher, practitioner, and lay colleagues, we were told, and we found, that genuine efforts are taking place to make inroads towards enabling all participants in education to work together across difference. But these efforts are occurring mainly in small, isolated pockets at the various levels within the public education hierarchy. Further, we found that while there is an abundance of 'high ideals' and 'good will', there remains an urgent need to continue efforts to build discourse communities, so that people working at different places within the education system may come together to engage in spirited dialogue about both the challenges and opportunities they perceive within the various contexts in which they are working. That spirited dialogue, to be effective, would need to be fundamentally reflexive in nature; that is, it would necessitate participants examining their/our perceptual and conceptual frameworks, our ways of experiencing and 'reading' the world. As one of the respondents in the study put it,

> I think ... we need to get to know *ourselves* a little bit ... get underneath
> the surface and really understand what our own cognitive frameworks are.
> Where are we getting our ideas? How do we really make sense of culture?
> How do we really make sense of what we want in the school and what we
> don't want. What's okay and what isn't okay. (Interview transcript, 1997)

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II. Detours in teacher education: Taking the road less travelled.

According to Bauman (in Davis, 1996), "there are problems in human and social life with no good solutions, twisted trajectories that cannot be straightened up, ambivalences that are more than linguistic blunders waiting to be corrected, doubts which cannot be legislated out of existence, moral agonies which no reason-dictated recipes can

soothe, let alone cure" (p. 53). Similarly, we contend there are problems in teaching and teacher education with no easy solutions, with twisted trajectories, ambivalences, doubts, and moral agonies that no reason-dictated recipes can fix. Neither do we profess to have found, nor do we expect to find *the* all-embracing, total, and ultimate formula either for teaching, or for preparing teachers for life in classrooms or researching the practices endemic to those undertakings. Indeed, we are deeply suspicious of any voice that promises otherwise. Rather, we are reconciled to the idea that the messiness of teaching and teacher education and teacher education research is here to stay. How then might this perspective in/form our practices both as teacher educators and as teacher education researchers?

Does it lead us to abjure all forms of inquiry and to advocate an "anything goes" kind of curriculum for, or instructional approach to teacher education? Not at all. To begin with, under prevailing institutional conditions, there can be no throwing away of requisite curriculum. Given that, however, we suggest there is a corollary call for informed, critical examination and questioning of that curriculum within both the practice and the field of teacher education. Further, we posit that when we as teacher educators and teacher education researchers problematize not only the "official" curriculum, that is, the textual material and the intellectual products of human thought and activity (deCastell, 1988) which constitute the foundations of teacher preparation programs, but also our own and our student teachers' discursive and pedagogic practices, we may find that we become better able to recognize and to demonstrate to our students that teaching can (and frequently does), however unintentionally or inadvertently, marginalize further those already marginalized within North American society as it is currently constituted.

We suggest that engaging aporias which become evident as a result of this problematizing has the potential to make visible some of the limitations of institutionally sanctioned curricula, and some of the problematic assumptions and conceptions held (often dearly and tenaciously) by all of the social actors (including teacher educators, teachers, student teachers, and students) involved in the business of "education": assumptions and conceptions which can and do lead to a re/production of discriminatory discursive and pedagogic practices. Thus, we encourage teacher educators to take "detours" around the official "route" to teacher preparation, that is, carefully planned departures from the prescribed curriculum, departures which can afford opportunities for all parties involved to attend together to typically neglected and overlooked matters.[28]

We begin this chapter by introducing three ideas that are central to our discussion: our conceptions of aporia, reflexive praxis, and conversations of inclusion. In this paper, we flesh out an exemplar of reflexive anthropology. It begins with a retrospective narrative account of a student teacher's thwarted attempt to take a detour in a grade 10 English class, and is followed by an analysis of the complex power dynamics and differentials inherent in the situation described. We end by responding to several of the criticisms that we anticipate may arise from the kinds of suggestions we make.

Central Ideas: Aporia, reflexive praxis, and conversations of inclusion

> It is the gaps and ruptures in practice—the breaks, confusion and contradiction that are always a part of the interplay in teaching—that offer the greatest insight and possibilities for change. (Orner, 1992, p. 84)

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[28] Of course, this practice of detour-taking necessitates judiciousness which, in turn, requires that we as teacher educators be engaged in rigorous practices of critical self-examination with a view to coming to recognize and acknowledge our various frailties, fallibilities, and foibles (e.g. egoism, denial, a tendency to rationalize, and so on) in order that we might transcend them.

When we speak of *aporia*, we are referring to those gaps and ruptures in practice which offer insight and possibilities for change. We consider the experience of an aporia as provoking "the thinking of the very possibility of what still remains unthinkable or unthought, indeed, impossible" (Derrida in Cornell, 1992). In other words, we conceive of aporia as constituting a space of potential, of promise. For example, in the space or aporia between that which one represents of oneself and one's experiences to another, and that which the other represents to her or himself of what has been represented, is tremendous potential. Each party has something to learn. Each can learn something from the encounter with the other about oneself, about the other, about the world, and about our respective and collective relations with/in it, to it, and to each other.

Moreover, as simultaneously conscious and unconscious subjects, we can never really know ourselves or others in any definitive way:

> There is always the possibility (and actuality) ... of misinterpretation, of misrecognition when we try to make sense of our relation to others. We can never be certain of the meaning of others' responses. We can never be certain of the meaning of our own responses. (Orner, 1992, p. 84)

Thus, it is not our intent to come to "know" definitively either the other, or ourselves. Rather, we see acknowledgement of, and engagement with both emergent tensions between subjects and the attendant aporias as potentially productive opportunities for learning: for seeing our/selves in others. To acknowledge and engage emergent tensions and aporias in this way is to enact what we call reflexive praxis.

> I urge each one of us here to reach down into that deep place of knowledge inside herself and touch that error and loathing of difference that lives there. See whose face it wears. (Lorde, 1984, p. 113)

Our working definition of *reflexive praxis* derives largely from poststructural feminist work in education (deCastell & Bryson, 1997; Ellsworth, 1992; Lather, 1992;

Orner, 1992). Reflexive praxis involves looking deeply inward, examining critically not just one's classroom practice/s, but one's lived experiences, with a view to taking account of the historical, socio-cultural, and political forces that have made im/possible a particular kind of human subject, and the ways in which all of the aforesaid can and do shape both the kinds of practices one can or cannot enact in classrooms and in the lifeworld, and the kinds of tensions one can or cannot engage. It is not merely a matter of identifying and interpreting what is there: rather, it involves questioning what we think it is we see, what interpretive frameworks are in/forming our seeing, and whence they came. It involves asking ourselves what vested interests and desires may be in/forming our interpretations, and then exploring those points of most resistance, even denial (Oh well, it can't be "x"! [can it?]). Reflexive praxis involves a radical self-questioning with a view to self-understanding and self-re/construction in light of new understandings. Reflexive praxis, we contend, is what renders *conversations of inclusion* if not possible, then at least not impossible.

> To enter into conversation with another is to lay down one's arms and one's defenses; to throw open the gates of one's own positions; to expose oneself to the other, the outsider; and to lay oneself open to surprises, contestation, and inculpation. It is to risk what one found or produced in common. To enter into conversation is to struggle against the noise, the interference, and the vested interests, the big brothers and the little Hitlers. (Lingis, 1994, pp. 87-89)

Like Lingis, we think of conversations as dialogues or talks in which difference or the other is acknowledged. In other words, conversations of inclusion can, to a limited extent, have the effect of reducing the differentials of power between and among

interlocutors.[29] It is a version of dialogue in the Freirean sense: that is, it can constitute a space of convergence, where the voice of the institution, the educators, and the students meet to assert, interrogate, and reaffirm or challenge their respective stories.[30] Conversations focusing on participants' biographies, for example, have the potential—depending upon the subject position/s of the teacher and on the institution within which one is practising—to "challenge an uncritical acceptance of experience as well as the dominant culture's denial of the values of a primary discourse community and its focus on [denial/exclusion] practices" (Zuss, 1997, p. 172).

Similar to Zuss (1997), Britzman (1991) speaks to, and expands on this need for challenging such phenomena in a teacher education context:

> The exploration of biography. . . cannot be limited to the nostalgia of the personal or the rhapsody of the unique. Attention must be given to the historical contexts of the past and the present, and to the antagonistic discourses that summon and construct what we take to be our subjective selves. We are all situated by race, class, and gender, and without an understanding of the social meanings that overdetermine how we invite and suppress differences, the complexity of biography is reduced either to the dreary essentialism that beneath the skin we are all the same, or to the insistence that difference can be overcome through sheer individual effort. Each case depends upon the denial of history and the suppression of subjectivity. Each orientation is an effect of a discourse that covers its own narrative tracks. (p. 233)

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[29] We have some difficulty with this idea since the very structures of the language systems one inherits or acquires are themselves prestructured by unequal relations of power (Bakhtin, 1986). The systemic inequities inherent in the very language upon which we rely for "conversations of inclusion" may end up making students who frequently experience forms of marginalization complicit in their own subordination and oppression (deCastell, 1996, p. 30). "Poststructuralist discourse throws into question the transparency, authenticity and self-referentiality of language embedded in calls for student voice" (Orner, 1992, p. 80).

[30] We acknowledge that this is problematic in that the respective voices of the institution, educators, and students do not have equal weight in terms of official, institutional power relations. Hence, our insistence upon reflexive praxis as a necessary (though not necessarily sufficient condition) for conversations of inclusion. An analogous situation would be colonizers 'opening up spaces' for the voices of the colonized within the regimes established by and for the colonizer. What happens to the voices of the colonized in those contexts? Typically, they are either marginalized, systematically delegitimized, or simply dismissed altogether, or they are co-opted by the colonizers, and turned back on those colonized. Relations of dominance and subordination are crucial here, and we intend to address them in a future work.

Like Zuss (1997) and Britzman (1991), we are arguing for highly complex and radically reflexive analyses of the meaning/s that one constructs out of one's lived experiences.

What we find problematic is that many of the studies deploying these methodologies have left largely unarticulated the issues of diversity along several dimensions in teacher education (Britzman, 1991). This silencing (or mumbled-voicing) of the pressing issues of diversity in this context results in preservice teachers being inadequately prepared to teach in situations characterized by diversity. This lack of preparedness perpetuates the cycle of marginalizing students who represent the in/visible other/s or difference/s in classrooms. In a paper addressing encounters of difference in her teacher education classes, Conle (1997) asserts:

> When we observe actions we cannot identify, we often do not know how to respond and are sometimes baffled intellectually and practically: we may try to break the impasse by slotting the new into inappropriate, old categories. (p. 182)

It is these apparent impasses or aporias, and the conversations of inclusion to which they may give rise, which we contend could be viewed by teacher educators as opportunities to prepare student teachers for the diversity they will encounter in schools (and, indeed, in other contexts as well). This in turn necessitates that we teacher educators and teacher education researchers be well-informed and adequately prepared to teach and to conduct research in diverse contexts. How might these broad aims be accomplished?

Methodology

We submit that the deployment of reflexive anthropology could afford teacher educators and teacher education researchers opportunities not only to inform and prepare their students for life in classrooms, whether they be

characterized by diversity or not, but also to inform and to prepare themselves to teach and to conduct respectful research in diverse contexts.

Reflexive Anthropology: Kathleen's dilemma

Reflexive anthropology (Hoodfar, 1997, p. 215) may take the form of a written representation of one's own practice/s with the writer as participant, observer, and reporter. The narrative account is then followed by reflexive interpretation and analysis intended to render visible the social and institutional forces which can and do serve to marginalize (however unintentionally) certain persons based on their apparent membership or non-membership in social groups, and which simultaneously militate against practices (such as the taking of detours around the prescribed curriculum) which would at the very least interrupt those processes of marginalization. The narrative below, and the interpretation and analysis that follow it, may be said to constitute an exercise in reflexive anthropology.

A critical incident

My story is based on the details of a critical incident that I recorded and reflected upon at length in a reader response and reflection journal during my first student teaching experience five years ago. It is a written representation of a selection of my pedagogic practices, with the "self" I was then as participant, observer, and reporter, and the "self" I have since become and am becoming as writer, interpreter, and analyst. Note that the sense of self to which we are appealing in this paper is not the atomistic, autonomous, self-naming, self-authoring individual, but rather the self as simultaneously constituted in and constituting dialogic relations within a particular historic and socio-cultural context which is always and already imbued with discursive, ethical, and power relations. As

such, the purpose of the analysis that follows the narrative is not to move in the direction of recommending that classroom practitioners expunge from their repertoires particular practices, or that they expunge particularly undesirable aspects of their selves. Nor is it to make claims about what ought to have been done in the scenario rendered here. Rather, the analysis is intended to call attention to some of the institutional forces which might have served to marginalize some of the actors in that social context, and which, we contend, may continue to do so in classrooms today.

The story provides an example of the kind of apparent impasse to which Conle (1997) refers—one which cannot at the time be fully understood, and which gives rise to a sinking sense of being flummoxed about how best to respond in the moment. Indeed, I did find myself baffled intellectually and practically in that space at that time. And while I did risk attempting to take what I thought was a detour around the official curriculum, I ended up, however unintentionally, reaffirming stereotypes, and legitimizing highly problematic attitudes and beliefs.

I had been assigned to observe and to teach in a middle-to-upper-middle-class secondary school in what is still generally regarded to be an affluent neighborhood in a fairly large city in Ontario. A several million dollar renovation to the school was being undertaken at a time when the provincial coffers were reportedly not only empty, but in arrears, and cutbacks in spending on education were, according to government officials, immanent. According to the principal, a high percentage of his students would go on to post-secondary education. Representatives of the school visiting the teacher education program had characterized the parents of most of the students attending the school as

"professionals" of one kind and another—doctors, dentists, lawyers, university professors, and such like.

The school was said to be an "easy" school, a good place to have one's first practice teaching experience. Students attending this school were described by both the principal and one of the teachers as "good kids." The faculty liaison person concurred. The students were also said to come from "good families." As student teachers, we were told at a preliminary meeting that we would face few, if any, behavioral problems at this school, so we could get on with the business of teaching easily. The strong implication was that if preservice people had difficulties teaching at this institution, it was not because the students were difficult to manage.

I was assigned to teach a grade 10 advanced level English class. The school associate, eight and a half months pregnant at the time, had initially asked to be relieved of the responsibility of supervising a student teacher, but at the last minute, had changed her mind. There were 31 students (and three teachers, my associate, her maternity leave replacement, and me) crammed into a long, narrow classroom designed to hold perhaps 25 bodies comfortably. The sound of jackhammers, electric saws, and construction workers resounded daily through the walls and door of the classroom. Further, I was told that seven of the students in the class I was to teach were on individualized programs for behavior problems. The identities of these behaviorally challenged students (who I had been told at orientation did not exist) were not disclosed to me.

On the morning of the incident, we were having a whole class discussion about friendship as a lead-in to an analysis of the relationship between Brutus and Caesar in Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar*. In an attempt to provide an effective introduction to

the analysis, I had decided to solicit from the students a list of qualities they would look for in a friend. Loyalty, compassion, honesty, caring, and such like topped the list.

We were well into the compilation of a comprehensive list when a male student who had a reputation for bullying, and for interrupting classroom proceedings with unsolicited and often rude comments, raised his hand. To say I was delighted at the prospect that I had somehow stimulated his involvement would be an understatement! I thought (naively) that I might actually be making some progress with this student. Following the principles of learning I had learned about in my education psychology courses (and confirming the maxim that a little knowledge is indeed a dangerous thing!), I decided in the moment that I wanted to do what I could to reinforce this "problem student's" apparent "pro-social behavior." So, I invited him to give us his input. He said it would be important that any friend of his be "straight."

A little shaken, but wanting to appear calm, I tried to use humor to call his bluff as it were. "How do you mean?" I asked. "As in up-front? Straight forward?"

There was some laughter. The student remained silent, and I thought I was in the clear. But, as luck would have it, another typically boisterous student picked up the baton and ran with it: "Nooo," he drawled, rolling his eyes skyward. "You *know* what he means ... sexual preference."

The words were out. The 'un-nameable' named. I could see no way out, no way to avoid at least gesturing towards taking on the obvious prejudice against persons who

identify as gay/lesbian that were apparent to me in both of the students' remarks and tone.[31]

Some of the other students became a bit rowdy. The associate teacher and her replacement-to-be (both of whom sat silently at the back of the classroom watching) informed me after class had been dismissed that a couple of students near the back of the room had begun to tell disparaging jokes about people involved in same sex relationships. These other two teachers (who were in the room at the time, remember) had not, however, seen fit to intervene—not even discreetly. Instead they later acknowledged having talked amongst themselves about what they thought I should be doing to restore order in the classroom.

Unaware of the goings on at the back of the room because of the noises from the ongoing renovations, and thinking that I had regained the attention of the class, I turned back to the first student and asked, "Why would that be important to you?" He responded by saying that he didn't want a guy "putting the moves on him," and, in what seemed to me at the time like an attempt to trip me up, he asked, "How would you feel if some woman tried to put the moves on you?"

I paused for what in retrospect was the briefest of moments (though it seemed at the time like an eternity) to consider what I would say. I was acutely aware at a very visceral level of the importance of addressing the prejudice inherent in the students' comments, but I was also cognizant that all eyes, including those of both my supervising teacher and her maternity leave replacement, were on me, and that I didn't have much time to stand there pondering what to say.

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[31] That I even desired to avoid such a discussion is telling, i.e. of how ill-prepared I was for the exigencies of classroom life in general, and, in particular, to address matters of importance, such as prejudice and hatred, in a classroom setting.

I responded to the student's question by saying, "It wouldn't matter. I would interpret her 'putting the moves on me,' as you say, as an indication of her interest in and/or attraction to me. I would be flattered by the attention, and I would respond by saying something like, 'I'm flattered that you find me interesting or attractive, but I'm in a committed relationship.' Thinking that because I had presented a reasonable response, the student would be prepared to reconsider his point of view, I asked, "Do you still want me to include 'straight' on the list?"

"Yes," he said, matter-of-factly.

So, in the interests of not modeling intolerance to the intolerant, I wrote 'straight' on the chalkboard.

Needless to say, I have regrets about the way the situation was handled (or mishandled). The incident haunts me still. True, the student offered the remark, and the co-operating teachers chose not to act at all, except to tell me after the fact how I ought to have handled the student. But in the final analysis, I, with the institutional power vested in me by the province and society in general as student teacher, wrote 'straight' on the board next to compassion, loyalty, caring, and the like, as a legitimate prerequisite for friendship.

Of course, some might dismiss my actions that day as a small act—a minor faux pas not to be fretted. Some might even claim that my concerns are unfounded, that I'm making a big deal out of nothing. But it is not nothing. It is something. How many more similar incidents, borne out of good intentions and good will, end this way and go unnoticed by those least likely to be both affected and effected by them, that is, by those privileged by virtue of their apparent social positioning as 'normal' versus 'deviant'? And this is to say nothing about those incidents borne out of deliberate ill will.

What would I do if I faced a similar situation today? I cannot say for sure how I would or would not act in the heat of the moment. I know only that I would not write 'straight' on the chalkboard as I did, thus legitimating it as a prerequisite for friendship.

Conducting this reflexive anthropology of my own teaching practice in light of the readings, thinking, and writing I have done, and the myriad conversations I have had since then as part of my graduate work and research, has afforded me an opportunity to consider some of the (in)action-mediated outcomes of my good intentions and to understand more comprehensively the tremendous complexity of classroom dynamics in general, but particularly as they pertain in a teacher education *practicum* context. It has reinforced for me the importance of teacher educators examining their own practices.

Regardless of whether or not the supervisors and teachers in the stories told above intended the particular material effects which became manifest in each case, the effects nevertheless occurred. Social actors were affected, for better or worse. We contend that each of these narrative accounts of our teaching and supervisory practices presents an aporia that could be engaged in a classroom context that is open to biographically shaped conversations of inclusion as a pedagogic practice. For it is only when we begin to take account of, and account for, some of the ways in which our own pedagogic and discursive practices (both in and out of the classroom) are inextricably enmeshed in complex relations of power not of our making, that we can become "free" agents for change: change for the better for students who daily experience marginalization in classrooms—a kind of death by a thousand cuts—however unintended the outcome may be.

Situational power dynamics: An analysis of Kathleen's story

Before we talk about the institutional power dynamics and the power of normative culture to which the narrative above draws attention, it is necessary for us address what we are not referring to when we speak about "power".

Power Reconceptualized

Generally, people speak of power as though it were a kind of commodity or possession: as some thing one either has or does not have. Rather, we hold to a less fixed notion of power, one consistent with that put forward by Foucault (1972; 1977) and that espoused by both Orner (1992) and Luke & Gore (1992). Power is conceived of as a movement of energy that functions through a net-like organization. Within such a system, individuals are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power—constituting it and being constituted by it. They are not merely its inert or consenting targets. They are always also the elements of its articulation.

Institutional Power

In Kathleen's story, as a student teacher is caught in a web of institutional and socio-cultural power relations. Institutionally, she finds herself being tugged and pulled by both the school officials, including the cooperating teachers and the faculty liaison (and the respective institutions they represent) who are positioned above her within the hierarchy of the education system, and the students who are, within the system as it is constituted, positioned below her. Personally, she finds herself caught up in her own desire to be recognized as a (potentially, at least) good teacher. She is not merely an innocent puppet whose strings are pulled this way and that, making her dance a macabre dance. She is a social actor who participates actively, however unwittingly, in the reification of existing relations of institutional power: the students are kept down, and the school officials (and all that they represent both institutionally and socio-culturally) are held up.

The Power of Normative Culture

At a more tacit level, the power of socio-cultural norms is also operating.

Teaching is, after all, a "normative enterprise" (Piddocke et al., 1993). For example, in

the province of Ontario, the setting for the student-teaching scenario recounted above, it

is expected by the education authorities (i.e., the Ministry of Education and Training, the

school districts and boards, the schools, and, hence, the faculties of education) and by

communities that teachers be positive role models for their students, both inside and

outside the classroom. Indeed, it is, and has long been, a statutory duty of both teachers

and temporary teachers "to inculcate by precept and example respect for religion and the

principles of Judaeo-Christian morality and the highest regard for truth, justice, loyalty,

love of country, humanity, benevolence, sobriety, industry, frugality, purity, temperance

and all other virtues" (Monastyrskyj, 1995, Ontario Education Act, 1995, 264(1) (c)).

While the religious particulars of this clause are no longer held to as rigidly as they once

were, and while it is acknowledged that the standards "are so idealistically high that even

the most conscientious, earnest and diligent teacher could not meet all of them at all

times" (Berryman, 1998, p. 12), the idea that teachers are expected to attain to a

significantly higher standard of conduct than is the general populace continues to hold.

Teachers found to have failed in terms of serving as "positive role models" (however that

is operationalized by those in positions to define and to adjudicate such things) both on

and off duty can be subject to sanctions meted out by any one or all of the education

authorities listed above.[32]

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[32] Sanctions may range from a verbal reprimand from one's immediate supervisor, to dismissal by the local board of education, to decertification by the Minister of Education and Training, depending on the "seriousness" of the offence.

It goes without saying that the normative ideal perpetuated both in and by schools and faculties of education is founded upon assumptions: assumptions about what constitutes the "good family," "good kids," and "the good teacher." "The good family" is typically assumed to be constituted by two parents, a heterosexual couple, diligently raising children to invest in the normative culture (which in Canada seems to be modelled on middle class, patriarchal, Anglo-Eurocentric ideals) in which they themselves are to a greater or lesser extent invested. "Good kids" are implicitly (despite explicit protestations to the contrary) assumed to be those who are compliant, obedient, studious, interested in higher education, upwardly mobile (or at least desirous of so being), highly motivated, and not stubbornly resistant (beyond the usual "adolescent stuff") to the curriculum, to school in general, to society at large, and so on.

The "good teacher" is assumed to be one who works caringly, critically, and creatively with students in schools but always within the boundaries of what is deemed legitimate or acceptable by the myriad and various education authorities (Piddocke, Magusino, and Manley-Casimir, 1997). She or he is expected to be:

> an exemplar of moral virtue, obedient to standards to a degree higher than that expected of the ordinary person. When a teacher falls below this standard, doubt is cast on the teacher's fitness to perform and hold the job of teaching children, and upon the reputation of the school board which continues to employ such a teacher. . . So anything done by a teacher which could undermine, or even just tend to undermine, that image and reputation could be misconduct entailing suspension or dismissal if it be serious enough. (p. 13)

Schooling as a Process of Normalization

Separately, the forces of institutional and normative authority are powerful. Working together, they are formidable. Invoking Foucault's conception of disciplinary power, Orner (1992) contends that, as a consequence of the establishment of dossiers, systems of marking and classifying, and permanent surveillance of them as a group,

students gradually begin to police their own behavior. They begin to regulate themselves "through the internalization of the regulation by others" (p. 83, emphasis added). In other words, they internalize the various legitimate social, cultural, and discursive norms— what is and is not permitted to do, to think, to know, to say, to feel, etc. Schooling or public education (as schooling is so often mistakenly called), then, constitutes nothing more than a process of normalization. Why do we consider this problematic?

We need to keep in mind that this idealized norm is constituted by particular people to the advantage (however inadvertently) of particular people and, conversely, to the disadvantage of some others. As teacher educators, we must ask ourselves who produced it? Whose ends are served by the production and maintenance of it? The questions of who are the producers (and by extension, who the consumers) of normative culture are significant to our purposes here, for they determine what can and cannot be known, said, or even legitimately asked.

The discussion here about institutional and socio-cultural power relations is intended to illuminate and problematize the extent to which schools, faculties of education, and the institution of public education are deeply rooted in and committed to the idea of teaching as a normative enterprise.[33] It also points to the luxury one has, in occupying a position or positions of social privilege, of choosing whether or not to learn about those who, by virtue of their difference(s) from the norm, are constructed as "others."[34]

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[33] Again, for the purposes of this chapter, while it would be advantageous to explore the nuances of normative North American culture, constraints of time and length require us to defer discussion of these phenomena to future related work.

[34] Note here that otherness is not something one can take up at will. Rather, it is a socio-political position one occupies by virtue of one's various social locations (race, class, gender, culture, sexuality, age, ability, language/s spoken, ethnicity) within already constituted and circulating relations of power. That is, one either occupies position/s of Other, or one does not, with respect to relations of power which are always

Ignorance is Power

When one is, or is thought to represent a socially constructed other, one has little choice (if one wishes to survive) but to learn about that which is other to oneself, i.e., to learn about that which is dominant. And typically, one ends up learning about one/self, about the social groups to which one belongs, through the eyes of the dominant. Occupying a position of social privilege, however, affords one the luxury of practising ignorance, of just not bothering to learn about "those people."

Ignorance, however, may seem to be less a *deliberate* practice, and more a function of not having had access to information which would challenge (if not undermine entirely) what is taken for received wisdom. But this state of mind, this form of ignorance, is also a function of social privilege. It is not necessarily a function of a given human subject's occupation of one or more positions of social privilege, but rather of the fact that the knowledge makers and decision takers regarding curriculum, pedagogy, and learning materials more frequently than not occupy such positions. As such, only particular kinds of questions (and not others) are likely to be asked; hence, only particular kinds of answers or solutions (and not others) are likely to be "found" or "dis/covered."

Curriculum, technologies, and the selection of what will constitute acceptable (and not acceptable) learning materials, legitimate (and illicit) knowledge, all can and do function as insidious forms of censorship. For they predetermine which knowledge students will and will not have access to, what they can and cannot know. Ignorance, be it the more studied or insidious form, can be (and is often) used as an excuse or a

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already circulating in and through the body politic at large. Hence, one cannot legitimately deny one's own position/s of privilege.

justification for not engaging aporias that become evident in classrooms: "I can't do that because I don't know how, and things might get out of control." Full stop. End of story. As opposed to "I don't know how, but I can learn." However, engaging aporias entails work, painful work. Many social actors who occupy positions of social privilege (in North America, white, English speaking, heterosexual, able-bodied, and/or male) often find it extremely trying—some just give up as a result, while others invoke a discourse of derision (Usher & Edwards, 1994) to avoid having to confront their position of privilege—to come to terms with the idea that they have been playing cards with a deck stacked in their favor, and have grown so accustomed to winning, so complacent, that they have come to believe that winning is entirely a matter of individual effort, a consequence of the deft deployment of one's knowledge and skills rather than a function (largely, if not entirely) of one's privilege. At the same time, some of the sense of hard-done-by-ness one might experience as a result of attempting to acknowledge some of the social privileges to which one has become accustomed may be alleviated when one realizes that unstacking the deck, as it were, neither constitutes nor justifies "reverse discrimination."

bell hooks (1994) talks about the importance of acknowledging the pain of learning, whether it be learning of one's own oppression, or learning of one's own complicity in the reification of a system of power relations one finds objectionable:

> I have not forgotten the day a student came to class and told me: "We take your class. We learn to look at the world from a critical standpoint, one that considers race, sex, and class. And we can't enjoy life anymore." Looking out over the class, across race, sexual preference, and ethnicity, I saw students nodding their heads. And I saw for the first time that there can be, and usually is, some degree of pain involved in giving up old ways of thinking and knowing and learning new approaches. I respect that pain. And I include recognition of it now when I teach, that is to say, I teach about shifting paradigms and talk about the discomfort it can cause. (pp. 42-43)

Acknowledging the pain of learning does not mean letting people off the hook. In the passage cited above, hooks suggests that ignorance is not constituted merely by an absence of knowledge or a lack of thinking. Rather, like Beckett (1983 in deCastell, 1988) and deCastell (1988), she acknowledges that individuals already have ways of thinking and knowing which render their experiences in the world sensible to them. Hence, as deCastell (1988) puts it, education consists not so much in instilling some new thing that was not there before, but rather in replacing what was there with something else. Yet, even as we argue for engagement with (rather than a denial or a deft side-stepping of) aporias which emerge in teacher education classrooms when established practices and conceptual frameworks are challenged by unfamiliar ways of thinking, talking, inquiring, and knowing, we realize that this practice is not unproblematic.

Potential Problems: The Interpellation

> It seems impossibly naive to think that there can be anything like a genuine sharingof voices in the classroom. What does seem possible, on the other hand, is an attempt to recognize the power differentials present and to understand how they impinge upon what is sayable and doable in that specific context. (Orner, 1992, p. 81)

Teacher education practitioners who deploy reflexive anthropology either as a mode of inquiry, or a as pedagogic devices must also take account of some of the more implicit or tacit power dynamics which are characteristic of discourse itself and of classrooms in both public schools and teacher preparation programs as they are currently constituted. Tacit power dynamics in classrooms, and structural inequalities inherent in discourse (Bakhtin, 1986) may preclude any kind of free and open exchange of ideas in classrooms (deCastell, 1996; Orner, 1992). For such an exchange presupposes a level playing field, a game of cards with, at the very least, a deck not stacked in anyone's favour and, hence, to any one's disadvantage. And, as suggested above, the education

system as currently constituted constitutes anything but a fair game. Under these (frequently unacknowledged, or worse still, flatly denied) institutional conditions, students constructed as other/s (Orner, 1992) can find themselves at great risk. deCastell (1996) even goes so far as to argue that requiring students to "speak the self" as an act of self-confession as opposed to self-making, to find and make public one's 'authentic voice' is, *under prevailing institutional conditions*, an act of treachery (p. 30).

Commenting on Foucault's analyses of confession practices of the medieval era, Orner (1992) links these practices with "curricular and pedagogical practices which call for students to publicly reveal, even confess, information about their lives and cultures in the presence of authority figures such as teachers" (p. 83). deCastell (1996) points out that under these conditions:

> what we confront is a kind of discursive panopticon. Individuals begin to construct theirown ontological straightjackets within a public discourse on subjectivity in which confession becomes an obligatory practice of expunging aspects of the self, in which the purpose of enforced speech is to bring the self to light, not to illuminate and cultivate it, but to eradicate those parts that can hereby be seen by more discriminating eyes to be pollutant. . . it is a practice of *standardizing and censoring selves*. (p. 30)

In other words, while schooling constitutes a process of normalization, classroom confession may serve as a process of self-sanitization by those located within the hierarchy of the education system in positions of power over others, i.e., teachers or teacher educators (cultural authorities) over students or student teachers (inherently deficient beings in need of 'benevolent' guidance and direction), especially those regarded by teachers as other or 'different' from the normative ideal. And while there are the obvious authorities in the picture—teachers, school administrators, concerned parents, and such like—there are also those unofficial authorities of social, cultural, and discursive practices—those individuals who embody (and more frequently than not take for granted as a good thing) the North American normative ideal.

But when (and how) one acts to address these insidiously problematic features can itself become problematic. As Orner (1992) argues:

> A disciplinary notion of power renders untenable the metaphysics underlying critical and feminist conceptions of the 'liberatory' classroom as a safe and democratic space where students find and articulate their voices. A disciplinary notion of power renders untenable the metaphysics of any educator's claim to a "liberator" identity (p. 84).

She continues by talking about how classrooms of self-proclaimed 'liberatory pedagogues' are thought/said to constitute equitable spaces, wherein all students have a voice, and all voices are equal, and where "power is dispersed and shared [equally] by all" (p. 84), when in fact, they are not. Indeed, what often happens in these classrooms is that the always present power dynamics are driven underground to circulate unnamed and, hence, continue uninterrupted (Usher & Edwards, 1994).

Answering the Call

While the critique above reconceptualizes "common-sense" understandings of power, it is predicated on a problematic conception of self, that is, the self as atomistic, monologic, self-defining, and isolated, rather than positing a more relational self, constituted by and constituting in dialogic relation with others within a particular historical, social, political, and cultural context. Consistent with the former conception of self, to open oneself, to tell one's story is to reveal one's heart, to dis-close one's personal experiences, one's thoughts, maybe even one's fears, hopes, and dreams. It is to leave oneself exposed, vulnerable. It is to juxtapose ones own story against the myriad of already institutionally legitimated and socially dominant narratives in a given socio-cultural context. Compelling a student to do this in a classroom setting characterized as it is by unequal relations of power, both formal and informal, is to require one who may

already be disadvantaged by virtue of his or her apparent social positioning to 'tip her or his hand,' as it were. It is to put the student in the untenable position of having to justify, against all odds, her or his very existence. Thus, requiring students to reveal themselves in this way would indeed constitute a treacherous act.

However, if the self is regarded not as an atomistic, autonomous, self-naming, self-authoring individual, but rather as constituted and constituting both in and by myriad relations with others which occur inside an intricate and complex web of discursive, ethical, and power relations, then that is another matter entirely. For in the latter case, the emphasis is on the forces (formal and informal, personal, social, cultural, institutional, political, economic, and so on) and the attendant im/possibilities to which they give rise, all of which in/form the development of a particular human agent. In other words, requiring students to tell 'their stories' given this conception of self, is to subject to examination not the particular human subject herself, but rather the conditions which made (im)possible a particular kind of human subject in the world.

Further, keeping in mind all of the aforementioned concerns regarding calls for student voice in the classroom, particularly regarding the voices of those students who are members of historically marginalized groups, researchers and practitioners alike must be vigilant that we do not, as a consequence of some paternalistic impulse to protect individuals from potential harm, relegate these voices back to the oblivion from which they so recently came, such that the legitimate concerns they might raise, and the important contributions they might make, would be pushed back to the further corners of legitimacy. Some means must therefore be created by which to make the dialogic space in classrooms not merely more inclusive, but more equitable as well.

Conclusion

We end our essay with a problematic juxtaposition. To what extent, and under what conditions, might the taking of detours in teacher education programs provide the beneficial possibilities that permit examinations of typically neglected and overlooked persons, practices, and social issues in a manner in which the engaging of aporias as they emerge could open up spaces for student teachers to develop their own capacities for more equitable teaching practices? Alternatively, how and under what conditions might the practice of engaging aporias in classrooms constitute an "act of treachery" perpetrated against student teachers which teacher educators should do everything in their power to prevent?

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

Commentary

It may or may not be evident at this point that the paradigmatic frame of these two papers differs significantly from the paradigmatic frame of the first part of the testimonial narrative. I shall have more to say about this in the next chapter concerning methodology. Suffice it to say at this point that with all of the paradigm shifting I had gone through in a relatively short span of time, I was emotionally and intellectually exhausted. For as my political consciousness was being raised, as my eyes were being opened to the extent of what I will risk calling 'man's inhumanity to man' (for lack of a gender inclusive term), to the power plays taking place in 'high' places, to the suffering taking place in 'low' places, to the corporatization of North America, to the commodification of schools by businesses, to the encroachment of the business agenda on school curricula, to the detriments of globalization, my blood pressure was also rising.

I was morally outraged. I was angry with the oppressors, with the perpetrators of this myriad of social injustices. I was angry at racism and racists. I was furious about gender discrimination, about violence against women, spousal abuse, and child abuse. I was enraged about poverty. I fumed about homophobia and homophobes. I was angry at an education system and the people who make it up, for failing fully to integrate and include respectfully persons with disabilities of various kinds. I was angry at my own family and at the education system through which I had passed for not telling me, for not knowing. I blamed them, looking down on them from my 'lofty' position as 'knower', and congratulating myself for my newly enlightened conscience, for my own heroic efforts to overcome my socialization, my so-called 'education,' and criticizing them harshly for their seemingly recalcitrant entrenchment in obviously wrong beliefs and prejudicial attitudes and practices. "How can you be so blind and stubborn?" I would muse to myself, and, on occasion, muse aloud. This self-righteous attitude extended to my students as well, as I contemplated with colleagues how to go about 'stripping the teflon' off of them, exposing them to the "truth" in order to get them to come to grips with their complicity in the oppression of others.

At the same time, I was also angry with myself, for my own ignorance, for my social privilege, for my participation in practices of oppression, for my complicity in social injustice. And what was worse, I felt powerless to change. I not only did not know what to do, I no longer knew how to be. The focus of my attention would alternate between being down on others for how awful, ignorant, privileged, etc. they were, to being down on myself for how awful, ignorant, privileged, etc. I was, to getting all het up and self-righteous about how victimized I was, as a woman in a "patriarchal" society, as a

person with a disability in an ablist culture, and as a person from the working class living in a society dominated by so-called 'middle class values'.

Back to the beginning: Un/learning to stand flat on my face

Let us turn back now to the graphic prologue to this dissertation – it constitutes a representation of the journey I have been on and on which I remain. What started out as a journey to become a better teacher became a journey to become a better person overall. In a sense, as I conceive of it, the first part of the story which narrates my 'oblivious' walk along the path of your own choosing represents my blind acceptance of the grand narrative of Modern Western Progress and you're my unquestioning confidence, that is to say, faith in 'pure' research to yield up the truth about reality to the effect of making the world a better place for all. The second part of the story represents that period of political 'conscientization' during which I became increasingly aware of the existence of tremendous political oppression in the world, of my own unwitting complicity in that oppression, and of the ways in which I, as a female growing up in a male dominated and dominating world, a daughter of working class parents, and a woman with a disability in an ablist culture had mainly unwittingly experienced oppression.

With each article that I read and contemplated in my attempt to re-form myself, and with each sentence that I wrote, I became more angry, more embittered, more morally outraged at the offenses against others I was seeing all around me. Steeped in the various critical, neo-Marxist, post-Fordist, feminist, anti-racist, multiculturalist, post-structuralist discourses, angry at and hating every form of social injustice to which I was, it seemed, daily bearing witness: poverty, racially motivated violence, hate crimes,

domestic abuse, ablism, gender discrimination, systemic marginalization of certain peoples on the basis of race, gender, class, and ability, and disgusted with deficiency models of physical, emotional, and intellectual disability, I despaired of things ever getting any better for anyone – and I raged at those occupying social and political positions of power for their inflated sense of their own importance, their ignorance, their arrogance, their apathy, and their indignation being poured out on the very people writhing under their political hob-nail boots. Which is to say that in many instances, I was the object of your own anger, bitterness, and rage.

As I could no longer dis-identify with those doing the offending, I found myself caught in the backwash of my own vitriol. And what is more, these new awarenesses and the overwhelming emotions (not to mention the self-righteousness) to which they gave rise took a terrible toll on my personal relationships as well. I waffled between feeling and expressing (or suppressing) indignation at the offences which I observed my loved ones committing every day, and experiencing a crippling self-condemnation, contempt, and loathing, which only drove me to try even harder to make myself over into a 'better' person – in my own eyes, and in the eyes of others -- and to raise the standards to which I subjected everybody else.

But redoubling my efforts only had the effect of doubling the weight of the condemnation I was already under. Instead of the torment subsiding, as I tried to change my heart and mind to fit what the 'experts'[35] said was 'right,' it got worse. Much worse.

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[35] See Bannerji et al. (1993); Britzman (1992; 1991; 1986); Cornell (1992); deCastell (1996; 1988); deCastell & Bryson (1997); Derrida (1978; 1988); Ellsworth (1992; 1997); Fine (1994); Foucault (1972; 1977; 1980; 1988); Franklin (1992); Freire (1970); Fuss (1989); Gallop (1995); Henry (1997); Hoodfar (1997); hooks (1994); Kohl (1994); Lorde (1984); Lather (1991; 1992; 1998a; 1998b); Lave & Wenger (1991); Lewis (1992); Lingis (1994); Luke & Gore (1992); McCarthy (1993); McDermott (1993); Orner (1992); Pinar, et. al. (1995); Roman (1993); Roman & Stanley (1997); Simon (1995); Smith (1987); Spivak

I had become enslaved to fear, anger, bitterness, and depression, not to mention self-defensiveness, self-righteousness, and self-pity. All of the reading and writing I had done served only to leave me with a tremendous sense of my own wretchedness, hopelessness, helplessness, misery, and blindness, i.e. with the recognition that my vision was severely and incurably limited, partial, perspectival. As the story of the gruesome promenade shows, and as my narrative indicates, this resulted in a kind of social paralysis. There was no going back. But there was also no going forward. I could not sidestep what I had seen. But neither could I remain where I was.

I was afraid to speak because my words might bring harm upon another or to myself. I was afraid to act because my actions might be construed as being wrongly motivated or effectively harmful to another. I was also afraid *not* to speak and *not* to act for these same reasons. I was trapped. Ensnared. Caught in a net from which I could not escape. I could see no way out for myself or for anyone else for that matter, except perhaps, someday, mercifully, death. But then what?

In her book, *Teaching positions,* Ellsworth (1997) refers to experiences like this as "stuck places." In "Detours" (Barnard, Muthwa-Kuehn, & Grimmett, 1998) we called them "aporias," i.e. seemingly impossible, impassable situations. In both cases, we talk about these "spaces" as being filled with promise and potential that is to be embraced and engaged creatively, productively by the stuck person. But call the space what you will, I was in no position at the time to regard it as a space of promise and potential. Neither was I able to engage this space creatively or productively. I had entered a pit of despair, and it was there that I came as close as I ever had before to wanting to end my own life.

(1993a; 1993b); Sumara (1996); Usher & Edwards (1994); Walkerdine (1996); Weber & Mitchell (1995); Willinsky (1990); Zueli, (1996).

But something inside of me just would not let me do it, just in case there had been even a grain of truth to what I had learned as a young person about God. "Coward," I thought at the time, "You can't even get that right!" It would seem that I had not after all lost my faith in God all those years ago. There was hope. As it happens, I was in a sense in the best position I could possibly have been, i.e., flat on my face in a posture of poverty of spirit and mournfulness for my wrongdoing, becoming fully cognizant of my own wretchedness, coming fully to acknowledge my own … what was that old word again, the one that was moribund … oh yes …

sin
and with it
judgment condemnation damnation
Hell on earth and beyond
but also the possibility of grace, mercy, and forgiveness
to be both received
and given

and O, how I needed forgiveness
and to forgive;
and O, how I needed mercy
and to show *mercy;*
and O, how I needed grace,
and to give grace.

But try as I might, I just could not save myself.

Then, a still, small voice whispered to my heart,
"Come unto Me …"
and there in front of me
appeared a sure and steady
nail pierced hand
open
outstretched
reaching down
into the pit
into which I had
fallen,
beckoning

Come unto Me all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.[36]

A review of the study so far

In sum, the impetus for this qualitative study, this double testimonial narrative, was my own sense of inadequacy to teach following completion of a teacher preparation program. My reflection on that experience and conversations with others led me to perceive a lack, a gap, a need in teacher preparation, i.e., for a forum in which to dialogue about contemporary social issues in order that one might be better equipped for some of the challenges of teaching in contexts characterized by diversity. The inquiry began in earnest as I found myself in an instructional capacity in a teacher education context in which I decided to 'experiment' with response writing. As I got into it, I espied research potential in what I was doing as an instructor and I made a qualitative study of my own practice, which I then wrote up and presented at an academic conference.

It was my intent upon entering the Ph.D. program merely to shore up theoretically what I had already done. I was convinced that it would take no more than two years to do the Ph.D. After all, I had just completed a Masters Degree in only one year. But when I got into the doctoral work, I had a number of experiences that caused me to slow down and take a closer look at what I had thought was an open and shut case for implementing response-based teaching in teacher preparation courses. That is to say, I had a number of political 'consciousness raising' experiences and I found myself in the middle of my own crisis of conscience and confidence.

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[36] Matthew 11:29

Some might be tempted to conclude at this point that I then did nothing more than beat a hasty retreat into a comfortable (for me) religion that has all the pat answers for which I was so desperately seeking. But that is not the case, not at all. The spiritual conscientization I experienced was anything but comfortable for me. It resulted in all kinds of upheaval, both personal and professional. I will have more to say about that in Chapter four. For now, allow me to explain the process by which I came to this conclusion about sin 'in this day and age' by way of explicating some of the methodological twists and turns of this longitudinal qualitative study which I have chosen to call a double testimonial narrative inquiry.

Chapter 3

Methodology

My purposes in this chapter are threefold. First, it is my aim to locate this qualitative study within the larger field of qualitative research in education. Second, I shall discuss some of the challenges with which I was confronted as I attempted to classify this study. Third, I shall explicate the particular methodology, that is testimonial narrative inquiry, upon which I finally settled.

Contextualizing the study: The field of qualitative inquiry in education

> ... the field needs to become more reflective about practice and to develop a more deeply democratic discourse for research, one grounded in principles of academic freedom and supported by the conviction that diversity engenders strength. (Miller et al., 1998).

Qualitative researchers have for years had to justify their work in a context that has been dominated by a positivistic mindset (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Lather, 2001),[37] as qualitative social science researchers pursued legitimacy as a "science". Even today, the debates rage on. One well-known and highly regarded qualitative researcher has boldly gone so far as to proclaim, "I don't need validity" (Denzin, 1994). Such a claim is heresy to those who persist in their positivism. However, sufficient ground has been gained in the field of educational research by qualitative researchers to open up spaces for "experimental," "multimethod" studies (Greene, 2001),[38] studies like this one.

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[37] See also Ellis & Bochner (2000); Gergen & Gergen (2000); Lincoln & Guba (2000); Miller et. al. (1998); and Smith & Deemer (2000).
[38] See also Beverley (2000); Ellis (1997); Ellis & Bochner (2000); Lather (2001); and Tierney (2000).

Miller et al. (1998) write,

> The field of educational research has expanded rapidly over the past few decades. There has been an opening up of research traditions, an increased inclusivity both philosophically and methodologically to new ways of knowing and thinking about teaching and learning and about the contexts in which they occur. No longer is knowledge production shaped only by a single set of assumptions which rely on analysis of known variables and their probable relationships. ... a new generation of researchers has discovered holistic and emergent research designs, emic points of view, decentred perspectives, and interpretive analyses ... allowing a broader range of insights to inform the field.

Under the umbrella term "qualitative research," many scholars[39] advocate for a variety of forms of reflexive inquiry, from the autobiographical, to the autoethnographic; to evocative narrative, to phenomenological, to *testimonio*, to name but a few. Yet although there has been an opening up within the field of educational research for "multiple methodologies and research practices" which have no theory or paradigm that is distinctly their own (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 3), "challenges and resistance to qualitative research" remain in both academic and professional contexts.

One of the challenges to this work is that it is generally too "subjective." Allow me to suggest, however, as others have,[40] that to some extent all research reports, even those of the so-called "hard scientists," are in some measure subjective, in that they bear witness to what the socially and historically situated researcher(s) have first believed and then asked, selectively attended to, observed, recorded, compiled, coded, analyzed, interpreted, and concluded from within their socio-cultural context and particular research paradigm or mindset. And, most often, neither the paradigms, nor the context within which they were taken up have been acknowledged, exposed, and interrogated as

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[39] Beverley (2000); Ellis (1997; 2000); Ellis & Bochner (2000); Greene (2001); Lather (1991; 2001); and Tierney (2000), among others.
[40] Bochner (1994); Ellis (1997; 2000); Lincoln & Guba (2000); and Lather (1991; 2001).

at least potentially problematic. That is, the researcher has historically managed (by various textual and justificatory strategies) to hide in the text of the report (Ellis, 1997; 2000).

Today, however, such practices are challenged, problematized, and called into question not only by those who have historically been "the gazees," those who have largely been marginalized and disenfranchised by such practices[41] and by the social policies to which such studies have given rise, but also by interpretivist researchers in the field of educational research.[42] Furthermore, a call has gone out for researchers to put themselves on the line, to acknowledge, examine, and open up to question their backgrounds, beliefs, and foundational assumptions about reality, knowledge, and the route to knowledge. In part, this qualitative study, this testimonial narrative inquiry, is a response to that call.

In this study, I make no attempt to hide myself in the text. Although the work is necessarily partial, in that it does not say everything there is to say and it says what it says from a particular perspective, it constitutes an honest attempt to represent both the political and spiritual journey that this teacher of teachers has been on.

Struggling with how to classify this inquiry: Shifting paradigms

When queried by my supervisor about the methodology of this qualitative inquiry I was initially stuck. How could this study be classified? Should it be? It did not seem to me to fit well into any of the typical placeholders, that is to say, categories that exist for qualitative educational research. Perhaps part of what makes this study so difficult to

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[41] See Anzaldua (1987); Banks (1998); Bannerji (1990; 1993); deCastell & Bryson (1997); hooks (1994); Kohl (1994); Johnson (1995); Said (1978; 1996); and Simon (1995).

[42] See Eisenhart (1995); Moss (1996); Popkewitz (1997); Smith (1997); and Miller et al. (1998).

classify is that it has taken place over such a long period of time and it is ongoing, although other longitudinal studies are not so difficult to classify. Perhaps it is more that until relatively recently, the foundations of the inquiry kept shifting.

In the beginning, I espoused a materialist ontology and a naïve realist epistemology (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). But as I was confronted with what seemed to me at the time to be convincing arguments from contemporary philosophers,[43] feminist and cultural studies writers;[44] and various education theorists,[45] whose works may loosely be classified as interpretivist,[46] I began to lose my confidence, my 'faith,' if you will, in those initial foundational assumptions. I 'found' that they just did not hold.[47]

Influenced by what I was reading at the time, by the socio-cultural context within which I was living and studying, and by my own lived experiences of that context, I turned to embrace what might be classified as an historical realist ontology[48]

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[43] Including Cornell (1992); Davis (1996); Derrida (1978; 1998); Foucault (1965; 1972; 1977; 1978; 1980; 1988a; 1988b); Lechte (1994); Levinas (1987; 1996); Lingis (1994); Lyotard (1994); McEwan (1992); Norris (1996); Rorty (1980); Solomon & Higgins (1996); and Spivak (1993a; 1993b; 1998).

[44] Including Bannerji (1993); deCastell & Bryson (1997); Fine (1994); Franklin (1992); Freire (1970); Fuss (1989); Gallop (1995); Henry (1997); Hoodfar (1997); hooks (1994); Kitzinger (1987); Lather (1991; 1992; 1998a; 1998b; 2001); Lorde (1984); Ralston-Saul (1995); Said (1978; 1996); and Smith (1987).

[45] Including deCastell (1996); Ellsworth (1992; 1997); Gore (1993); Kohl (1994); Lewis (1992); Luke & Gore (1992); McCarthy (1993); McDermott (1993); Orner (1992); Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman (1995); Roman (1993); Roman & Stanley (1997); Simon (1995); Sumara (1996); and Usher & Edwards (1994).

[46] Howe (2001) divides the "interpretivists" into two 'workable' but admittedly problematic broad categories, the "postmodernists," who seem to answer "yes," or at least seem to have no grounds for answering "no" to the following questions: "Is knowledge ... merely a cultural-historical artifact? Is it merely a collection of moral and political values? Does it merely serve certain interests and purposes? And the "transformationists," i.e., "pragmatists, critical theorists, and (certain) feminists" (p. 202).

[47] Just as an aside, one of the things I found attractive in the writings of the postmodernists (after I got over my own initial defensiveness) was their readily apparent concern, compassion, and heart for 'the downtrodden,' 'the disadvantaged,' 'the marginalised,' 'the disenfranchised,' 'the poor,' and their professed commitment to working for the betterment of society, even at tremendous cost to themselves in terms of money, time, energy, resources, reputation, and so on. I agreed with their stance, that knowledge has implications for the knower. I still do. I shall have more to say about this later on.

[48] I.e., "virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values crystallized over time" (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p. 168).

and a transactional/subjectivist epistemology.[49] I set about the task of writing from that position.[50] Unbeknownst to me at the time, I had not yet come to rest on the final set of presuppositions upon which the balance of this inquiry would be based. There was one more 'paradigm shift' in store.

Just as I had lost confidence in the initial foundational assumptions that I espoused, I began to lose my confidence, my 'faith' in postmodernism and the secular materialism upon which it is predicated. Readers of this dissertation should know that it has not been an easy road, laying down the vestiges of my old faith in secular materialism. Old mind-sets die hard. In addition to being raised up in a home that valued Christian principles and attending a Roman Catholic elementary school from kindergarten to grade eight, I was also deeply steeped in and influenced by secular materialism since birth. It was the socio-cultural air that I breathed. I was both directly and indirectly influenced by the largely secular materialist socio-cultural milieu within which I had 'grown up,' by the secular materialist theories and practices of Modern schooling to which I had been subjected, and by the myriad and various secular materialist cultural products – texts (fiction and non-fiction, poetry, prose, drama, and etc.), films, television programs, music, *objets d'art*, and so on – to which I had been exposed during the course of my life. This worldview permeated virtually every avenue of my thinking.

Further, during the course of my college and university education prior to my doctoral studies I had been trained in the scientific method of inquiry. As an aspiring dental hygienist, I had been required to study the life sciences, especially biology, and,

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[49] "value-mediated findings" (p. 168).
[50] That is the position from which the two papers in Chapter 2 were written.

having taken a minor in psychology and completed a Master's degree in education

psychology, I was required to study the social sciences, and had been trained in what

would most likely be called a logical positivist research paradigm. I learned very well to

formulate questions, set forth procedures of inquiry, follow the procedures, make

observations, record 'findings,' analyze those findings, and draw conclusions. As I

recall, at no time during these studies was I ever encouraged really to interrogate the

foundational assumptions of these disciplines of inquiry. Plenty of questions came to

mind, but there seemed to be no forum in which to dialogue with others about them. My

Masters course in research design, for example, required only that I read, comprehend,

and then apply certain principles and procedures.

As I have written in an earlier chapter, it took face-to-face and textually mediated

encounters with people from cultures other than my own to begin to erode my own

assumption of the inherent superiority of the predominant Modern Western world view

(instrumental rationality, and the Modern scientific model of inquiry, both of which are in

the main grounded in a secular-materialist ontology), to begin to reveal to me my

ignorance and arrogance, and to enable me to re-consider the possibility, for example,

that there might just be a spiritual dimension to reality.

So, the balance of this inquiry is predicated on the assumption that there is more

to reality than 'meets the eye.' But I do not mean here to refer either to ideals, or to

abstract principles or moral imperatives, e.g., about the good, justice, love, and so on, or

to something as esoteric as a 'sixth sense'. Rather, I am acknowledging that I believe

there is a spiritual dimension to reality, and that the whole-hearted study of and prayerful

meditation upon the Bible constitutes the means by which one comes to know God, oneself, and the principles governing that dimension of reality.

Struggling with how to classify this inquiry: The "problem" of faith

Some might ask at this juncture, are we not now in the realm of "faith"? I would have to say, yes. That is true. We are. Faith is involved here – faith that there is more to reality than 'meets the eye,' that the Bible is the Word of God, that Jesus is who the writers of the gospels and epistles testify that He is, the Living Word of God, the Word made flesh, the Word that was with God, and the Word that was God, and that He is who He, Himself, testifies that He is, that is, the Christ, the Messiah, the Living *Torah*, the living "teaching" (Heschel, 1976, p. 325).[51] For some, that will seem to be just too much for an "academic" undertaking such as a doctoral dissertation. After all faith is anathema to academic inquiry is it not?

Allow me to suggest that there is no inquiry that does not require a leap of faith, at least in terms of the first principles the inquirer espouses. Newbigin (1989) writes,

> Every kind of systematic thought has to begin from some starting point. It has to begin by taking some things for granted. In every domain of thought it is always possible to question the starting point, to ask, "Why this rather than another?" or "What grounds are there for starting here?" It is obvious that this kind of questioning has no theoretical limit. One can go on questioning, but then one would never begin to form any clear conception of the truth. No coherent thought is possible without taking some things as given. It is not difficult to show, in respect of every branch of knowledge as it is taught in schools and colleges, that there are things taken for granted and not questioned, things which could be questioned. No coherent thought is possible without presuppositions. What is required for honest thinking is that one should be as explicit as possible about what

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[51] Heschel (1976) writes, "the translators of the Septuagint committed a fatal and momentous error when, for lack of a Greek equivalent, they rendered Torah with *nomos*, which means *law*, giving rise to a huge and chronic misconception of Judaism ... That the Jews considered Scripture as teaching is evidenced by the fact that in the Aramaic translations [the language of Jesus] Torah is rendered with *oraita* which can only mean teaching, never law" (p. 325).

these presuppositions are. The presupposition of all valid and coherent Christian thinking is that God has acted to reveal and effect his purpose for the world in the manner made known in the Bible. Of course it is open for anyone to ask, "Why choose this starting point rather than another – for example, the Qur'an, the Gita, or *Das Kapital*?" but then one has to ask the questioner about the assumptions from which he [or she] starts, and which perhaps have not been examined. (p. 8)

That is one of the things that makes this study unique. I did not at the outset of this study presuppose that God has acted to reveal and effect His[52] purpose for the world in the manner made known in the Bible; rather, that is the disturbing conclusion I came to part way through the study.[53] My own journey to believing the Bible seems more akin to what Campolo (2000), a Bible believing sociologist, has written. When asked how he, a man of intellect, a man of his academic background, could take the Bible seriously in this day and age, he replied,

> Because I decided to! ... Many years ago, I considered the various options of truth that were available in the intellectual marketplace, and I made a decision to believe the Bible. Having made that decision, I spent the ensuing years constructing arguments and gathering information that would buttress my beliefs. But to be honest, I believed first. All my thinking and all my philosophizing and theologizing since then has been designed to support my *a priori* faith commitment. (p. 77)

Only, that does not quite capture it either. I did not sit down and consider the various options concerning truth that were available in the intellectual marketplace and make a decision to believe the Bible. I came to believe the Bible

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[52] I should note here that just as it has not been easy for me to lay down the vestiges of my faith in secular materialism, it did not come easy to me to accept God on God's own terms, as Father, as Husband, as He. But that is how He refers to Himself in His word, and I have come over time not only to accept that, but to embrace it. Neither did it come easy to me to accept that Jesus is *the only* way to God. Just as I wrestled in the early days of my relationship with Him about the issue of marriage and divorce (about which I will have more to say in the next chapter), I wrestled hard with Him about this issue. I did not want to take these Scriptures at face value. But in the end, God had His way, and today, I am thankful. I would never have known the closeness and communion I have with Him now had I not taken Him at His word and surrendered my beliefs.

[53] Nb it disturbed me then. It does not disturb me now. I shall have more to say about this in Chapter 4.

because the God of the Bible came and met me where I was when I cried out to Him in desperation. I came to believe the Bible when all of the other options of truth that were available in the intellectual marketplace proved to be nothing more than 'fictions functioning in regimes of truth.' But I am getting ahead of myself.

Marsden (1997) writes,

> ... the contemporary academy *on its own terms* [emphasis original] has no consistent grounds for rejecting all religious [i.e. faith-based] perspectives. If postmodernists who denounce scientific objectivism as an illusion are well accepted in the contemporary academy, there is little justification for the same academy to continue to suppress religious perspectives because they are unscientific. (p. 30)

Allow me to push the envelope one step further by suggesting that all scholarship requires a leap of faith – that the God of the Bible is, or that the God of the Bible is not; that the Bible is the Word of the God, or that it is not; that Jesus is who He says He is, or He is not. Either way, our inquiries, the questions we will and will not pose, the answers we will and will not seek, are ineluctably informed by whichever view we take. There is no not deciding. Heschel (1976) puts it this way,

> Did it ever happen that God disclosed His will to some men for the benefit of all men? It is not historical curiosity that excites our interest in the problem of revelation. ... In entering this discourse, we do not conjure up the shadow of an archaic phenomenon, but attempt to debate the question whether to believe that there is a voice in the world that pleads with us in the name of God. No one who has, at least once in his life, sensed the terrifying seriousness of human history or the earnestness of individual existence can afford to ignore that problem. He must decide, he must choose between yes and no. (pp. 167-168)

In other words, to say that 'the God question' is irrelevant to scholarship is already to have taken a leap of faith – that the God of the Bible is not. For if one were even merely to admit the possibility that He is, then surely the God question is relevant

to scholarship! And "scholarship might just as responsibly take place within the framework of the assumptions that God has created an ordered reality" (Marsden, 1997, p. 31) and has acted to reveal and effect His purpose for the world in the manner made known in the Bible (Newbigin, 1989) as within the framework of the assumptions that He has not.

Why does it make a difference to believe that God wrote the Bible? Stern (1998) writes,

> I would not give science the last word in determining truth, because I don't think faith should be relegated to a category of knowledge inferior to science. The philosophical underpinnings of the Western World are centered on two cities – Athens and Jerusalem. The Greeks developed philosophy in a rational manner, but largely at the expense of separating heart and head. Many psychological and spiritual ills stem from this separation (one can also speak of this separation as between body and soul). The Jews kept head and heart, body and soul, together, and the Bible reflects this unitary view of human nature. The head has its way of knowing, and the heart has its way of knowing, and neither should be ignored. If head and heart are connected, there is the possibility that what the Bible claims, seems and proves to be will move the heart to respond in faith. If one believes that in the Bible God is speaking, one will be much more likely to take seriously its promises ... and the result, I propose, will be a better life for oneself and the others one meets.

Having said all of that, let me return to the problem of classifying this study.

Struggling with how to classify this inquiry: What shall it be called?

To some degree, this qualitative inquiry could legitimately be called an empirical study, in that is guided by and grounded in experience. However, empiricism may be defined as "any view that bases our knowledge, or the materials from which it is constructed on experience *through the traditional five senses* [my emphasis]" (Honderich, 1995, p. 226). I am not too sure whether many would be willing to grant that the experiences I shall relate in the latter portion of this dissertation have their roots

in "the traditional five senses," although those senses have certainly been exercised. But so much of what I shall relate goes beyond the realm of the traditional five senses. Furthermore, on some accounts, empiricism has its roots in the belief that "all we can know about the world is what the world cares to tell us; [and] we must observe it neutrally and dispassionately, and any attempt on our part to mould or interfere with the process of receiving this information can only lead to distortion and arbitrary imagining" (p. 226). I most certainly do not agree with the idea that all we can know about the world is what the world cares to tell us (that is about itself), and I reject outright the possibility that any human being can take a neutral, dispassionate, and essentially uninvolved stance in any kind of inquiry. All human inquiry is situated.

Like many of the interpretivists, in addition to taking the position that all human inquiry is situated, I take the position that human knowers are implicated in the known; as we come to knowledge, we are obliged to formulate a response. As I have said, my encounters with the literature of the interpretivists contributed to the undermining of my confidence, my 'faith' in anything like positivistic science, that branch of science "committed to the possibility of objective, neutral inquiry and [the discovery there from of] universal truths" (Boler, 1999, p. xv). However, unlike the postmodernists, I do not eschew the possibility of universal truths. Indeed, I have come to espouse the now very unpopular "capital T" Truth. Still, for all of their disagreements, what the interpretivists and scientific objectivists have in common is that their inquiries generally begin with "purely naturalist assumptions" (Marsden, 1997). While this study may have begun with such assumptions, it does not end with them. And so, because of the first principles that I

have come to take on faith, this inquiry is not likely to be considered by many to be very 'scientific.' But then, it does not claim to be.

It does, however, seem to borrow techniques of observation and data collection, for example, thick descriptions and field notes (Carspecken, 1996); document (student work) analysis (Hodder, 1994); observations (Adler & Adler, 1994; Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994); informal interviews, and member checks (Lather, 1991) from the so-called "modern scientific paradigm of inquiry". But are these methods of inquiry unique to the realm of what is commonly thought of in the West as "science"? Are these not the very methods of inquiry utilised by a variety of ancient, so-called "primitive" peoples? Lingis (1994) points out that,

> Rational science is not distinguishable from the empirical knowledge of the great sedentary civilizations of India, China, the Mayas, the Incas, or from that of the nomads who have survived for centuries in their often harsh environments, by its content of observations. Claude Levi-Strauss, in *The Savage Mind*, showed that the Amazonian Americans had elaborated a representation of their environment that was rigorously empirical. Their procedures scrupulously distinguished effective knowledge from hearsay and approximation. Their identification of the species, properties, and uses of the natural substances and living things of their environment was often far more comprehensive than that now contained in the data of our botany, zoology, and pharmaceutical science. Their representations were equivalent to ours in the exigency for empirical rigor in observation and verification; its realization was limited only by the limits of the region to which they had cognitive access and by the technological limits of their tools for exploring and experimenting. Nor were their bodies of knowledge inferior to our botany, zoology, geology, meteorology, and astronomy in the intrinsic coherence and consistency of their patterns of organization. What the West calls science is not accumulations of observations but explanatory systems.

And are the above-described techniques of inquiry not the very methods of inquiring and reporting utilised also in the Bible? Consider that Luke, for instance, the writer of the

third book of the gospels and the Book of Acts was a physician and an historian. It has been said that,

> ... [t]he language and structure of Luke and Acts reflect a man of high literary ability, excellent education, and a Greek background and perspective. ... Although there were other works about Christ, Luke wanted to give an "orderly account" as a historian who was well informed and capable of offering a literary document and reflecting a reliable account as he secured it from eyewitnesses. (Amplified Bible, 1987, p. 1153)

Do his writings not suggest that he, too, reviewed the extant literature of his time, made observations, took extensive "field notes," conducted interviews, performed member checks and so on to compile his report? Consider the following passage of Scripture written by Luke.

> Dear Theophilos:
>
> Concerning the matters that have taken place among us, many people have undertaken to draw up accounts based on what was handed down to us by those who from the start were eyewitnesses and proclaimers of the message. Therefore, Your Excellency, since I have carefully investigated all these things from the beginning, it seemed good to me that I too should write you an accurate and ordered narrative, so that you might know how well-founded are the things about which you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4, CJB54)

It seems that many "researchers" from a variety of traditions are accustomed to thinking of certain methods of inquiry as belonging to a particular research paradigm, but if one looks around outside of that paradigm, one may be surprised to find that science has itself appropriated or borrowed (versus originated) certain methods and techniques of inquiry from other "disciplines" or eras of inquiry.

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[54] *Complete Jewish Bible, David Stern (Trans.), (1998).*

Coming back to the problem of how to classify this inquiry, it has occurred to me that since it deals with accounts of lived experiences, and also in that it "studies persons" (van Manen, 1997, p. 6) – not subjects or individuals,[55] it could be called a "hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry" (van Manen, 1997). According to van Manen (1997), hermeneutic phenomenology is distinguished from traditional, hypothesizing, or experimental research in terms of the kind of knowledge in which it is interested. While the knowledge in which traditional, hypothesizing, or experimental research is primarily interested is generalizable and true for one and all wherein "[a]ctions and interventions, like exercises, are seen as repeatable; while subjects and samples, like soldiers, are replaceable" (pp. 6-7), the knowledge in which phenomenology, in a broad sense, is interested is that which is essentially not replaceable (p. 7). It is a "philosophy or *theory of the unique*" (p. 7). In this sense, this study could be called a hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry.

Some might call it a phenomenological narrative, as it takes the form of a story composed around a collection of accounts of lived experiences or anecdotes. Contrary to some thinking within the social sciences, anecdotes and stories are valuable. A number of years ago, Goodson and Walker (1995), whose research is admittedly mostly of an applied nature, articulated a need to develop a parallel tradition (to the social science tradition *per se*),

> ... that does not concern itself solely with scientific study, but attempts to confront educational phenomena more directly; attempting, in Eisner's words "... to create, render, and disclose in such a way that the reader will be able to empathetically participate in the events described. (p. 187)

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[55] In making this distinction, van Manen (1997, p. 6) draws on W.H. Auden's comment that the term "individual" "is primarily a biological term to classify a tree, a horse, a man, a woman; while the term "person" refers to the uniqueness of each human being. "As persons, we are incomparable, unclassifiable, uncountable, irreplaceable" (Auden in Van Manen, 1997, p. 6).

One might say that with current trends in social science research in general, and teacher education in particular, just such a "tradition" is beginning to emerge. A brief glance at either the latest edition of the *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (2001), or the most recent edition of the *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2000) will show that social phenomena in general and educational phenomena in particular are being confronted more directly and in such a way that readers are able empathetically to participate in the events described.[56]

van Manen (1997) writes that the value of anecdotes and narrative inhere in that they may "penetrate the layers of meaning of the concrete by tilling and turning the soil of daily existence" (van Manen, 1997, p. 119), by laying bare formerly covered-over meanings. They may also "possess a certain pragmatic thrust" (p. 119), compelling a reader to investigate the relationship between life and theoretical propositions. At the methodological level, they may constitute roundabout or indirect reflections about fundamental human experiences such as friendship, love, suffering, and so on (van Manen, 1997). Such is the case with this study.

They may also "be encountered as concrete demonstrations of wisdom, sensitive insight, and proverbial truth" (p. 120), which enable readers of them to see what is possible and what is not possible in the world in which we live (van Manen, 1997), and/or they may take on the significance of "exemplary character." In other words, van Manen (1997) writes, "Because anecdote is concrete and taken from life ... it may be offered as an example or as a recommendation for acting or seeing things in a certain way" (p. 120), to enable the hearer to grasp a certain truth that might, for one reason or

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[56] For a fleshed out description of what might be meant by empathetic participation see Nussbaum (1995) *PoeticJustice.* For a critique of this view of empathy see Boler (1997), "The risks of empathy: Interrogating multiculturalism's gaze," and Boler (1999) *Feeling power.*

another, be difficult to convey. van Manen concludes his discourse on the merits of anecdote and story by saying that they operate in the tension between particularity and universality. These facets of anecdote are also true of this double testimonial narrative.

But again, anecdotes and stories, like some of the other the techniques of inquiry about which I have already spoken, are not unique to Modern and Post-modern phenomenological social science research about the social life-world. For instance, van Manen (1997) singles out Plato's dialogues to make this point, but he might just as easily have drawn upon anecdotes, stories, and parables from the Bible that serve many, if not all and more of the purposes cited by van Manen. I am reminded of one anecdote in particular, which would have antedated Plato – it is the story told to King David by Nathan the prophet as recorded in 2 Samuel: 12:1-7. Now here is a man who had a difficult truth to convey to the then King of Israel.

> And the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came and said to him, There were two men in a city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb which he had bought and brought up, and it grew up with him and his children. It ate of his own morsel, drank from his own cup, lay in his bosom, and was like a daughter to him. Now a traveler came to the rich man, and to avoid taking one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfaring man who had come to him, he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for his guest.
>
> Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, As the Lord lives, the man who has done this is a son (worthy) of death. He shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no pity.
>
> Then Nathan said to David, You are the man! (2 Sam. 12:1-7)

Save for the revelation of the Lord, Nathan would have had no knowledge of David's adultery with Bathsheba and his round about murder of her husband, Uriah the Hittite (by sending him into a highly volatile battlefield). Had Nathan just gone to David and accused him of the adultery and murder of which he was guilty, the then king (who had a history of having a hot temper)[57] might just have denied everything and ordered the prophet to be severed from his head. However, not recognising himself in the story initially, David pronounced sentence on the guilty party who was, in fact, himself. Nathan was now in a position to reveal to David that which had been revealed to him by God about David, and God, in turn, revealed to David (and to all who would read/hear the story afterward) something about Himself, that is to say, His mercy, His loving-kindness, and His faithfulness to His Word:

> And the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord! The Lord! A God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness and truth, keeping mercy and loving-kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but Who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children, to the third and fourth generation. (Ex. 33:4-6)

Whereas David was prepared to take the life of the man who had transgressed, the Lord in His mercy, as David acknowledged his sin and repented, spared David's physical life, continued on in relationship with him, and kept him in the office of head of state until a ripe old age.

Still, the story of David and Nathan reveals not only God's compassion and mercy, but also His justice. That is to say, David gets what he does not deserve: his life

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Cf. 1 Sam. 25.

is preserved; he continues in his office as head of state; Bathsheba's life is preserved and she becomes his wife; they have a son, Solomon; and the family continues to enjoy prosperity, position, status, and so on; and he does not get what he does deserve, namely, death. But in the story, the righteous and just Judge comes to the fore. How so? The king, blessed as he is by position, prosperity, a following, status, and the overall favour of God does not escape the just judgement of God when he dares to violate God's righteousness causing the whole nation to suffer. Even God's beloved servant experiences the rod of God's discipline when he perverts justice by committing adultery with Bathsheba and plotting the cold-blooded murder of her husband, Uriah. God does not keep silent. He speaks and acts in behalf of the one who has been unjustly treated.

A story such as this surely penetrates the layers of meaning of the concrete "by tilling and turning the soil of daily existence" and by laying bare formerly covered-over meanings. It also possesses "a certain pragmatic thrust." At the methodological level, it constitutes a roundabout or indirect reflection on fundamental human experiences such as friendship, love, suffering, justice, compassion, mercy, and so on. It also constitutes "a concrete demonstration of wisdom, sensitive insight, and proverbial truth" (van Manen, 1997, p. 120), which enables readers of it to see what is possible and what is not possible in the world in which we live and because this anecdote is concrete and taken from life, it may be taken as an example or as a recommendation for acting or seeing things in a certain way, to enable the hearer to grasp a certain truth that might, for one reason or another, be difficult to convey. These facets of anecdote are also true of this double testimonial narrative.

This study could also be described as a chronological, political and spiritual autobiography, as it comprises stories arranged chronologically which are drawn from my own lived experiences. But, some might ask, would an autobiographical narrative have any scholarly credibility? Allow me to suggest that it ought to on the grounds that there is no scholarship that is not autobiographical in some respect. Consider respectively what both Nietzsche and Foucault (who admitted on his death bed that all of his work had been "autobiographical" (Marcus, 1995)) have said concerning scholarship and autobiography.

> Gradually it has become clear to me what every great philosophy so far has been : namely, the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unnoticed memoir. (Nietzsche in Marcus p. 19) …the 'travesties' of theoretical innovations 'inevitably provoke a return to the work – *and* life – of the author.' (Foucault in Marcus, 1995, p. 19)

In other words, all theorising and philosophising, all inquiry, is to some degree autobiographical in that it reveals at least as much of the interests, values, beliefs, and character of the researcher as of the researched.

Even 'pure' science is autobiographical in that it reveals (while admittedly simultaneously concealing) something of the life histories, the interests, the perceptual 'bents' of the inquirers. For example, what kinds of questions are they (not) asking? What are the kinds of things to which they do (not) selectively attend in their research? What are the theoretical frames they use (or do not use) in order to interpret their 'findings'?

Furthermore, although many scientists (and philosophers) desire and attempt to distance their work from "the commonplace," which is to say, from "story" and

"folklore,"[58] there is no inquiry, scientific or otherwise, which is not founded on a narrative of some description. Lyotard points out that although the scientist classifies narrative knowledge,

> as belonging to a different mentality: savage, primitive, underdeveloped, backward, alienated, composed of opinions, customs, authority, prejudice, ignorance, ideology ... fables, myths, legends, fit only for women and children (Lyotard, 1984, p. 27 in Usher and Edwards, 1994, p. 158),

even the 'pure' sciences, the hard sciences, are founded on ,

> a metanarrative, metadiscourse, or grand narrative, which seeks to legitimise science as a form of knowledge privileged over other forms of knowledge.[59] Modern science is therefore in the paradoxical position that 'it cannot know and make known that it is true knowledge without resorting to the other, narrative, kind of knowledge which, from its [science's] point of view is no knowledge at all.' (PMC,60 29 in Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 158)

In other words, Lyotard draws our attention to the ultimate reflexive paradox of modern science, that is, that it relies on a form of story to legitimise itself, which, "given its own discourse, it must reject as a valid, truthful form of utterance" (Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 160)?

Getting back to the question about classifying this inquiry as "autobiographical," I have to ask myself, would 'autobiographical narrative' be an adequately representative term? It seems to me that it would not, because ultimately, the inquiry is not so much about me, as it is about the One with whom I am in relationship. It is about Who He has revealed and is revealing Himself to be in His Living Word, and what He has done and

[58] I have discussed this a little bit in my unfolding of Kitzinger's argument concerning social scientific inquiry. See chapter 1)
[59] I.e. including revelation
[60] The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge (Lyotard, 1984)

is doing in my life. For me, it could be considered a form of autobiography as Life (bio) writing (graphy) itself (auto).

This inquiry might be described as postmodern in some respects, in that inherently, it resists a neat and tidy classification. Still, there would be those who would suggest that it could not be considered 'postmodern' at all, in that it embraces neither the Nietzschean claim that 'God is dead', nor the various contemporary post-humanist, secular, materialist explanations of human behaviour, relationships, psychology, society, culture, discourse, and origins, nor the relativism which is said to characterise postmodernism. As I have already said, its Truth is capital-lettered.

Let me submit that it is fundamentally a relational, conversational or dialogic inquiry, one that involves whole-hearted, careful reading, listening, witness bearing, and testifying, not only with words but with my very life. I find what Lingis writes (1994) useful here by way of explanation. He suggests,

> [t]o enter into conversation with another is to lay down one's arms and one's defenses; to throw open the gates of one's own positions; to expose oneself to the other, the outsider; and to lay oneself open to surprises, contestation, and inculpation. It is to risk what one found or produced in common. To enter into conversation is to struggle against the noise, the interference, and the vested interests, the big brothers and the little Hitlers." (87-89)

That is what is at the heart of this inquiry, the adoption of a posture of receptivity, of laying myself open to surprises, contestation, and inculpation, risking what I had formerly found or produced in common, and struggling against the noise, the interference, and the vested interests, the 'big brothers' and the 'little Hitlers' who would try to detract from or twist either the stories of those who have historically been marginalised and oppressed, or the revelatory message being spoken to my spirit by the

Living Word of God. This brings me to the third purpose of this chapter, to explicate the methodology, testimonial narrative inquiry, upon which I finally settled.

Explicating my methodology: A double testimonial narrative inquiry

As I have indicated there are two parts to this study, the first of which involved what one might call a political conscientization. The second involved what one might call a spiritual conscientization. The first texts I read testimonially were the texts of historically marginalized and disenfranchised "others," and it was this reading that brought me to awareness of myself as a sinner in need of mercy, forgiveness, and grace. Like David in the anecdote related above, I became enraged about transgressions committed against others, about the prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory practices that are so deeply entrenched not only in the hearts and minds of white individuals of Anglo-European ancestry, but also in the very systems of thought, language, and law which our ancestors have instantiated and which have become predominant in the world.

As I continued reading and raging, I could not escape the fact that I was one of 'them,' one of the oppressors. In other words, I was brought to a place of identification with 'the sins,' for lack of a better word, of both my ancestors and my contemporaries. Not surprisingly, then, the next texts that I read testimonially were a wide variety of passages from what is commonly referred to as the Bible, and it was in reading these texts testimonially that I discovered that this word is truly a living word and a life giving word, a word that impacts like no other.[61] This is why, for academic purposes, I have decided to characterise this inquiry methodologically as a double study in

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[61] I shall elaborate on this more in the chapters that follow.

testimonial reading, the first part of which resulted in a political conscientization which, although it held out the promise of liberation, empowerment, freedom from oppression, in the end, failed to deliver, and the second part of which resulted in a kind of deliverance from oppression, a liberation and empowerment that I could not have imagined, and which I most certainly would not have even believed possible, had I not experienced it for myself.

Why "testimonial reading"?

In Chapter one, I describe my preliminary work on this thesis and I mention that when I had begun to engage in the practice of response-based pedagogy some years ago, I found myself ensconced in a setting and decided to make a study of it. Likewise, after I had completed my 'intensive program of reading' and had become engaged in the prayerful study of and meditation upon the Scriptures of the Holy Bible, the name of a reading and listening practice about which I had read some time before was brought to my remembrance, "testimonial reading" (Boler, 1997), and it occurred to me that this practice aptly described what I had been up to long before I even realized that that is what I had been doing.

I first read about this approach to reading while I was immersed in the discourses of postmodernism, post-structuralism, cultural studies, gender studies, multiculturalism, antiracism, and socio-cultural theories of learning and disability between 1998 and the year 2000. During that period of study, I came across an article by Megan Boler (1997) entitled, "The risks of empathy: Interrogating multiculturalism's gaze." In this article, Boler (1997) examines and problematizes the idea of empathy as constituting the foundation for democracy and social change.

Specifically, Boler's (1997) article is a critique of Nussbaum's (1995) idea of 'poetic justice' which posits that it is possible imaginatively to put oneself in the shoes of another, especially a fairly distant other, to experience vicariously (by hearing, reading, and/or viewing an account of) another's lived experience, that it is possible to fully identify with another, especially his or her suffering. Boler's (1997) primary concern is with what she calls "passive empathy," a too easy identification with a fairly distant other, with someone whose way of being and background differs radically from one's own.

Boler's (1997) astute article begins with a quote from Susan Griffin. "How old is the habit of denial?" Griffin asks in *A chorus of stones.* "We keep secrets from ourselves that all along we know," she says. Griffin uses the example of people believing lies about the bombing of Dresden, that it was done to destroy strategic railway lines. And she notes, "There were no railway lines in that part of the city" (Griffin in Boler, 1997, p. 253). In other words, she asks how it could be that people did not see. How could people, "those people" in Dresden, not have known what was really going on?

Since having begun this study, I have come to ask myself some of the same kinds of questions in both a political and spiritual context. For example, how could I not have seen my own complicity (as a white, English speaking person) in the oppression of people who were different from me? How could I not have known how privileged I was? How could I not have known I was, myself, oppressed in some respects (as a female in a male dominated society)? How could I not have known about the blight of Apartheid in South Africa (or cared about it, save for how it affected my rights as a consumer)? How

could I have thought of myself as being a "good person," when I was so patently self-centred, puffed up, and ambitious?

In the article, Boler (1997) goes on to give a synopsis of some of the current scholarship that is being produced concerning empathy as a "bridge between differences," the affective impetus for engaging in dialogue with the other. Critiquing Nussbaum's (1995) *Poetic Justice*, Boler (1997) claims that the reading practices to which empathy, specifically passive empathy, may give rise do not adequately (if at all) challenge the reader's foundational assumptions about the way things are. Boler (1997) states that she understands her role as an educator to be, "to teach critical thinking that seeks to transform consciousness in such a way that a Holocaust could never happen again" (p. 255). That is a noble and worthy aim to pursue, to be sure. But is "critical" thinking what is needed?

Is there any other kind of thought/thinking that could radically transform consciousness in such a way that a Holocaust, or other similar large or small scale atrocity, such as Apartheid in South Africa, or the Viet Nam War, or the Rwanda genocide, or September 11, or the farming out of First Nations children to residential schools in Canada, or the Crusades, or the Spanish Inquisition, or a Mount Cachel scandal,[62] or a Matthew Shepherd,[63] or a Reena Virk,[64] or a Columbine, or a Taber, Alberta[65] could never happen again? What about the 30,000 plus children starving to death in the world every day? Is it just a matter of thinking differently? Or does it go deeper than that? Like Palmer, Heschel (1966) calls us to 'sound the depths.' He writes,

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[62] I.e., the sexual abuse of little boys in a Roman Catholic orphanage.
[63] The young man who was pistol whipped, tied to a fence and left to die because of his sexual orientation.
[64] The young woman who was viciously swarmed by a group of youths, beaten, and drowned in Victoria, British Columbia.
[65] Where Jason Lang was gunned down in the hallway of the community high school.

What is needed is *defense in depth*, in the depth of every person. For the holocausts are caused not only by atomic explosions. Holocausts are caused wherever a person is put to shame. *Daily* living is brinkmanship. (p. 43)

In her article, Boler (1997) begins to unfold a set of reading practices which she calls "testimonial reading," and which she offers as an alternative to practices of "passive empathy." Reading practices, Boler (1997) points out, have as much to do with the disposition that the reader adopts while she or he encounters the text (spoken, written, or visual) of another, as with any kind of activities of interpretation she or he is to perform. However, this kind of reading which Boler describes as "testimonial" is not unlike the kind of reading the ancients must have undertaken as they read the texts of Scripture. It is surely like the kind of reading practice Kierkegaard indicates when he writes,

> What is required in order to look at oneself with true blessing in the mirror of the Word? The first requirement is that you do not look at the mirror in order to inspect it, but that you look at yourself in the mirror ... If there were only a single passage in the Bible which you understood – well, that is your first concern. You need not sit down and ponder over the obscure passages. God's Word is given in order that you may act according to it, not in order that you may practice the interpretation of what you find obscure ... The second requirement is that, in order to see yourself in the mirror when you read God's Word, you must remember to be constantly saying to yourself, "It is speaking to me; I am the one it is talking about ... If God's Word is only a doctrine to you, it is no mirror. It is just as impossible to be mirrored in a doctrine as in a wall. ... No, when you read God's Word, you must constantly be saying to yourself, "It is talking to me, and about me." Finally, if you desire to observe yourself in the mirror of the Word with real blessing, you must not at once begin to forget how you looked. You must not be the forgetful hearer (or reader) of whom the apostle says that he carefully looked at his own face in a mirror and straightway forgot what manner of man he was ... The right thing to do is to say to yourself at once, "I shall begin now to prevent myself from forgetting. Now, this very moment, I make this promise to myself and to God, even if it be but for the next hour or for today. For that length of time, it shall be certain that I do not forget. (NIV *Classics Devotional Bible*, p. 1451)

In other words, I am the sinner, I am the oppressor to whom the text addresses itself. Testimonial reading requires that the reader acknowledge both the capacity for and the realized "wickedness" in his or her own life.

Some of the concerns regarding the posture of 'passive empathy' that Boler (1997) identifies are as follows. First, it is more a story and projection of oneself than an understanding of the other, and it is rooted in the fear that the same thing could happen to 'me' (p. 252). Second, Boler (1997) points out that the reader is positioned unproblematically as judge, and is invited to evaluate the other's experience "as 'serious or trivial,' and as 'your fault/not your fault.' The other's 'serious' suffering is 'rewarded' by the reader's pity, if not blamed on the sufferer's own actions" (p. 257). But how is any reader, how am I, how are you as a reader to judge such things?

Who are we to take up such a position? Are we in the place of God? What qualifies us to make judgments about others? Yet we do it daily, habitually, whether or not we mean to, whether or not we realize it. I even find myself denying that I do it at all, claiming in one breath that I am not judgmental, and then in the next breath, I am enabled to hear myself criticizing, condemning, or accusing someone, my husband, my children, my loved ones, my 'enemies' (to their face, or behind their back, or just in my own thoughts) of some terrible thing in my estimation or according to the particular moral or ethical code or set of 'objective' standards which I happen to espouse.[66]

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[66] On one level, I share the lack of faith in people that Boler expresses about judging what is *really* happening in a given situation, or to judge what is necessary for someone else to flourish. (I even question sometimes my own fitness to judge what is necessary for me to flourish!). Still, there remains in me to be rooted out a faith in myself and in others so to do, else I would not do the very thing I profess to hate, that is, to pass and pronounce judgement of one form or another on any other as though I were in a position so to do. In what, I wonder, is this faith in self rooted?

On Boler's account, according to Nussbaum, the identification that occurs with compassion allows one to judge what others need in order to flourish. Boler (1997), on the other hand, expresses "significantly less faith in our capacity to judge what is 'really happening' to others," and she concludes, "To judge what 'others need in order to flourish' is an exceptionally complicated proposition not easily assumed in our cultures of difference" (p. 258). I concur.[67] Boler's chief criticism is that "passive empathy produces no action toward justice[68] but situates the powerful Western eye/I as the judging subject, never called upon to cast [his or] her own gaze at [his or] her own reflection" (p. 259). Passive empathy it allows the reader to walk away from the scene without ever having to consider what kind of man or woman she or he is.

Another risk of what Boler calls "passive empathy" is that while the text may allow a reader a sense of gripping and relatively 'easy' reading [the reader does not feel bombarded, overwhelmed, angry, guilty, and so on following the textual encounter with the other], it also allows for an abdication of responsibility,

> The reader does not have to identify with the oppressors. ... What does it mean, to experience a pleasurable read and be spared the emotions of rage, blame, and guilt [when reading about the horrors of the Holocaust and other atrocities] ? In what ways is passive empathy related to the dehumanizing strategies used to justify and represent war? (p. 260)

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[67] For my own part, only God knows what is really happening to any of us, and only He is in a position to judge what each individual needs to flourish. Only He who is perfectly holy, perfectly righteous is fit to judge people, their conduct, their hearts. He is the only One who knows all that needs to be known about each person. If only I could walk in the truth of this daily – it would revolutionize my relationships with others.

[68] It is interesting to listen to conversations these days. Everyone seems to want justice. But nobody seems to want mercy. I wonder, is it because we (who call for justice) imagine ourselves not to be in need of mercy? Yet, do we not also commit offences against others? What is it that allows us in one breath to gloss over our own 'little' offences or the offences of someone we love, or the offences of some group with whom we identify, and in the next breath, call down fire from heaven on an individual or group of individuals for an offence committed against us or someone we love or with whom we identify?

In other words, it allows him or her to leave the scene with no sense of obligation to bear witness, to do anything about what she or he has seen and/or heard. Taking up a position as reader like that which Lingis (1994) describes, laying down one's arms and one's defenses, throwing open the gates of one's positions, exposing oneself to the other, the outsider, laying oneself open to surprises, contestation, and inculpation, risking what one found or produced in common, calls one to account by calling one into relationship with the other whereby one becomes obligated to say or do something in response to what she or he has seen and/or heard. On Boler's (1997) account, change consists in acknowledging one's responsibility, "recognizing oneself as implicated in the social forces that create the climate of obstacles the other[i] must confront" (p. 263) and doing 'one's own work' which, at the very least, involves throwing open the gates of one's own assumptions and world views to question.

But then what? What does one do with this tremendous burden of responsibility? It is a terrible thing to come to the realization that you are indeed both implicated in the marginalization and disenfranchisement of others, and caught in a net of power relations from which there seems to be no way out. What is one to do? If the old worldviews prove problematic or false, with what "new" views are they to be replaced? And where is one to look for a model? To whom might one turn in order to un/learn how to be differently in the world? And to whom might one look for encouragement throughout this lifelong, uphill battle against the very forces which are now constitutive of one's 'character,' 'nature,' 'person,' 'self?'

In contrast to passive empathy, Boler puts forward the practice of testimonial reading which requires a commitment to rethink one's assumptions about life, oneself,

others, the world, events, and so on; a commitment to confront inner obstacles (mind-

sets, patterns of emotional reactions, speech habits, and so on) which surface as one's

views are challenged; and a commitment "to recognize oneself as implicated in the forces

that create the climate of obstacles the other must confront" (Boler, 1997, p. 263).

What is the purpose of "testimony"? How does it function?

> Testimony exceeds the facts, challenges legal and historical claims to truth, and challenges the call for 'just the facts.' It is called for in the legal context, "when the facts upon which justice must pronounce its verdict are not clear, when historical accuracy is in doubt, and when both the truth and its supporting elements of evidence are called into question" (Felman & Laub in Boler, 1997, p. 263). It does not offer a completed statement, a totalizable account. Rather, "to testify – to vow to tell, to promise and produce one's own speech as material evidence for truth (i.e. justified belief) – is to accomplish a speech act. (Felman & Laub in Boler, 1997, p. 264)

Testimony is an attempt to represent 'events in excess of our frame of reference,'

events 'unimaginable.' It calls for the listener/reader's responsibility, for the

listener/reader becomes a participant in, co-owner of, and witness to the event referred to

in the testimony, and a response is called forth. The listener/reader "comes to feel the

bewilderment, injury, confusion, dread, and conflicts" (p. 265)[69] to which the other bears

witness. In the case of empathy, the reader/listener comes to the place of recognition that

s/he is as vulnerable as the speaker, and that s/he, too, is a separate human being who will

experience hazards and struggles of his or her own; however, Boler (1997) points out,

unlike passive empathy, the listener or reader does not fully identify with, or become the

victim. She or he "preserves his [or her] own separate place, position, and perspective; a

battleground for forces raging in him [or her]self, to which [she or] he has to pay

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[69] Or hope, joy, love, unimaginable peace

attention … to properly carry out [his or] her task" (Felman & Laub in Boler, 1997, p. 265), the task being to formulate a response.

In order for this response to be "properly formulated," according to Boler (1997), the testimonial reader/listener must attend as much to him- or herself as to the other, "not in terms of 'fears for one's own vulnerabilities,' but rather in terms of the affective [and cognitive] obstacles that prevent the reader's acute attention to the power relations [forces] guiding [his or] her own responses and judgments" (p. 265). Boler (1997) uses the example of a reader responding to a text with irritation. That irritation can then become a justification for dismissing the text and its author, or it can become "a site for interrogation of how the text challenges my investments in familiar cultural values" (p. 267). I might ask myself, "Why am I responding in this way to this account? What is there in me, in my background (what inner obstacles to right relationship with the other) are being surfaced here?" And Boler (1997) asks, "Might irritation … indicate the reader's desire to avoid confronting the articulated pain?" (p. 265).

The list of 'affective defenses' which Boler (1997) cites[70] brings to mind my own experiences of bearing witness to the suffering of historically marginalized and disenfranchised others during the earlier period of my political 'conscientization' that began to take place during my B.Ed. and M.Ed. years, and that continued through my sessional instructorship prior to beginning doctoral studies, and my first year in the PhD program. Interestingly, this list of 'affective defenses' also brings to mind my own experiences of bearing witness to the suffering of Jesus as I continued in my meditation on passages from the Bible.

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[70] "[A] 'paralysis' from 'fear of merger with the atrocities being recounted,' 'anger unwittingly directed at the narrator' [and at the person requiring that the narrative be read], 'a sense of total withdrawal and numbness;' and 'an obsession with fact-finding'" (pp. 265-266).

It took some time before my "irritation" at various passages in Scripture became a site for interrogation of how the text was challenging my investments in familiar cultural values and mindsets. Initially, that "irritation" was a justification for dismissing the text and its Author. I was reluctant to ask myself, "Why am I responding in this way to this account? What is there in me, in my background (what inner obstacles to right relationship with the other) are being surfaced here? Might this irritation indicate a desire on my part to avoid confronting the articulated pain, that is, of my sinfulness that made the death of Jesus necessary for me to have peace with God? What crisis of truth does this text speak to, and what mass of contradictions and struggles do I become as a result?

Boler (1997) goes on to say that testimony "resonates with poststructuralist crises of truth" (p. 266), in that it causes us to encounter "strangeness." Passive empathy, Boler (1997) writes, does not engage readers/listeners in an encounter with strangeness, with the uncanny, does not challenge what one thinks or feels one knows. Rather, readers experience an untroubled identification that does not "create estrangement or unfamiliarity" (p. 266), a necessary step in coming into right relationship or communion with another. Rather, she writes, passive empathy allows one the illusion of familiarity, 'insight,' and 'clear imagination' of occurrences, "and, finally, a cathartic, innocent, and I would argue voyeuristic sense of closure" (p. 266). Put differently, it leaves one able to remain in his or her 'habit of denial,' only now, having been further deceived into believing that she or he has 'dealt with' that issue.

Testimonial reading, on the other hand, "leaves for the reader no hiding place in tact" (p. 266), all things are naked and open, so to speak. As one progressively moves into a more intimate relationship with (and knowledge of) the Other, one really comes to

know oneself. For when I read and listen testimonially, "I may imagine/feel the speaker's/ writer's anguish (as my own)," but I also recognize that I cannot know the other in full – only in part, as 'through a glass dimly'. That is, unlike passive empathy which tends to lead to premature closure, "[t]estimonial reading recognizes its own limits, obstacles, ignorances, and zones of numbness"(p. 266). Humility before the other (rather than the puffed-upness of presumed knowledge of the other) deepens over the course of testimonial reading.

Finally, Boler (1997) suggests, and I concur, that, "*all texts* [my emphasis] can potentially be read testimonially. To enquire about these reading tasks, we might ask what crisis of truth does this text speak to, and what mass of contradictions and struggles do I become as a result?" (p. 267). She asserts, and I agree, that testimonial reading is applicable across genres, from the novel (as Nussbaum (1995) recommends), to literature (as Felman (1992) writes), to the testimony of Holocaust survivors (as Laub (1992) suggests), and, I submit by way of this study, to the Bible. Do we dare to read the Scriptures in the same way that Boler (1997) recommends that we read the testimonies of others? Do we dare to conceive of the Holy Bible as "the Excess" and "the Unimaginable" representing "Himself" through the testimony of a variety of witnesses across history? Do we dare to dismiss the possibility that it may be just that? I am reminded again of Heschel's (1976) comment,

> ... it is not only a personal issue, but one that concerns the history of all men from the beginning of time to the end of days. No one who has, at least once in his life, sensed the terrifying seriousness of human history or the earnestness of individual existence can afford to ignore that problem [i.e., Did it ever happen that God disclosed His will to some men for the benefit of all men?]. He must decide, he must choose between yes and no. (p. 168).

Perhaps it is time, then, that we in academia took up the challenge, not only to read testimonially the accounts of "others," but also to read testimonially the text which claims to be the account of God's relationship with His creation and His people (instead of trying to make it make sense to us within our own limited frames of reference), and to ask as we read, what crisis of truth do these texts address themselves to, and what mass of contradictions and struggles do I become as I read them?

While Boler (1997) notes that testimonial reading and listening is risky for the readers/listeners in that it exposes them, renders them vulnerable, opens up to question what they think and feel they know, she does not address the risk that testimonial reading can become self-centred, self-indulgent, and narcissistic, leading to self-righteousness and a condescending attitude toward those who refuse, for whatever reasons, to adopt such a posture. There is only one text that I am aware of that has within it a built-in safeguard against this tendency toward self-exaltation and aggrandizement, and that is the Bible. In fact, it expressly forbids the exaltation of self. It requires that the reader acknowledge that the Absolutely Other, the LORD, is the agent of our transformation, to His and only His glory. He is the One who effects in us the transformation which we long for, and in the process of being transformed, as we yield to Him, to His ways, waiting on Him to change our hearts, He develops within us patience and love for others who are at different places in the process than we are. It also requires that the individual make the choice to think more highly of others than of oneself. Of course, this is much easier said than done …

In sum, testimonial reading is as much about the 'posture of the heart and mind of the reader' as it is about any particular kind of practice of interpretation. It requires of the

reader a disposition of humility, a "standing under" as Prakash (1999) writes. It requires

also vulnerability, and receptivity whether one is talking about responding testimonially

to the narratives of peoples who historically have been marginalized and disenfranchised,

or responding testimonially to the Word of God. Allow me to illustrate.

In the spring of 2000, several colleagues and I worked with the idea of testimonial

reading in a collaborative presentation we put together for the Canadian Society for the

Study of Education Conference in Edmonton. During this presentation, Chinnery spoke

of the disposition one must adopt, the posture one must assume, if one is to respond

testimonially to the existential other. Building on the work of Levinas, Chinnery spoke

of how such a response necessarily entails an openness, an attitude of receptivity, a frame

of heart and mind "that reveals itself as the activity of welcome: it is to say, "Here I am;

I am at your disposal" (Chinnery, 2000). In her explication of Levinas's conception of

radical passivity, which is grounded in Levinas's Judaism, Chinnery (2000) writes, "our

very subjectivity (that is, our very constitution as an individual I) is a function of an

existentially prior responsibility [i.e. relationship]. One becomes an "I" by being subject

to the Other, by being sensitive, being touched, affected, and potentially wounded by the

Other."

Just prior to our presentation at this conference, in an introductory philosophy of

education course I was team-teaching with a couple of colleagues, a student complained

bitterly in one of the writing assignments he submitted that the course was not helping

him to understand the various philosophies we were studying. Neither the text, nor the

teachers, nor the discussions, he wrote, were of any use to him. Much of what was

written in this student's assignment seemed to me, on first reading, like nothing more

than a spontaneous tirade borne out of frustrated expectations and self-will. What was more, his writings neither met the criteria we had set; nor did they match the contributions the student had made during weekly class discussions.

We had asked students to engage with the substance of the assigned readings, but this student proceeded instead to write at some length about his own likes and dislikes, as regarded both the textbook and our pedagogy. On his account, the textbook was 'too dry' and lifeless, and the class was not being taught the way it should be. The student wrote for pages about how he could and would do it better if he were teaching. Further, the student had not, as the assignment required, reflected on how his own expectations about classroom life, about learning, and about teaching were informing his experiences.

However, the contributions the student was making in class were generally insightful and seemingly reflective of a solid, if rudimentary, understanding of the readings. Also, the kinds of analyses to which the student subjected the texts during class discussions suggested that he did indeed understand some of the more subtle and complex aspects of the ideas and issues we had been discussing. Yet, he worried because when asked, he could not explain to the satisfaction of his friends the philosophies we were studying. In this student's view, we were clearly just not delivering the goods!

I received the criticism hard, and was preparing to articulate (at some length) our rationale for the choice of textbook we had made, and the pedagogy we employed. In other words, I was going to respond to his strongly expressed frustration with not only an equally strongly stated justification for our choice of textbook and for our instructional approach, but also an argument about how he, too, had a responsibility as a learner to

make every effort to make sense of the material, and then, if in difficulty, to approach us for assistance during our office hours. In short, I was going to defend myself.

It seemed to me that the student's remarks were both unfair and uncalled for, given both the amount of planning and work we had put into the course to date, and the efforts we had made weekly in class to make personal contact with students in order to bring to light any difficulties they might have been experiencing. To be perfectly frank, I was more than just a little "piqued" by what *I took* to be a hostile diatribe. Anticipating a similar response (and no small amount of sympathy!), I handed the student's writing assignment to one of my co-instructors, asking, "What do you think of this?!"

To my surprise, my colleague was utterly unaffected by what the student had written. I do not recall what she said in response, but I recall clearly the realization that dawned on me in that moment: what this student has written is not inherently offensive; rather, there is something inside of me, the reader, that is deeply offended by what this student has written. Since I had some time and the inclination so to do, I committed myself to search out what that something was. For something else had also come sharply into focus: despite all of our best attempts, this student was not being well served by the course, and while there was still time, I wanted to try, without disrupting an instructional approach that was working for the vast majority of the students, to address his concerns. I set his assignment aside, and began to do some digging.

Initially, it seemed that it was my inner sense of justice that had been offended. My colleagues and I had, after all, worked very hard, and we consistently went 'out of our way' to try to understand where our students were coming from, and to give them the benefit of the doubt. Having been an undergrad myself, I could certainly identify with

the pressures that mount up around mid-term, and the frustrations that come when things just don't seem to make sense. What irked me was the student's apparent lack of understanding. It seemed that the student could not, or would not understand our position as instructors: that we had not just one, but 51 students to whom we were responsible; that our lives, too, are fraught with schedules and deadlines; and that we had worked very hard on planning a course that would be interesting, relevant, and edifying.

But something deeper beckoned. I was troubled that my first response was not one of kindness and understanding, but one of frustration, anger, and self-defensiveness. A few days later, an episode of an old television show, M*A*S*H, came to mind. It was the episode in which the character Hawkeye Pierce (played by Alan Alda), a surgeon at a mobile army surgical hospital, obsesses about a patient who is not recovering from surgery as well as he might. Hawkeye is deeply troubled. He is an excellent surgeon and has a reputation for being so. He cares deeply for his patient, and wants him to recover. He realizes he may have 'missed something' when he was removing the shrapnel from the patient's bowel, but he cannot think of what he might have missed. He is stumped. He mopes around the hospital, complaining that he cannot find a peaceful spot in the unit where he can sit and think quietly, and he generally makes the lives of his colleagues and tent-mates miserable. Even those coming to offer help or suggestions are gruffly turned away.

Eventually, the unit commander comes along and challenges him, telling him basically that his desire for perfection and recognition is drastically out of proportion to, and in conflict with his genuine and heartfelt desire to heal the patient. Having been taken down a peg or two, shortly thereafter, Hawkeye awakens from a sound sleep

knowing what the problem is. He rouses the O. R. staff, re-operates successfully, and the patient recovers.

Upon reflection, I wondered, could *this* be the obstacle to my responding to this student from of a place of kindness and understanding? Could it be my own desire for perfection and recognition, i.e., the pride of my heart, that was so deeply offended? I returned to the student's writing. I re-read it. I re-re-read it. Remarkably, there was no reaction. The text had not changed. The vitriolic words of 'the diatribe' were still there. The student's 'disgruntlement' was still readily apparent. But something had changed. Something had changed inside of me. And my response had also changed, dramatically. With the dross of pridefulness and its close companion, self-defensiveness, identified, I was en-abled to perceive the suffering that was so readily apparent in the student's work, and to respond in a way that I could not do before, that is, in a way that came closer to the ideal of "Here I am."

Waterstone (2000), elaborating on Boler's (1997) concept, extended this notion of witness bearing to the realm of oral discourse. She writes that testimonial listening bears witness to something. This witness bearing is distinguished from spectating by both Boler (1997) and Waterstone (2000), in that the latter is characterized by the maintenance of a safe distance, and by seeking closure or certain knowledge of the other; whereas, witnessing "is a dynamic process characterized by openness and uncertainty. Witnessing entails vulnerability" (Waterstone, 2000) – it is to 'lay down one's arms and defenses' (Lingis, 1994), and to allow the word to permeate and penetrate one's very soul.[71]

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[71] The story of David and Nathan is a Biblical example of how the Word of God can penetrate and permeate the soul.

Like Boler's testimonial reading, Waterstone's notion of testimonial listening places responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the listener, that is, to acknowledge [his or] her complicity in the "forces that create the climate of obstacles which the other must confront." *Testimonial reading and listening constitute part of an endeavor to see differently, as distinct from an attempt to make the other (the existential other, the historically marginalized 'other,' or the Absolutely Other) familiar and non-threatening.* It involves becoming aware of our own selective (in)attention, allowing ourselves to reflect upon such questions as, "When do I find it easy to attend, and when do I find it difficult? What present attitudes and investments obstruct or deflect my attention?" It involves a rethinking of our own assumptions, and a confrontation of the inner obstacles that may surface when we encounter the Other. As such, it requires a willingness to get out of our comfort zones, to move beyond the familiar and what it is we think that we know, whether it be about another person, or about the God of the Bible.

Chapter three: A review

Having struggled to 'classify' this study according to conventional methodological systems of classification, which, as I have said, was very difficult, it occurred to me that the methodology of this study has been all along something which bears a striking resemblance to "testimonial reading" and "testimonial listening" as described respectively by Boler (1997) and Waterstone (2000). Further, it bears a remarkable resemblance to the very reading practice in which I engaged as a student, and which I required of my students while I was teaching. In other words, I had not set out in a premeditated way to undertake this kind of a study. It only became apparent to me en train what had been happening.

As a student, I had engaged in the practice of attending to the questions and concerns which arose while I was reading texts that were required as part of my program of studies and problematizing my own frames of reference. Later on, I engaged students in a similar practice, requiring them to attend to the frameworks of understanding through which they were viewing the texts they were required to read and to allow those frames to be challenged. Then, following my return to the student side of the desk, I once again engaged in the practice myself, as I began to 'hear' the scholarship I was reading to my own life. That is to say, rather than position myself unproblematically as analyst, critic, or judge of the words, narratives, discourses, and otherwise context-dependent self-expressions of others, especially those who historically have been marginalized and disenfranchised, I 'stood under' them, allowing myself to be touched, affected, and wounded by what I was reading. For lack of a better way to put it, I opened up my ways of understanding to questions and challenges: How could I think this about such and such? Where had these ways of looking at things come from? Out of what kinds of experiences did these thoughts and ideas emerge? What context had given rise to them? Could there be another way of seeing? What other perspectives were there to be considered? And so on.

Finally, I engaged the Holy Scriptures from this by now well-established posture. I had no idea that all the while I had been engaging in this particular reading practice that the groundwork was being laid for something quite remarkable; for what I found when I engaged the Scriptures in this manner astonished me – and awes me still. There was Someone there listening. Someone was responding to my queries. Someone required of me a response. But I am getting ahead of myself.

On reflection, it seems to me that in our haste historically to analyze the Scriptures according to human tradition, according to the wisdom of mostly men and a few women (which, as history bears out, is fleeting), we have lost sight of the eternal wisdom that awaits the diligent seeker, the one who will not be put off by what she or he sees or hears at first reading, that is, the one who will press in beyond his or her first impressions, the one who will not be satisfied with an attempt to skim meaning off the top, or to superimpose upon the text another closed system of meaning, the one who will lay down his or her arms and defenses, and allow him or herself to be deeply affected by the Other, perhaps even wounded by the Other.

I recall such an experience of testimonial reading in relation to the Scriptures a couple of years ago. I had embraced what might be called by some a feminist separatist perspective on the world, and as I read one passage of Scripture, it 'rubbed me the wrong way' to say the least. I was furious! However, I did not throw the "Good Book" down and leave it, dismissing it as having nothing to offer but patriarchal 'clap trap'. For some 'reason' instead, I cried out something to the effect of, "O Lord, I cannot believe you hate women so. You created us after all. Are we, too, not made in Your image? This passage sounds as though you hate us and have so little regard for us. Is there some other meaning you would have me take away from this passage? Is there something else you would have me understand?" And then, as is all too typical for me, I forgot that I have even prayed this.

Some time later in the day, while I was alone in my apartment, scrubbing out the shower stall, seemingly out of nowhere, into my thoughts burst a fully formed and fleshed out understanding of the passage I had read and prayed about that morning. It

had nothing to do with women in particular, though the two individuals in the story happened to be women. Rather, it had to do with the younger generation being used of God as an example to the older generation – "Your mothers will become your daughters." This is not an understanding I would ever have arrived at on my own. I know myself well enough to recognize it as utterly uncharacteristic for me at that time. I knew then that I had been "answered." And I was stunned. Prayer was not supposed to work that way. There really was someone listening. And responding!

Another more recent example involved my eldest daughter – I was sitting on my living room floor watching her play with one of her dolls. She had found a headband that went with one of the outfits someone had bought for her, and she was engaged deeply in the process of placing that headband just so on her dolly's hair. I must have sat watching her for 20 minutes or more, fascinated at how carefully she was working, and how particular she was about what she was trying to do. And as I sat there in a state of wonder and awe, I could not help but praise God for the privilege of being her mom, of having the time to spend with her like this, of not having to rush here and there and drag her with me, or place her in someone else's care, for having the privilege of watching her grow from the little baby I brought home from the hospital who couldn't even hold her head up, to this little 18 month old girl so intent on fixing her dolly's hair, and so gently and carefully arranging it.

And then a question occurred to me, is this how You look at us, at Your children, with such delight, filled with a love so tender that I cannot describe, with a love so great sometimes that it hurts? And then it was brought to my remembrance, the many times I have tucked my little one in, and looked in on her sleeping. "Is that how You regard us?"

I asked, "You who neither slumbers nor sleeps?" There was such tenderness in my heart for my little one, a tenderness which I know comes from the Lord, yet I could not fathom His ever looking on me or anyone else as His child in that way.

Somewhere down the line, I had got the wrong idea, that God stands there afar off, impersonal, like an adjudicator with a clipboard, keeping score, come to think of it, like the disinterested, dispassionate enquirer of the "Enlightenment". Even now, as I reflect back on that moment, I cannot fathom His loving me that much. It just does not compute. I am stunned and deeply moved by His tenderness, and by the fact that I had never thought of this before, that I had never imagined God as even being capable of such tenderness.

A few final thoughts

So this thesis, this longitudinal, qualitative, testimonial narrative inquiry is, in a sense, 'experimental'. It is a multi-modal[72] documentation of one person's journey of un/learning to teach, a journey from despair to hope, from oppression to freedom, from death to life; from a potentially volatile socio-cultural context to the wide open field of God's grace and glory; from ignorance, to testimonial reading, to testimonial living and writing; a journey that is ongoing; a transformative and transforming journey. It began as a journey to become a better[73] teacher. But as I began to bear witness to, and to come to terms with my many character flaws, my unwitting complicity in the oppression of others, it became a journey to become a better person. Finally, it was quite unexpectedly transformed into a journey to know God, the God of the Bible, not so much to know

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[72] I.e. it comprises narrative, poetry, exposition.
[73] I.e. better both than what I was at the time, and better than those whom I had judged as not being very good.

about Him, but to know Him intimately as one knows a cherished friend or loved one, by entering into genuine, loving, testimonial relationship with Him.

But so what? Of what value could such a study be to anybody else? What benefit (if any) might derive from engagement with this narrative? In other words, why should anybody, whether or not they share my convictions, bother to read it?

To begin with, in keeping with the merits of phenomenological narratives which I discussed earlier in this chapter, perhaps there might be something somebody could learn from or relate to in my story, something that would prove helpful to them in some way, whether in their personal and/or their professional lives. In the course of my teaching at the university, I have observed students going through various processes of transformation, e.g., of political conscientization, of personal and professional identity crises of various kinds, and so on, similar to what I went through, experiencing similar kinds of effects (emotional turmoil, confusion, depression, and so forth).

Also, as I wrote earlier, persons learning to teach today (as when I was entering the profession some nine years plus ago) are increasingly being required to render their professional service in a tempestuous climate of crises, conflicts, and unfulfilled promise. Given my own experiences, my heart goes out to them and I want to share my story with them in the hope that it might, even in some small way (e.g., realizing they are not alone in the storm), help, encourage, inspire, provide counsel, offer hope and/or comfort. Or perhaps it will disturb and so challenge someone who has slipped into complacency whether in their faith, or in their service to others, or in some other area of their lives.

Further, this study promises to test the limits of the calls that have gone out for an all-inclusive Bakhtinian dialogic carnival (Scheuric in Lather, 2001; Lather, 2001) within the field of qualitative research in education. Are all voices truly welcome here in this dialogue? Ellis (1997; 2000) writes that evocative narratives are to be used, not analyzed; told and retold, not theorized or settled. They offer lessons and/or incitements to further conversation. It is my hope that this testimonial narrative will do just that, that is, constitute an incitement to further discourse. Having said that, I shall now continue with the second half of the testimony.

Come unto Me all you who labour and are heavy laden,
And I will give you rest.
Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me,
For I am meek and lowly in heart,
And you will find rest for your souls.   (Matt. 11:28-29)

Chapter 4

Gleanings from the field: Taking His yoke

"My dear brothers and fathers, listen carefully to what I have to say before you jump to conclusions about me." When they heard him speaking Hebrew, they grew even quieter. No one wanted to miss a word of this.

He continued, "I am a good Jew, born in Tarsus in the province of Cilicia, but educated here in Jerusalem under the exacting eye of Rabbi Gamaliel, thoroughly instructed in our religious traditions. And I've always been passionately on God's side, just as you are right now.

I went after anyone connected with this 'Way,' went at them hammer and tongs, ready to kill for God. I rounded up men and women right and left and had them thrown in prison. You can ask the Chief Priest or anyone in the High Council to verify this; they all knew me well. Then I went off to our brothers in Damascus, armed with official documents authorizing me to hunt down the Christians there, arrest them, and bring them back to Jerusalem for sentencing.

As I arrived on the outskirts of Damascus about noon, a blinding light blazed out of the skies and I fell to the ground, dazed. I heard a voice: 'Saul, Saul, why are you out to get me?'

'Who are you, Master?' I asked.

He said, 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, the One you're hunting down.' My companions saw the light, but they didn't hear the conversation.

Then I said, 'What do I do now, Master?'

He said, 'Get to your feet and enter Damascus. There you'll be told everything that's been set out for you to do.' And so we entered Damascus, but nothing like the entrance I had planned – I was blind as a bat and my companions had to lead me in by the hand. (Peterson, 1993, pp. 288-289)

Just let Jesus be your taxi driver: My own Damascus road experience

As I wrote in chapter one, the readings I had taken in and the projects to which I had joined myself concerning racism, sexism, classism, capitalism, imperialism, ablism, and the mistreatment I felt I had experienced as a woman with working class origins and a non-visible disability aroused a melange of emotions within me: shock, anger, outrage, indignation, resentment, bitterness, guilt, fear, depression, and despair, to the point where I had lost just about all hope of things ever getting any better for anyone.

By this time, I had withdrawn from looking at the newspaper and television newscasts. It angered me too much. It scared me too much. As a woman living in a society which overall seemed to me not to take sufficiently seriously the reality of violence against women (in terms of really doing something to stop it), I grew more and more fearful with every passing report of another such act. I found that as long as I could shut out the world, things would seem okay for a while. But the world always managed to invade even the 'safe' little haven I had created for myself.

I became very embittered toward "those people" perpetrating acts of violence and oppression on others. With each article I read, I filled up a little more with anger and hate toward "them," and toward myself, for I was complicit in a system of power relations that is inherently oppressive. I could not, it seemed, escape my implication in the oppression of others, and the fact of it hung like a millstone around my neck. Like so many, I had internalized all manner of wrong beliefs, systems of thought, habits of mind and speech and so forth about "others". But, I was driven to do something about my 'miseducation.'   I was determined to transform myself. I believed I could do it myself. I was wrong.

By the spring of 1999 I had read as many articles and books by people who had experienced various kinds of violence and social oppression as I could lay my hands on. The readings coupled with my own experiences of oppression and relationships I became involved in with "others" had the effect of opening me up to hear not only with my head, but with my heart as well the testimonies of "others."[74] As my heart was tenderized, I allowed myself to be vulnerable, to lay down my arms and my defences, to throw open the gates of my self and allow myself to be affected, touched, and wounded by the other, in order that I might be transformed.

But because I thought I was 'doing my part' to make the world a better place, I imagined myself to be a better person than those individuals who seemingly just would not listen to reason, who would not consider the evidence, who steadfastly held to what seemed to me at the time to be obviously wrong beliefs, foolish religious traditions, urban myths, and so on. This is the trap of which I spoke in the last chapter in my discussion of some of the risks of testimonial reading. I became filled up with self-righteous indignation. I had little compassion and even less mercy in my heart for those from whose ranks I was only beginning to emerge, for those who refused to acknowledge and take account of the evidence of the existence and detrimental effects of systemic social inequities, who relentlessly challenged the foundations of advocacy research (but inquired not, as far as I could tell, into the foundations of their own perspectives), who simply would not own up to their complicity in the oppression of others, those "teflon people" (as some of my colleagues and I referred to them) who stubbornly and tenaciously clung to their obviously arcane and wrong beliefs.

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[74] I.e. historically marginalized peoples.

And why should I have compassion for them? Why should I show them mercy? Were they not the ignorant? The privileged? Did they not already have everything going for them? Were they not just afraid they might lose some of their precious privilege if they were to admit that they were wrong, and had always been wrong? Was I not now in a position to judge? Surely if *I* could face up to reality then they should and could too. How could they be so blind, so heartless, and so stubborn? And what could I do to get them to see the light, to acknowledge the 'truth,' to get them to change their "wicked ways"?

I had positioned myself unproblematically in the judgement seat, imagining that I was in a position (of knowing better and being better or at least being on my way to knowing and being better) to criticise, judge, and try to change the minds and ways of thinking and being of those who seemed to me to be the problem (and that included me). This tendency toward criticism, judgement, and persuasion found its way into the curriculum and pedagogy in my courses, as I selected texts and various media resources that I thought might be most helpful to precipitate in my students a 'crisis of conscience' of sorts. This tendency also manifested in my personal life, and took a terrible toll, for some of "those people" were my own kin.

As I began to look at "them" through the new lenses I was acquiring, through the lenses of critical theory, feminism, postcolonialism, neo-Marxism, queer theory, postmodernism, and so on, I found it increasingly intolerable to be around them. I felt obliged to attempt to bring at least some of them into 'the light' and to motivate them to social action for social justice within their respective spheres of influence. After all, I had been "enlightened."

In other settings, I recall remaining stonily silent during conversations which had always rubbed me the wrong way, but I could never put my finger on why. Now, I thought, I understood. I became very difficult to talk to. I recall going to dinner one evening with some family and friends, and the conversation being very stilted – every attempt made to include me in the conversation was met with a closed mouth and an icy stare. How could they say such things, I wondered to myself. Still, in other settings, I shared my new insights and social consciousness with vigour, relentlessly and endlessly pointing out erroneous thinking, calling for evidence to substantiate points of view, aggressively confronting stereotypes, bringing forward evidence to 'help' people to come to terms with the error of their ways. Using all of the intellectual tools I was in the process of acquiring, I verbally took on whomsoever I could. In short, I became an intellectual bully.

Moreover, I was fast becoming impossible to live with. The person who took the brunt of the accusations, condemnation, anger, rage, frustration, and self-righteous indignation was my husband. Finally, in the spring of 1998, unable to put up with the seemingly stubborn ignorance, the steadfast refusal to 'see' and 'walk in' the light, the just plain arrogance, the irreconcilable ideological differences, and frustrated with what to me at the time seemed to be a relationship that was going nowhere, I abandoned him. I left, feeling perfectly justified in walking away – so much for my "enlightened" social conscience!

How could I not have seen? How could I not have known? In retrospect, I acknowledge that I did not see and I did not know because of selfishness, pure and simple. I recall having been at lunch with one of my professors around Christmas time,

in 1998, and her saying something general to me regarding self-centredness. Well, it was as though someone had touched a red-hot branding iron to my soul. "Was she talking about me," I wondered after our lunch was over? Why else would she say such a thing? Why couldn't people just be explicit, I moaned inwardly. Looking back, I see I was just like Saul, kicking against the goads, resisting the conviction of the Holy Spirit. I was self0centred, but I was still trying to justify myself.

On some level I did not want to see and I did not want to know. I was hell bent on getting what I wanted when I wanted it. I was not intentionally malicious or abusive. I did not set out deliberately to hurt anybody. But that is in effect what I did. I just wanted to be happy, and I truly believed at the time that I was doing the right thing, even the noble thing, pursuing that which would make me happy, and making what I thought at the time were the "ethical" choices. I was wrong.

In reality, if anyone was stubbornly ignorant, resistant to the light, arrogant, and intolerant, it was me. And although it was during that very turbulent time (between the spring of 1998 and the winter of 1999) that I began to learn that loving has as much if not more to do with giving as with receiving, I feel tremendously deep regret now when I reflect on the choices I made at that time, for all of the hurt and emotional turmoil my choices precipitated in the lives of my immediate family, my in-laws, my extended family, and, ultimately, in the lives of the new group of friends I was making and their families. I feel ashamed as I look back on much of what I wrote during that two year long period, at the selfishness that is to me now so readily apparent, but to which I was blind at that time. I had not yet begun to learn that is it not up to me either to judge who is and is not worthy of love, or to withhold love accordingly.

A truly radical intervention

In the spring of 1999, after having come very close to something like a nervous breakdown during the writing of my comprehensive examinations for the PhD program[75], I had a series of "spiritual" experiences that would forever alter the course of my life. It seemed all to begin when I went to a party,[76] a seemingly innocuous event. But at this party was an acquaintance who had recently become separated from her husband. Also attending the party was a close friend of mine who had stood by me 'closer than a brother' during the time I had become estranged from my husband; however, this friend's presence that night was of little comfort to me, for she recounted a chilling anecdote about a friend of hers who had been divorced and the 'coincidental' circumstances of her untimely death, how she had breathed her last in the arms of the man who had formerly been her husband.

I even recall that at one point during the evening, this friend of mine actually quoted from the Bible, saying, "God hates divorce" (Malachi 2:16[77]). To say the least, I was less than impressed. I remember thinking, "How insensitive of her. Obviously, this woman has agonized over whether and when to leave her husband." Not to mention the fact that I, too, was in the process of getting a divorce. How could she say such a thing, and in such company? I could not fathom how such a seemingly intelligent woman could take the Bible and its contents so seriously, so literally, that is to say, at face value, in this day and age. It just did not compute. I was still reeling somewhat

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[75] This is neither an exaggeration, nor a facetious statement. I truly did come very close to a breakdown as a consequence of the stress I had put on myself to perform.

[76] Although in reality, it had begun long before that.

[77] For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence," says the LORD of hosts. Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously." (Malachi 2:16)

when she called me at home later on that evening to ask me if I was okay. "Of course," I replied. But I was not.

At around the same time, I began to have nightmares. This is something I had never before in my life experienced. I had had bad dreams, to be sure, but nothing like this! Bloody, stumpy people pawed at me in my sleep, as I, clothed in a white shirt, walked out of a subterranean mall of sorts. In one of the dreams, this now deceased friend of my friend was expressing her frustration about their attempts to reach out me, to make me understand. In another of the dreams, the devil himself was coming for me, and all that stood between him and me was this godly friend of mine and her son. The devil cut a hideous figure in the dream, and the purpose for which he had come to take me makes my flesh crawl even to think of it, even though it was only a dream. What was more, that same night, another friend of mine had a similar kind of dream. While our dreams were different in detail, the substance of them was sufficiently similar to leave both of us feeling more than a little creepy. It was the Easter weekend, and I ended up in church.

I still recall the overall subject of the sermon that resurrection Sunday morning, "Let Jesus be your taxi driver.' I do not recall the details of what was preached, only that I was deeply moved by what I heard, and that I wept openly but silently as I sat listening with both my head and my heart. At some point during the service, I must have said, "Yes" to the invitation to "let Jesus be my taxi driver." I had no idea what impact that simple response to such a silly sounding suggestion would soon have on my life.

Shortly thereafter, I became intensely interested and involved in activities in the church I was now regularly attending. This was totally out of character for me. I went

to services three times a week to hear the word.[78] And, what is more, I found that the word I had heard would be a 'tool' I would need in the days to follow my hearing of it. I could not seem to get enough. Of all the services I attended, I think my favorite was the Sunday evening service. It was a time of quiet reflection and prayer, accompanied by something like Gregorian chant. One week it would be the women singing, the next week, the men, the following week, both together. I recall one of the prayers recited during the service, which I would pray not so much by heart as from my heart, "Be it unto me according to Thy word." Perhaps I should have anticipated what I was letting myself in for, but I did not.

I became part of a spiritual formation group that met every two weeks in a friend's home. I attended meditation workshops at the church. I was invited to be a lay administrator in the church (and I accepted the invitation). And I had volunteered to be a reader of Scripture at Sunday services. Furthermore, I had begun to have experiences of God 'speaking through' individuals, and these experiences were validated, affirmed as legitimate, by the clergy and other parish members with whom I associated. One or two of them even remarked that I had what they called a keen 'God-consciousness'.

I recall one particular evening, while in attendance at a service in another friend's home, an elderly man, a retired minister, put his hand on my head and gently said, "God bless you child." I was so deeply touched by this gesture, it was as though the Lord had manifested His presence right at that moment and laid hands on me Himself. For the first time in my thirty-seven years, I experienced and began to understand something of God's love for me. That is not to say that I had not ever heard

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[78] Even when I was at the 'height' of my faith as a youngster, church was a duty, and a boring one at that. Even the half hour service on Saturday night was too long for my taste.

homilies telling of God's love for humankind. I just had never experienced it before in such a personal way.

Perhaps I had been more strongly influenced by the 'fire and brimstone' view of God that is so pervasive in the world. I had the idea somehow that God was some angry, vengeful, arbitrary Supreme Being, a mean-spirited tyrant who spent His time issuing rules and regulations, and watching closely to see whether His creation was being "naughty or nice." If you were good, you got rewarded, but if not, then to hell with you! Could that image of God have been wrong?

By the fall and beginning of winter in 1999, I had a strong sense of expectancy, that something significant, something wonderful was being birthed in me, and I could hardly wait to see what it might be. I began more regularly and more determinedly to read, meditate on, and draw inspiration and strength from passages in the Bible, although I was still pretty selective about which Scriptures I would open myself to. There was much in there that I just could not accept at face value. But the church lectionary, i.e., the order of readings for the church year, was preset. God's curriculum for my life had been established, and I was on a collision course on the Damascus road with the Living Word of God.

A life-changing encounter: Meeting Jesus on my own Damascus road

December 1999 began pretty much as any other month might. I had finished writing and defending my thesis proposal. On the first Sunday of the month, I was scheduled to make my 'debut' as a reader in church. I would be reading from 2 Peter 3:8-13, a relatively short piece, but it was powerful. Only, I did not quite get it.

I remember it occurring to me again and again as I rehearsed the passage prior to reading it in church, and even while my knees were knocking as I read it aloud before an audience of perhaps 400 plus people, "What kind of person ought you to be?" "How ought we to live?" Indeed, these were the questions that had shaped the dissertation proposal I had written. But I believed that I, personally, was on the right track. I never dreamed how the Spirit of the Living God was about to shake up my life.

At around the same time, I found myself being confronted in a variety of ways from a variety of sources about marriage and divorce. I began to have haunting dreams, one of which even involved me moving boxes back into the apartment building I had lived in with my husband. Although I could not say why at the time, I was really quite disturbed by these dreams. That was no longer my life. I had moved on. I did everything I could to ignore these experiences. I would put them out of my mind. They were just dreams after all. But just when it seemed that I had let it go, I would get hit in church with a passage of Scripture that dealt directly with marriage and divorce.

That was all anyone seemed to be talking about during those weeks, and what was worse, I couldn't seem to open my own Bible without my eyes lighting on some passage or other that dealt specifically with that particular area of my life. I began to feel very uncomfortable, even angry. I think the topping on the cake was the sidewalk chalk scrawl I saw early one morning as I was walking in our neighbourhood – "Repent sinner." Fury foamed. How dare anyone do such a thing! What business did they have defacing public property and foisting their beliefs, their conservative theology, on the rest of us?! Oh, those troublemaking, rightwing, conservative, Bible- thumping,

fundamentalist, evangelicals and their simple-minded literalist interpretations of the Bible! Really!! The gall!!!

Strangely, however, despite my adverse reaction to these experiences, I continued my daily practice of Scripture reading and meditation, and one day, I found myself drawn to read, re-read, and commit to memory Psalm 25, interestingly, a plea for forgiveness and deliverance, a psalm of repentance. I was praying it with the 'insights' I had gained concerning my complicity in the oppression of others in mind, and I was praying it from my heart.

> To you O Lord I lift up my soul, O my God in You I trust. ...
>
> Remember O Lord your tender mercies and your loving kindness for they have been from of old.
>
> Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions. According to Your steadfast love, remember me, for Your goodness' sake. ...
>
> For Your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great. ...
>
> Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for He shall pluck my feet out of the net. Look upon me and have mercy upon me, for I am troubled and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged; O bring me out of my distresses.
>
> Look upon my affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins. Consider my enemies, for they are many, and they hate me with cruel hatred. O Guard my soul, and deliver me; let me not be put to shame, for I put my trust in Thee. ... (Psalm 25, *NRSV*)

As I look back, I marvel that I really did not grasp in my mind exactly what it was I was praying, that is to say, that it covered the whole of my life, not just my 'new social consciousness.'

In mid-December, I met with a friend for lunch before going home for the holidays. Despite the altercation I had had with this woman at the party six months earlier, our friendship had remained in tact, albeit a little strained. Still, I had been very much looking forward to sitting down with her for a meal, and catching up on the latest news about her life and her family. But our meeting was uneasy. I sensed even as we exchanged greetings that on some level she was troubled. She seemed not to be herself, and I had a strange feeling of heaviness in my chest.

At one point during our lunch, she handed me a bag and said, "I've had this book for two years, and the Spirit of God has prompted me to give it to you today." She seemed almost reluctant to give it to me, even apologetic. I took the package from her. I could not think what it might contain. "You are walking in the Spirit now," she said to me, as though that were supposed to mean something to me. It did not. I had no understanding of what she meant. The title of the book looked interesting to me, so I turned it over and looked briefly at the back flyleaf. I had only glanced quickly at it, but the blow had been struck. I hurriedly stuffed the book back into the bag and muttered an insincere, "Thank you."

I do not recall much of our conversation after that, so deeply disturbed was I by what I had read and heard. I had had just about all I could take in the past couple of weeks. This book struck more than a glancing blow. Still, there was more to come. Everything I had worked so hard at over the past two years, my academic aspirations, the theoretical perspectives which I had wholeheartedly and whole-mindedly embraced and which were the basis of my proposed research, the relationships I had formed, and so on, began to crumble. I remember driving to Stanley Park before going home that day, and

skimming the contents of the book. The only way I can describe how I felt at that moment is to say that it felt as though I had been shorn in two. The pain of it is indescribable.

I tried to contact the minister at my church that evening (who most certainly would have disagreed with the position taken in the book), but there was no answer. I left a message. 'Co-incidentally,' circumstances would keep him from returning my call until some time after I had come back from holidays. Also, 'coincidentally,' in an effort to distract myself from the deep disturbance I was experiencing, I opened up a book which I had bought for a friend, Martin Buber's I and Thou (19..), and the page to which I happened to turn contained the following passage of Scripture:

> Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean. Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil. Learn to do good. (Is. 1:16)

I felt as though I had been run through yet again with a double-edged sword. I was undone. I recall going to a potluck Christmas party that evening in the apartment building I was living in, but I could think of nothing but what had happened earlier in the day. There was no way I was going to be able just to put this out of my mind.

A couple of days later, I went home for the holidays as planned, hoping to have some relief from the inner turmoil I had been experiencing, but the God who pursues, the 'hound of heaven' as C. S. Lewis refers to Him, the lover of my soul, was right there with me and would not let me go. I am reminded of the words of Psalm 139 as I recall this experience:

> ... Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there. If I make my bed in

hell, behold, You are there. .If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me. and Your right hand shall hold me. (Ps. 139, 7-10)

Within days of my arrival home, I found myself, against my reason (which was telling me that this was all craziness), confessing first to my mother, and later to my aunt, what a terrible mistake I had made when I left my husband. What was more, it began to dawn on me that I was going to have to talk to him, my now ex-husband, and that God's plan for my life was going to involve a reconciliation with him. This was, at the time, the last thing in the world that I wanted. Nothing had been resolved between us. All of the old hurts, the pain of being desperately lonely in our relationship, the old resentments and bitterness, remained. I recall at one point, some weeks later, praying that if this was what God had planned for my life, He was going to have to change my heart, as I did not want to go back and live out a lie, saying it was what I wanted, all the while knowing it was not. I can say in all honesty today that God has honoured that prayer. He has indeed radically transformed and continues to transform my heart. He is faithful.

It was also the last thing anyone else either was thinking of, or wanted – i.e., for me to make contact with my ex-husband again. No one wanted dredged up again all of the pain and suffering that had been the consequence of my abandonment of our marriage. Still, in April of 1999, I made the telephone call the Holy Spirit of the Living God had been urging me since December to make. I called my ex-husband, and he agreed to see me. I recall praying a prayer before we met, saying something to the effect of, 'Lord, I have no idea what to say, and this meeting is not my idea, but Yours, so You're just going to have to take over.' Although the first few minutes of our meeting were, not surprisingly, awkward, we fell into a more or less easy conversation

as we walked together. We met and talked again a number of times between April and July of that same year, and on the 17th of July, with much trepidation, we resumed our life together. What followed, I do not have adequate words to convey.

All the noise I had been living with in my mind for as long as I can remember suddenly quit, and the "peace that passes all understanding" (Phil. 4:6) fell upon me. I am at a loss for how to represent this peace, except to say that all of the torment, the fear, the anger, the depression, the guilt, the anguish, the "dark imaginings," I had for so long been so desperately trying to shut out with alcohol, non-prescription medication, meditation, novels, television programs, crossword puzzles, and so on just stopped. I recently heard one pastor (Copeland, 2003) describe the time in his life when he accepted Jesus as his personal Saviour and Lord, as his 'taxi driver,' in this way – he said that the quiet he experienced in his mind when he took that step of faith was like someone who had lived in a boiler room all his life, and then suddenly, somewhere, someone cut the power and all the noise stopped. "That quiet," he said, "was the loudest thing I ever heard." I could relate. I remember talking to a friend during those first few days after I had moved back in with my husband, and I kept saying over and over, "I cannot get over how quiet it is in my head. I just don't have words to describe it."

In August of 2000, a month after my husband and I had resumed our life together, we began attending services at a little church in West Vancouver. I was still somewhat uneasy about the decisions I had made and acted upon, and the radical, unexpected turn my life had taken. Was I losing my mind? What was I doing, making major life decisions on the basis of Scripture passages, dreams, 'God-incidences,' and

"rhema" words[79] from the Lord? As if in answer to my unarticulated concerns, Drew and I were drawn to enroll in the *Alpha* course that was being held at our church. It was during this course that I began to see and hear how I was not the only one who had had such encounters with the Lord.

Many of the kinds of things that had only recently happened to me personally were being affirmed by what I was hearing in the sessions. But the topping on the cake came when, during one of the videos, the pastor told the story of a couple in his congregation who had been through a set of circumstances as close to our very own as one could get without being us. I cannot describe the relief I experienced when I learned that many others were hearing from the Lord in these ways. I was not alone. I was not going crazy. Although it was a time of tremendous uncertainty, I am thankful that I had never heard anything like this before – for if I had, I might have doubted the authenticity of my own experiences, wondering whether I had just been 'influenced' by others' accounts of their experiences. Instead, the voices of others' experience served to confirm for me what I, myself, had been going through.

Today, God's word is essential food and drink to me, and I pray for the grace to have the opportunity and to take the time to read it and to meditate on it daily. I have come, like Kierkegaard, to regard God's word as a mirror, one that uncompromisingly but tenderly reflects back to me the condition of my soul, and the way I am to go. I have also come, like Heschel (1976) to regard it as humankind's greatest privilege. He writes,

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[79]" That which is said or spoken, an utterance, in contrast to *logos,* which is the expression of a thought, a message, a discourse. *Logos* is the message; *rhema* is the communication of the message. In reference to the Bible, *logos* is the Bible in its entirety; *rhema* is a verse from the Bible" (*Spirit Filled Life Bible* p. 1408) that applies or is applied to a particular situation or circumstance.

It is so far off and so direct, categorical in its demands and full of compassion in its understanding of the human situation. No other book so loves and respects the life of man. No loftier songs about his true plight and glory, about his agony and joys, misery and hope, have ever been expressed, and nowhere has man's need for guidance and the certainty of his ultimate redemption been so keenly conceived. It has the words that startle the guilty and the promise that upholds the forlorn. And he who seeks a language in which to utter his deepest concern, to pray, will find it in the Bible. ...

Why does the Bible surpass everything created by man? Why is there no work worthy of comparison with it? Why is there no substitute for the Bible, no parallel to the history it has engendered? Why must all who seek the living God turn to its pages?

Set the Bible beside any of the truly great books produced by the genius of man, and see how they are diminished in stature. The Bible shows no concern with literary form, with verbal beauty, yet its absolute sublimity rings through all its pages. Its lines are so monumental and at the same time so simple that whoever tries to compete with them produces either a commentary or a caricature. It is a work we do not know how to assess. The plummet line of scholarship cannot probe its depth nor will critical analysis ever grasp its essence. Other books you can estimate, you can measure, compare; the Bible you can only extol. Its insights surpass our standards. There is nothing greater. (p. 240)

It is not an object to be subjected to various kinds of analysis. Rather, it is the lens, the

framework through which I am coming to understand who I am in relation to God, the

state of the world, and most importantly, who God is. It is the primary vehicle through

which I am coming to know Him. And He is in the driver's seat.

Breakfast on the beach with Jesus: Wow! Now this really is empowering!

At the end of the Book of John, there is a story about Jesus serving the disciples

breakfast on a beach. It takes place after the crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and two

appearances of Jesus. The story begins with Peter and six of the disciples going fishing.

At first, try though they might, they cannot catch anything. However, Jesus arrives on

the scene (only they do not recognize Him) and says to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find [some]" (John 21:6), and they do. Right away as the nets were filled John recognized the Lord, communicated this to the others, and the disciples quickly made their way back to the shore with the catch of the day.

> Jesus said to them, Come [and] have breakfast. But none of the disciples ventured or dared to ask Him, Who are You? Because they [well] knew that it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so also [with the fish]. (John 21:12-13)

Since I have opened myself up to the possibility of a relationship with the Lord, every morning that I have been willing to make myself available to wait upon Him, I, like the disciples that day, have been treated to what amounts to a spiritual breakfast on the beach with Jesus. Prior to coming into agreement with the Lord about the truth of His word, about the superiority of His ways over not just my ways, personally, but the ways of the world in general, I gleaned only small comfort and little inspiration for daily living from His word.[80]

Prior to my own Damascus road experience, I had very little (if any) use for the Bible. Whenever I would read bits of it, I would become agitated, angry, and/or fearful – not fearful in the sense of any deep, reverential awe that would compel me to my knees or to fall on my face as though dead as would undoubtedly happen if I were to experience a manifestation of the *Sh'khinah,* that is, the Divine Presence, the manifest glory of God present with men – but afraid in the sense of cowering and cringing in a corner. But

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[80] As those who have known me well over the years will testify, I am about the last person on earth they would have ever expected to come to such a place where I would prefer the Bible over any other book! If someone were to ask for evidence of a transformation in me, I would have to point them to the change in my attitude toward the Bible. Today, if I were allowed to have only one book in my possession, there would be no question as to which one I would choose. It would matter not the translation (*NIV, KJV, NKJV, RSV, NRSV, The Living Bible, The Spirit-filled Life Bible,* the *Complete Jewish Bible,* the *Amplified Bible,* the *Gideon Bible, The Message,* whatever), as long as it was the Word of God, I would be content.

instead of regarding that irritation, that fear, as "a site for interrogation" of how the text challenged "my investments in familiar cultural values" (Boler, 1997, p. 267), instead of asking myself, "Why am I responding in this way to this account? What is there in me, in my background (what inner obstacles to right relationship with the Other) that is being surfaced here?" I allowed that irritation to become a justification for dismissing the text and its Author. Almost certainly, my irritation was an indication of my desire "to avoid confronting the articulated pain" (Boler, 1997, p. 265) of my sin and its consequences. And so in order to keep the Word at arm's length, I would bring to bear on it all of the other 'lenses' or frameworks of understanding, metanarratives, theories, and what have you through which I had learned to analyse the world, my experiences and the experiences of others.

While I have come to accept the Bible as the one true 'metanarrative,'[81] I do not feel it is up to me to try to change others' minds about it, to convince them of the truth of what I believe, to try to 'convert' them to my way of thinking, i.e., to proselytize as I had done in the past, when I had undergone my political 'conversion'.[82] Rather, I feel obliged only to share with others my testimony, and to leave the convincing, the 'converting,' if there is to be any, to the Holy Spirit. As Gamaliel said to the Sanhedrin concerning what to do with Paul and the other believers in Jesus in his day in the Book of Acts, "if this doctrine or purpose or undertaking or movement is of human origin, it will fail (be overthrown and come to nothing); but if it is of God, you will not be able to

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[81] Metanarrative in the sense that it is all encompassing – *Il n'y a pas de hors Texte' – there is no 'outside' this story of humankind's relationship with God.*
[82] As I had when I determined to 'conscientize' my family, my colleagues, my students about certain political realities.

stop or overthrow or destroy them; you might even be found fighting against God!"
(Acts 5:38-39).

Today, some three years plus after my own Damascus road experience, I love the
Word of God, and find myself strengthened, encouraged, and empowered by it in ways I
could not ever have anticipated or even imagined. In her article, "Why doesn't this feel
empowering?" Elizabeth Ellsworth (1992) writes about her experience as a teacher and
her students' experiences as situated learners in a course, the end of which was intended
to be the empowerment of the historically marginalized and disenfranchised members of
the class. She tells of how the course back-fired, and no one, least of all those students
who were supposed to benefit the most felt particularly liberated or empowered by the
experience.

In hindsight, the idea of opening up spaces for people to share from their
repertoire of life experiences, especially of oppression, without first attending to the
practices of listening and the heart/mind posture of the listeners, the hearers, of those
stories seems presumptuous if not downright irresponsible. For as Ellsworth learned, and
those of us who have read her article have also learned, what is most likely to ensue at
best is something like 'passive empathy' (Boler, 1997). At the worst we might expect
any of the following reactions: 1) defensive posturing and still further oppression by way
of trivializing the kinds of hardships experienced by 'others,' 2) arguing about the
existence of the systemic inequities which give rise to such hardships, and/or 3) the habit
of denying one's complicity in the oppression of those others who have opened up their
lives, and exposed their wounded hearts before individuals who bear a strong likeness to
those who inflicted the wounds in the first place. Following the experience of

Ellsworth's course (which was for some more like a battle), attempts to foster reconciliation and healing were made, but still, on Ellsworth's account, they were inadequate to repair wholly the damage that had been done. Scar tissue remained.

The word of God is not like this. When one gives oneself wholeheartedly and wholemindedly to it, one finds oneself to be empowered in surprising ways. Yes, it breaks down, but in the same breath, it builds up. Somewhere in the Scriptures, it is written that the Lord "heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Ps. 147). In my experience, I have found this to be very true. The circumstances of my own 'conversion' were particularly painful, as they involved reversing choices I had formerly made. Unlike when I had first made those choices (e.g., to leave my husband, and to distance myself from my family of origin), i.e., with little regard for the feelings of those whose lives were profoundly affected by my decisions, I was now acutely aware of the pain others with whom I had since developed close relationships were suffering, and, as one friend put it, if it were up to me, I would rather have 'turned the knife' in my own belly than hurt the ones I had grown so deeply to love. Still, I had to do what the Holy Spirit of the Living God had so clearly commanded me to do.

I do not have words to describe the anguish I suffered as I was shorn in two. I recall several occasions upon which I walked desolately late at night to the shores of English Bay and on my hands and knees in the cold, wet sand, sobbing from my heart, I screamed at heaven, "Why God? Why?" There was no one in the world I could turn to for comfort. I was estranged from family and friends, old and new. There was no solace to be had anywhere in the world, even in any of my former escapes, i.e., movies, television, literature, music, my work, and so on. All of these served only as painful

reminders of the bitter torment that my soul was experiencing as a result of hurting

someone else. I began really to understand what one psalmist had written so many years

ago when he wrote,

> ... I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly. ;I go mourning all the day
> long because my loins are full of inflammation, and there is no soundness
> in my flesh. I am feeble and severely broken; I groan because of the
> turmoil of my heart. ...My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my
> plague, and my relatives stand afar off. ... (Ps. 38:6-8, 11, *SFLB*)

Truly, I had nowhere in the world to go, and so I cried out day and night to the

Lord, to the very One who had so perfectly fulfilled the potential to 'wound' me once I

had thrown open the gates of my 'self' to Him. Still, strangely, as I was being broken, I

was being healed. Healed of *all* past hurts. Healed of the effects of a lifetime of unwise

choices. Healed from the effects of a life lived under a burden of condemnation, under

the weight of a works-oriented religion. I have experienced first hand the healing touch

of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, the grace of God, and the peace that passes

understanding, the peace of God that is not contingent upon favorable circumstances.

Today, some five years plus after that time of transition, I derive such comfort,

direction, and help for daily living from the word of God.[83] I am now a wife, the keeper

of a home, and the mother of two beautiful little girls under three, and I am in the

process of finishing this dissertation. I am also working on a couple of research projects

and am preparing to teach a course this summer. What is more, I am not young to be

raising small children. Indeed, recently, a friend of mine who is the same age as me

spoke of the challenges she is experiencing, having had a child later on in life. "There

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[83] This is not to say that I have been transformed, but only that I am in the process of being transformed, as I continue to ask while reading the Scriptures, "what crisis of truth does this text speak to, and what mass of contradictions and struggles do I become as a result?" (Boler, 1997, p. 267).

are advantages," she admits, but she says that she tires more easily than she might have had she had her child when she was younger. I could certainly relate to what she was saying. Indeed, there are some mornings when I wake up feeling so tired that I am almost sick to my stomach. However, I am learning to lean on God's word when I feel this way. It is written,

> ... He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might, He increases strength. ... Even the youths shall faint and grow weary. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not grow weary. They shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:29-31).

I can no longer count the number of times I have sleepily quoted this promise back to the Lord in prayer, asking for the strength to get through the coming day, to do it with joy in my heart; and to do it without once thinking of how tired I am, or of how little sleep I have had. And I can say that without fail, the Lord is true to His word. He has never not given the strength, the power I have needed and asked for. Often, as the end of the day draws near, it will be brought to my remembrance that I have been up since 2 a.m. or so, and I have not even thought of napping, even when presented with the opportunity. God is faithful to keep His word.

Today, for me at least, and for many, many more people worldwide who call themselves by the name "Christian," the word of God is not an object to be analysed, or some thing to be debated. Rather, it is a living word, a text to be engaged, a source of comfort, a force to be reckoned with. It is life itself.

> Ho!" says the Lord, "Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and you who have no money, come, buy, and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Listen carefully to Me and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and

come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you ... (Isaiah 55:1-3a).

These are not empty words. They are not merely ancient, eloquent discourse. And they are not, as I used to believe, merely the words of historically located, socio-culturally situated men. They constitute a genuine, open, ongoing invitation made by the Living God who is alive and is both willing and more than able to fulfil the promises made.

Chapter 4: A review

In sum, during the course of my independent reading, I experienced a crisis of conscience and a crisis of confidence or 'faith.' I experienced heightened emotional turmoil and cognitive dissonance. The "troubles of my heart" enlarged. This, coupled with my defensive posturing took a toll on me and on my personal relationships. It also affected my classroom practice as I, using all of the new intellectual tools at my disposal, rather heavy handedly tried to bring students to an awareness of their complicity in the reproduction and maintenance of oppressive socio-cultural systems.

In the process I grew increasingly frustrated, first by individuals who seemed defensively to turn a blind eye to the overwhelming evidence presented to them concerning systemic inequity along race, gender, class, linguistic, and ability lines, and concerning the 'problematic but frequently unacknowledged, invisible, normative referent' in so much of the research in the social sciences and in so many of our own social and economic policies. These individuals seemed hardened and calloused to the concerns, heartache, and general suffering of "the other" in Canadian society, and I just wanted to shake them awake. I was also troubled by a second group of individuals, those who willingly opened themselves, their worldviews, their assumptions up to question,

and allowed themselves to be challenged, but in so doing, found themselves in a crisis of conscience not unlike the one I, myself, was going through, and I asked myself and my colleagues, what can we do for these people? How can we help them to move beyond their own respective 'crises of conscience'? Can we? It did not seem right to me to bring people to a point of crisis and then not offer them something that would help them to move beyond it.

There were – no, there are no easy answers to these questions. I continue to grapple with them. However, I am no longer grappling alone or in my own strength. I have someone I can turn to in the midst of any struggle, someone upon whom I can cast *all* of my cares, someone I can cry out to for wisdom, and provided I cry out in faith I will receive exactly what I need in perfect time.

In the next chapter, in which I explore some of the implications of my 'newly found' faith in the Master Teacher for my practice as a teacher and a teacher educator, I share a number of teaching experiences in which I cried out to God for help, and was helped beyond what I could have asked or imagined.

Chapter 5

Faith in context: A retrospective of my professional development as a teacher

In *The Message*, a contemporised translation of the Bible, Eugene Peterson (2002) writes,

> By entering through faith into what God has always wanted to do for us – set us right with him, make us fit for him – we have it all together with God because of our Master Jesus. And that's not all. We throw open our doors to God and discover at the same moment that he has already thrown open his door to us. We find ourselves standing where we always hoped we might stand – out in the wide open spaces of God's grace and glory, standing tall and shouting our praise. (Peterson, 2002, p.2039)

As I look back on my professional development as both a teacher and a teacher educator from my new position, that is, in Christ, I wonder how I might have experienced both my first practicum and the intensive program of reading I undertook differently had I years ago thrown open my doors to God and found myself standing out in the wide open field of His grace and glory. As I reflect on how I reacted to various situations (e.g., my first practicum, or the experiences of coming to awareness of my own oppression and my complicity in the oppression of others), I am naturally inclined to feel a sense of shame and embarrassment. This is evident even in the early pages of this dissertation. After all, how could someone my age, with my education and life experience react in such a way? Shouldn't I know better? Ought I not to be more 'grown up,' more 'mature'?

However, when I come into the presence of my God, into the wide open spaces of His grace and glory, I am reminded of who and what I am in His sight, a 'clay pot,' a

sinner saved by grace, one of His many beloved children, and I remember who He is, and His great love, and miraculously that burden of shame and embarrassment falls away.

> For there is nothing He does not know about me. He knows my sitting down and my rising up. He understands my thoughts afar off. He comprehends my path and my lying down, and is acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but He knows it altogether. And He has hedged me, enclosed me, behind and before, and laid His hand upon me. (Adapted from Ps. 139: 2-16)

I am comforted by His knowledge of me and by His love for me. I cannot surprise Him. He is not surprised by my circumstances. He knows it all already, even the end from the beginning, and He has it all in hand. Furthermore, He is working it all together for my good. While things may look perplexing or confusing to me, they do not appear so to Him. In relation to the Great I AM, the Alpha and Omega, the Ancient of Days, even my biggest problem is but a blip on the screen of eternity. Still, He is mindful of me and He cares for me (Ps. 8:4). It is with this frame of mind, this posture of heart that I go into the classroom to face whatever circumstances may be there.

What difference does it make, this perspective, this posture of heart and mind? When I meditate upon these things, I am humbled, caused to think more lowly of myself. I am awed by a God so powerful and a love so great, and I am humbled in relation to my peers, to other human beings also made in the image of God, including my students, colleagues, administrators, parents, and so on. I am moved to think more highly of them than of myself. The playing field is truly leveled, for all are equal before God. No one is any better than anyone else. Scripture tells me, "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23) and all are in need of His grace and mercy; everyone has turned, each to his or her own way (Is. 53:6). No one has ever done anything to merit God's favour. Not me. Not my neighbor. Not my enemy. Not anyone. Only one man

was ever perfect, sinless, and that man was God incarnate, the revelation of God's truth, holiness, mercy, grace, righteousness, justice, and love, the Living *Torah* (teaching), the Word made flesh. No one else was or is or ever will be God. God is God. And that is all.

And so I am encouraged, in that I do not have to compete with anyone for love and affection. Neither do I have to knock myself out trying to rack up points, or to be better than somebody else in order to win favor. I do not have to perform. Nor do I have to hoist myself up on the backs of others in order to be noticed. On the other hand, neither do I have any business pulling anyone else down in order to raise myself up, finding fault with others, judging them for their deeds (or the lack thereof), criticising them for their shortcomings, and so on. This perspective, as it lays greater and greater hold of me firmly roots me, more firmly establishes me, makes me more secure and less susceptible to the shifting winds of opinion (both of others and of myself), which, as you may recall, was one of the greatest struggles I had not only during my first practicum, but all the way through to the midway point of my doctoral studies.

Knowing that God loves me unconditionally and beyond measure enables me to extend that kind of love to students, colleagues, administrators, parents, and even politicians who seem to be playing havoc with the education system. Christ labored to earn me favor with God so that I (and anyone else who would receive Him) would not have to. But with this favor comes responsibility. That is to say, I am held accountable for how I live out the whole of my life because I do so in the awareness of the presence of Almighty God.

Had this been the posture of my heart and mind during my first practicum, I would not in all likelihood have been so subject to the shifting winds of others' opinions. I might not have been so afraid to make mistakes, to fail. I might have been less hard on myself. I might have been less concerned about myself, about my self-image, my performance, with whether or not *I was making a difference* in the lives of my students, with whether or not my performance would be sufficient to earn me the recommendation I needed in order to secure employment upon graduation – knowing God as my Father, as my Provider, I could just have trusted the matter to Him and got on with the business of un/learning to teach.

In the process, I might have been better able to be fully present for my students. Put differently, in being Christ-centred, I would have been more apt to be other-centred. For one cannot be both Christ-centred and self-centred. To be Christ-centred is to be other-centred. It is to be more attentive and responsive to the needs of others as they become apparent. It is to be "quick to listen but slow to speak, slow to get angry" (James 1:19, *CJB*). It is to remember that all are made in the image of God. It is to see the Lord in each one of them. It is to respond to them as unto Him.

Recently, I was reminded that in the kingdom of God, my greatest strength is, in fact, my greatest weakness, for I am most likely to trust that strength, to use it when and how I think it ought to be used, rather than even to think of submitting that area of my life to God to be used as He wills. I am more apt in these areas to fall into the traps of pride, to rely on myself, to think I know what is best, what should be done, and so on.[84] But as

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[84] This lesson was brought home to me recently, when I found myself really struggling with all of the minutiae of daily life with two toddlers. I commented to a friend, I don't seem to have a problem taking the big problems to God, but the little stuff, I'm less likely to bring that to Him. She replied by saying something to the effect of, "I wonder what that says about us?" The conclusion I have come to is that I

I am helped by Him, as I come to know Him more and more in His faithfulness, and as I come more and more to know myself,[85] I am slowly by His grace becoming increasingly less self-reliant, and more inclined to depend on Him for everything, big and small.

Between the covers of the Holy Bible, I find stories of others who have struggled with how to be and what to do in life and I am encouraged. I am instructed by these stories, enabled to learn from the mistakes and failures of others, as well as from their victories and their triumphs. I also find words of instruction concerning how to be God's way, and I find promises – promise upon promise upon promise. And as I learn to take these promises of His at face value on faith, being confident that He is faithful and always keeps His promises, I am given opportunity after opportunity to bear witness to, and to marvel at His grace and glory as He keeps those promises. So, while I may start out flat on my face crying out to Him, "What have I done?" or "Why me?" or "Why this again?" or "How did I get here?" invariably, if I follow through, if I "press in," I end off standing tall and shouting His praise in the wide-open field of His grace and glory.

Had I been walking with the Lord during my first practicum, I might have cried out to Him in my fear, discouragement, and anger, asking for strength, courage, fortitude, and perseverance. Given where I was at the time, I would most likely have asked for justice, for God to change the circumstances and to change the people with whom I was having the most difficulty. After all, they were clearly in the wrong, were they not? And

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believe myself to be capable of handling the seemingly "little things," the "minor details" of daily life – when to get up, when to sleep; what to wear; what to do next; where to go and not go; what to eat and not eat; and so forth, but I am learning that even in these seemingly trivial matters, the Lord wants me to lean on Him, to commit my way to Him, leaning not to *my own* understanding, but considering Him in all of my ways, relying on Him to direct my paths. After all, He sees what I cannot, and knows what is best.

[85] Cf. Boler (1997, p. 266). In reference to the practice of testimonial reading of the narratives of Holocaust survivors, Boler (1997) writes, "Testimonial reading leaves for the reader 'no hiding place intact. As one comes to know the survivor, one really comes to know oneself' (Felman & Laub, 1992, p. 72 in Boler, 1997, p. 266).

I was the one being wronged? In all likelihood, in addition to receiving the strength, courage, fortitude, and perseverance I had asked for, I would have been gently convicted somewhere along the line of pride and self-righteousness, and received perspective, instruction, and perhaps even correction concerning humility, submission to authorities, forgiveness, and loving my neighbor (e.g. my associate teachers for whom I had little positive to say at the time).[86]

In retrospect, I wonder how, had I honored His Word, things might have turned out differently for everyone concerned, for He is not only concerned with what is best for me, His beloved child, or even His other beloved children, but with what is best for all concerned, with what will bring maximum glory to Him. After all, He loves us all. He made us. He died for all. There is not one of us who is not made in His image, and He wants to bless us all.

I may also have sought the Lord in His word, looking up Scriptures concerning the very emotions in which I was awash at the time. Concerning fear, I might have found, prayed about, and prayed some of the following passages.

> For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind[87]. (2 Tim. 1:7);

> For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." (Rom. 8:15)

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[86] I have since learned that it is not justice that I want from God, but mercy. Mercy, mercy, mercy is what I need.

[87] Sound mind, from *sophronismos*, meaning safe-thinking, good judgement, disciplined thought patterns, and the ability to understand and make right decisions. It includes the qualities of self-control and self-discipline (p. 1853 *SFLB*).

> There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. (1 Jn 4:18)

In sum, in all of these Scriptures I am counseled by the Holy Scriptures not to have a fear[88] of man. Rather, Jesus encourages those who follow after Him to have a reverential awe or fear of God, which is constructive. Meditation on these Scriptures convicts, comforts, and encourages me, as I reflect on who God is, on what He has already done, and on what He promises, is doing, and will do.

Concerning anger I may have found,

> Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent ... (Prov. 27:4a)

> 'Be angry, and do not sin,' do not let the sun go down on your wrath ... (Eph. 4:26)

> So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; For the wrath of man does not bring about the righteousness of God. (James 1:19-20)

I find these Scriptures to be at once convicting and instructive, and in praying for God's help to walk according to them, I know from experience I would be truly empowered so to do.

Concerning depression, I may have taken the following Scriptures as medicine for my soul.

> Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore I will remember You from the land of the Jordan, and from the heights of Hermon, from the Hill Mizer. Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; all Your waves and billows have gone over me. The LORD

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[88] I.e., *phobeo*, a panic that grips a person causing him to run away, be alarmed, scared, frightened, dismayed, filled with dread, intimidated, anxious, and apprehensive (*SFLB*, 1991, p. 1422).

will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me – a prayer to the God of my life. (Ps. 42: 5-8, *NKJV*)

Through this Scripture I would be reminded of His faithfulness to His people and of His mighty works, and I would derive encouragement from His promise on which I could hope and stand.

> Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I have come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary with my crying; my throat is dry; my eyes fail while I wait for my God. ...
>
> ... my prayer is to You, O LORD, in the acceptable time; O God, in the multitude of Your mercy, hear me in the truth of Your salvation. Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink; let me be delivered from those who hate me, and out of the deep waters. Let not the floodwater overflow me, nor let the deep swallow me up; and let not the pit shut its mouth on me.
>
> Hear me, O LORD, for Your lovingkindness is good; turn to me according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, and do not hide Your face from Your servant, for I am in trouble; draw near to my soul, and redeem it; deliver me because of my enemies. (Ps. 69:1-3; 13-18)

From these Scriptures I would receive encouragement and comfort just in remembering who God is in the midst of trouble. These words serve to remind me both that I am not the only one ever to suffer anguish, and to get my attention off of my circumstances and myself, and back on Him where it belongs.

> Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yes, our God is merciful. The LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. Return to your rest, O my soul, for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you. (Ps. 116:1-7)

In crying out to Him in the midst of my distress, acknowledging my own inability to 'save' myself, I would also be helped by Him – for God gives grace to the humble, i.e. to

those who acknowledge their need of Him. Additionally, in any of these states of mind, that is, fearful, angry, depressed, I might have sought and would most assuredly have found encouragement in the stories of Joseph, Moses, David, Ruth, and Esther, and in the letters of Paul who, while incarcerated in a Roman prison, counseled fellow believers to "Rejoice!" in all circumstances.

Having found these Scriptures, I could have memorized them; meditated upon them, and prayerfully engaged in a deeper study of them, exploring etymologies of words, socio-cultural contextual information, and such like. I could also have prayed about them, asking God to elaborate, to guide me to other pertinent or thematically related passages, to reveal Himself to me in the Scriptures. And I could have prayed some of them, crying out to God in my distress, calling upon His name, asking for help, for understanding, for strength, and so on.

Instead of trying to work out the situation for myself, or trying to work it out with the person or people involved from my/our limited perspective/s, I could have submitted the matter to God in prayer in obedience to His word,

> Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. (Prov. 3:5)

asking for it all to be worked out for His greater glory, asking for Him to be Lord over my responses to the situations in which I was finding myself.

How would things have turned out had 'known then what I know now'? How would it have affected my practice, my relationships with others? It is difficult to say – there is no way to know for sure, how things might have been different. To try to say would be purely speculation. However, from my more recent experiences of walking

with the Lord in a teaching context, I can say that I am pretty sure my initial reactions

would not have been significantly different from what they were (although I find that my

reactions to stressful situations are becoming tempered over time).

I might have prayed something like, "Why is this happening? Why am I

responding in this way to this experience? What is there in my background (what inner

obstacles to right relationship with the other) are being surfaced here? What would you

have me learn from this? What does Your word have to say about this? What crisis of

truth does this experience speak to and what mass of contradictions do I become as a

result? How would You have me respond? How do I extend Your love and grace to all

who are concerned here: the student, any other students who may have been hurt,

offended, or otherwise affected by the comment? Please just be Lord over my emotions,

all that I think, do, and say. Your word counsels me to commit my way to You, and to

lean not on my own understanding. And You have promised in Your word to "instruct

me in the way I should go," and that You will guide me with Your eye. Relying on Your

faithfulness, knowing that You always honor Your word, that Your Holy Spirit hovers

over it to perform it, knowing that you always keep Your promises, please take over in

this situation. Thank you, in Jesus' name." And then I would have to await His response.

Just to make this a little more concrete, allow me to revisit the dilemma that I

wrote about in the "Detours" paper that appears in Chapter 2. As you may recall, in my

first practicum, I was assigned to teach in a grade 10 English class and I was asked by my

sponsor teacher to prepare a unit on the play Julius Caesar. I began one of the unit

lessons with a discussion about friendship, wanting to focus in on the relationship

between Caesar and Brutus. All was ticking along more or less as planned, when one

student interrupted the flow of the discussion, raising a social issue that I was not at all prepared to address. I had never really given any thought to the matter, and I handled the whole situation rather badly. In short, caught off guard, aware of the fact that there were two supervisors and an additional spectator watching, not to mention 30 or so other students, all waiting to see what I was going to do, I panicked.

I remember feeling that the student was wrong in what he had said, and I wanted to do something about it, but I also did not want to model intolerance to the apparently intolerant student. I was also concerned about what others would think of me. The incident troubled me enough that I found I had to write about it some years later. What follows is an unedited excerpt from my student teaching journal, which outlines basically what happened in class and reveals my own ignorance and prejudice. The excerpt is followed immediately by a section from the paper I co-authored some five years ago. Following the second account is an account of a similar kind of incident faced by a famous teacher, one in which the teacher was also being tested to see how he would respond.

Excerpt from student teaching journal

Wednesday Nov. 3, 1993

Having a class discussion re. friendship. Qualities you would admire in a friend. One male student raises 'gay' issue. Would want friend to be straight. Wanting to have student articulate concern, I ask, "... as in up front? Straight-forward?" There is some laughter. Another student says, "Sexual preference." Now the issue is on the table. I ask (the original student), "Why is that important to you?" Students become somewhat rowdy. I get their attention back. Indicate that I am going to seriously consider the remark, since the student has a right to his point of view. I repeat my question, "Why is that important to you?" His answer, he doesn't want the guy putting the moves on him. He asks, "How would you feel?" I think for a moment, consider what to say, thinking, "It wouldn't bother me. Why not? Because that person's preference does not

say anything about me other than that they find me attractive, and that is a compliment, not an insult. So I respond in kind, "It wouldn't matter. Her 'putting the moves on me' is an expression of her sexual orientation, not mine, and of her attraction for me." He considers what I've said and I ask, it is still important to you? He answers, "Yes." I include it on the list.

What would I do differently?

Excerpt from "Detours"

... we were having a whole class discussion about friendship as a lead-in to an analysis of the relationship between Brutus and Caesar in Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar*. In an attempt to provide an effective introduction to the analysis, I had decided to solicit from the students a list of qualities they would look for in a friend. Loyalty, compassion, honesty, caring, and such like topped the list. We were well into the compilation of a comprehensive list when a male student who had a reputation for bullying, and for interrupting classroom proceedings with unsolicited and often rude comments, raised his hand. ... He said it would be important that any friend of his be "straight."

A little shaken, but wanting to appear calm, I tried to use humor to "call his bluff," as it were. "How do you mean?" I asked. "As in up-front? straight-forward?"

There was some laughter. The student remained silent, and I thought I was in the clear. But, as luck would have it, another typically boisterous student picked up the baton and ran with it: "Nooo," he drawled, rolling his eyes skyward. "You *KNOW* what he means, as in sexual preference."

... I turned back to the first student and asked, "Why would that be important to you?"

He responded by saying that he didn't want a guy "putting the moves on him," and, in what seemed to me at the time like an attempt to trip me up, he asked, "How would you feel if some woman tried to put the moves on you?"

... I responded to the student's question by saying, "It wouldn't matter. I would interpret her "putting the moves on me," as you say, as an indication of her interest in and/or attraction to me. I would be flattered by the attention, and I would respond by saying something like "I'm flattered that you find me interesting or attractive, but I'm in a committed relationship."

Thinking that because I had presented a reasonable response, the student would be prepared to reconsider his point of view, I asked, "Do you still want me to include "straight" on the list?

"Yes," he said, matter-of-factly.

So, in the interests of not modeling intolerance to the intolerant, I wrote "straight" on the chalkboard. ... I, with the institutional power vested in me by the province and society in general as student teacher, wrote "straight" on the board next to compassion, loyalty, caring, and the like, as a legitimate prerequisite for friendship. ...

What would I do if I faced a similar situation today? I cannot say for sure how I would or would not act in the heat of the moment. I know only that I would not write "straight" on the chalkboard as I did, thus legitimating it as a prerequisite for friendship.

A famous teacher is tested

Early in the morning (at dawn), He came back into the temple [court], and the people came to Him in crowds. He sat down and was teaching them, when the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery. They made her stand in the middle of the court and put the case before Him. Teacher, they said, This woman has been caught in the very act of adultery. Now Moses in the Law commanded us that such [women – offenders] shall be stoned to death. But what do You say [to do with her – what is Your sentence]? [Deut. 22:22-24] This they said to try (test) Him, hoping they might find a charge on which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger. However, when they persisted with their question, He raised Himself up and said, Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her. Then He bent doen and went on writing on the ground with His finger. They listened to Him, and then they began going out, conscience-stricken, one by one, from the oldest down to the last one of them, till Jesus was left alone, with the woman standing there before Him in the center of the court. When Jesus raised Himself up, He said to her, Woman, where are your accusers? Has no man condemned you? She answered, No one, Lord! And Jesus said, I do not condemn you either. Go on your way and from now on sin no more. (John 8:2-11)

Commentary

As is evident in the juxtaposition of the first two accounts of the dilemma I faced during my first practicum, the second portrays me in somewhat of a more favorable light. That is not an accident. When I wrote the first account, I wrote it for my own eyes and purposes only – so that I might reflect on what had happened, and figure out how to handle a similar matter better in the future. At the very least, it is an honest representation of where I was at that time. I was genuinely concerned for the welfare of both the student who made the comment and the students who might have been hurt or offended by the comment (not to mention my treatment of it in class). Needless to say, I was also concerned for how my actions had been read by those in authority over me who, by virtue of that role, had the power to write up an evaluation that could affect my chances of becoming employed upon finishing the teacher preparation program. As jobs were scarce at the time, I was especially anxious about the report. I was also concerned what the students would think of me.

I wrote the second account some years later, still troubled by how I had handled the situation, still genuinely concerned about the impact my blunder may have had on the students (although less so, given the temporal distance), but now even more preoccupied with my own self-image, with how others hearing/reading the account might read me. In short, I did not want to come across as being ignorant, insensitive, and prejudiced, but rather as being genuinely concerned for the welfare of 'others'. I was now more concerned with how I would be judged by my colleagues than with how my (in)action had affected the students at the time. Truthfully, when the incident occurred, I was no more concerned about 'heteronormativity' (a term I had not even heard of until I had

begun my doctoral studies) than I was about "women's issues," "multiculturalism," classism, and ablism, and at the time of writing the second account, while I was deeply concerned with those things, I was more concerned with distancing myself from my former position. I was very self-righteous, that is, critical of those who were not concerned with such things, and who just would not listen to 'reason' about them.

In the Scriptures, when Jesus was confronted with an angry mob bent on testing Him to see how He would respond to a situation, whether He would compromise *Torah*, He did not respond hastily. All eyes were on Him. How was He going to handle it? Jesus, already sitting down slips to His knees in the sand and begins to write with His finger, the finger of God who wrote the Ten Commandments on the tablets of stone atop Mount Sinai. As one writer has put it, "The question we need to ask is not what [He wrote], but why" (Card, 2003).

To begin with, I believe it is not insignificant that Jesus stooped down to His knees. I recall some time ago, losing one of my earrings on a flight from Montreal to Vancouver. I was quite upset about it, not because they were particularly expensive earrings, but because I had just bought them the day before and I really liked them. I had gone to the washroom on the plane and upon returning to my seat, I discovered that one of the earrings was missing. I walked back down the aisle of the plane and I did not see it. Then, I do not know why, but I got down on my knees and began to look around on the floor. Sure enough, underneath a woman's briefcase, I found it. When I told the story to a friend of mine who is also a believer, laughing about how it must have looked, my crawling about on the floor of the fuselage, she said to me very soberly, you were willing to get down on your knees.

Getting down on one's knees is an act of humbling oneself, and I believe that that is precisely what Jesus was doing that day even in the presence of the crowd – humbling Himself before His Father and before those who were in front of Him, including the woman. He did not lord His sinlessness over her. He did not Lord His authority over them. He did not make a big scene about it and begin to cry out loud, "O Father, give me the wisdom to know how to handle these treacherous men and this sinful woman!" He merely knelt down in the sand and began to write, taking time to hear from heaven.

He also humbled Himself before the sinful woman, stooping down to her feet, as well as to the feet of the crowd, making Himself vulnerable the midst of a potentially volatile situation – anyone could have begun to hurl rocks at Him at any moment. Yet He remained quiet, peaceful, at rest. He had nothing to prove to any of them, despite what they thought.

And so while I cannot go back and relive my dilemma, and I cannot say for sure how I would respond to a similar incident in the future, I pray that if I were ever to find myself in such a situation again that I would respond as Jesus did, that I would have the grace to pause and humble myself both before Almighty God, asking for the wisdom to respond in love, and before my students, both the bully and the ones who were the object of his scorn. I could stop the discussion and have the students engage in a timed writing exercise. As a prompt I might ask something like, "What is friendship?" And then I could explore with students what the problem is with making something like this a criterion for friendship.

Depending on where we were in the class, I might have them write until the end of class and then take their responses home with me to read, pray over, and respond to

personally, privately, perhaps taking up the matter the next day in class after having had time to seek the Lord for how to respond in love to *all* of the students in the class, bearing in mind that each and every one of those young people is made, fearfully and wonderfully, in the image of God, and that He loves each and every one of them without exception. If there were quite a bit of time left, I might have the students get into small groups to discuss their responses to the prompt, and circulate to hear what kinds of things people were talking about before deciding whether to open the matter up for a whole class discussion. That would give me time to continue to pray and to hear from the Lord, as well as to listen to and speak privately to the individuals who had caused the disruption. What I would observe and hear would determine what I would do from there.

However people may feel regarding Jesus as the Messiah, the promised Son of God, whatever they may believe about the resurrection, most people are willing to acknowledge that Jesus was a brilliant teacher. So, who better to be in relationship with, who better to go to with my questions and queries about teaching than the Master Teacher Himself. I have done this in faith in various kinds of classroom situations, and He has always shown Himself to be a faithful and true friend and mentor. I have had some opportunity to practice in this way, and I can say that I have found that when I do lean on the Lord rather than my own understanding, I do not have to think and plan how to respond. Neither do I have to 'try' to be 'godly'. Rather, I pray, asking the Lord to respond through me, and then I submit to His authority. Allow me to share a couple of narrative accounts of experiences of teaching in this way.

Instructions with a promise:

Reflections on some of the implications of this way of living for curriculum and the practice of teaching

The first incident took place almost at the beginning of the term. My colleague and I had asked the students in the class[89] to write a brief personal response to a text we had selected. One of the students turned in a very clear-cut, analytic, mini position paper rather than the kind of personal response we had asked for. I longed in my heart to reach out to this student who seemed to be hiding behind the veneer of a clever analysis, and also to challenge and stretch the student to move beyond the limits of the thinking that was apparent in the piece of writing that had been submitted. But I was utterly at a loss for how to do so in such a way as to elicit the student's co-operation without engendering defensiveness. So, not knowing what else to do, I prayed committing the matter to the Lord, and I set the paper aside. I could not in any way have anticipated what was about to happen.

I guess perhaps I was not expecting such a direct 'response' to my prayer. I don't know. But within a relatively short period of time, it occurred to me to share with this student a paper written by a colleague and friend of mine. I telephoned my colleague to obtain permission to share the paper (it had been given to me to read and respond to, as it was to be presented at a conference). My friend was deeply moved at the thought of this paper being used in this way, and was much uplifted by the experience.

In a way that reflected the high quality of the analysis, I graded the assignment that had been submitted and I suggested that the student might enjoy a paper that had been written by a colleague of mine. I attached a copy of the paper to the assignment

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[89] An undergraduate class in curriculum development.

when I returned it. When we saw each other next, the student had just finished reading the paper, and was almost in tears. "How did you know this was exactly what I needed to read?" I was asked. Clearly something in my friend's paper had struck a cord with this student who had been deeply moved, and helped in some way neither of us could articulate at the time. I mumbled a response to the query, but what I said exactly I do not recall.

The second incident is like the first in that I found myself in a teaching situation and did not know what to do. My colleague and I had come up with what we thought at the time would be an excellent idea for our last teaching class. We had decided to show a particular video clip in class and we had discussed how we would use it and for what purpose. The lesson was to be another 'consciousness raising' exercise. We had gone over our plan in some detail, but when we finally got the film into the VCR to cue the clip, neither of us could remember anything about what we had planned. Nothing. We both drew complete blanks.

We tried to recreate the conversation we had had, employing the usual strategies one resorts to when trying to stimulate one's recall, but nothing. It was as though someone had taken an eraser to both of our memories and wiped them clean of any thought regarding what we had so elaborately planned. And neither of us had written anything down. I should say that neither of us is particular forgetful when it comes to matters such as these, and that one of us almost compulsively writes everything down, including lesson ideas, at least in point form on scraps of paper (even restaurant napkins!), if not in full prose in a journal. Yet there we were, stuck without a lesson, and not much time left to plan. Again, fervent prayer ensued. And again, a response came.

I found myself paging through a collection of mini-essays I had not looked at for some time, and one of them, "An open heart" (Mackenzie, 1995, pp. 108-109), about generosity and hope caught my attention. I suggested that we might read the essay in class and ask students to respond by calling to mind what inspires them, what keeps them going when times are tough (or some such theme). As it happened, it was as though the lesson had been tailor-made to meet the needs of this whole group of people, us included. What they had not needed was yet another 'consciousness raising' exercise but rather, an exercise that would free them up from the weight of discouragement that had, unbeknownst to us, settled on them like a dark cloud.[90]

At the end of the class, we were asked to respond to the same question: what inspired us? I recall my response was something like, "graced moments" like these, and I proceeded to share with them what had happened, and how this 'lesson' had come about. According to student reports, the class ended on a very positive note for all concerned. All had been encouraged and refreshed, and, in retrospect, we had all been in need of it.

Principles for living and implications for curriculum and pedagogy

Priority one for me now is daily getting time alone with the Lord for prayer and testimonial reading of the Scriptures, humbling myself before Almighty God, for His Word promises that while He resists the proud, He gives grace to the humble. In a case such as this, humility may consist in merely acknowledging before God that I really do not have any idea how I am going to meet all of the challenges that a day, a given course,

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[90] This is not to say that 'consciousness raising' exercises are 'bad.' Indeed, I would argue that they are necessary. However, I am convinced that it is not enough to bring students to awareness of their complicity in systems of relations which advantage some and disadvantage others, to the place where they are 'wounded' by this or that other and then to leave them there in that state of woundedness alone and unaided. I would argue that it is necessary also to offer students encouragement and hope, to bind up their wounds and to help them heal.

or group of students, or set of circumstances might bring – and then bring them one by one to Him, acknowledging that I do not have the necessary energy, time, knowledge, resources, or perhaps even the inclination to meet them.

Then, it is a simple matter of committing my way to the Lord, and leaning not on my understanding, but in all of my ways (my selection of materials, the preparation of lessons, the planning of assignments and other means of evaluation, my approach to evaluation, day to day interactions with students, and so on) considering Him, and then trusting Him to direct my paths. And when I slip, acknowledge to Him my missing the mark, and, if so guided, to acknowledge to the individual or individuals my mistakes, asking their forgiveness, and recommitting my way to the Lord. Being anxious for nothing (Phil. 4:6), casting my burden on Him for He cares for me (1 Pet. 5:7), and so on.

I hope it is clear that I am not advocating a loosey-goosey approach to curriculum planning and instruction, whereby one just throws all caution to the wind, prays a quick prayer like, "Lord, lead me," and then just goes ahead and does whatever comes to mind. Not at all. As my colleagues and I (Barnard, Muthwa-Kuehn, & Grimmett, 1997) have contended elsewhere, in agreement with most writers concerning teacher preparation, one must have a deep familiarity with the content area and with methods of instruction. Undoubtedly, God is able divinely to impart knowledge; however, in my own experience, what is most often made use of is the stuff of previous inquiries, of previous experiences of diligent seeking.

Finally, I am continually reminded that the discipline of heart and mind (to remain worshipful, thankful, stayed on the Lord Jesus) comes not by way of my own desire and efforts; rather, it is a gift from my heavenly Father. When this truth lays hold of me, then

I am kept from a) taking credit where none is due and b) seeking gratitude appreciation, and recognition from others for all that is done by Him through me. Consequently, I am shielded from disappointment, discouragement, resentment, bitterness, depression, despair, and such like.

As the likeness of Christ increases more and more in me, as I am more and more im-pressed with His character, as I become increasingly caught up in, attentive to, dependent upon, abandoned and surrendered to the Lord, as He becomes my all in all, I am empowered by Him to be differently in the world, in relationship with others, to give, to love, to serve, no matter the circumstances (in plenty or in want), without seeking anything in return, and to rejoice. Where in the past, I might (would most certainly) have held a grudge, I am enabled to forgive. Where I might have looked for gratitude for all of 'my' hard work or for 'my' generosity or magnanimity, I am humbled, reminded that I am His workmanship, and that it is His ability working in me that has accomplished the good end.

Where I might have become impatient, I am enabled to rest and to wait, to persist, and/or whatever else may be necessary. Where I might have passed judgment, or thrown 'the Good Book' at someone, calling down the fire of heaven upon them for their offences against me or against God as I see it, I am reminded of my own weaknesses and struggles, and I am filled with genuine compassion – not moved to pity, as though I were seated above the individual in a position to judge – but rather, moved on the same plane to be for the other, no matter who she or he may be, what may be his or her circumstances, or how she or he has treated me, and to respond lovingly, genuinely, with

a hearty, "Here I am. I am at your disposal," as I did in the incident related toward the end of chapter 3.

How does all of this translate into pedagogical terms? Inner transformations give rise to outward manifestations. They translate into increased patience with students, colleagues, administrators, government, and self. They translate into less haughtiness, less self-righteous judgment of others, less self-condemnation and deprecation, less gossip, slander, and idle talk, less time and energy spent striving to be all that I should be in terms of the standards I profess with my mouth to espouse, and less boasting. They translate also into less envy, malice, and vindictiveness; less anger, resentment, and bitterness; less time and energy spent striving to make a difference, to be noticed, to gain recognition, to win the acceptance and/or approval of my superordinates, my colleagues, my students, members of the community at large, and less fear of what others may think, of how others will judge. They translate into seeing others (all existential others, including but not only historically marginalized peoples) differently, that is, through grace and mercy-washed eyes. Furthermore, the inner transformations give rise to different curricula and different approaches to instruction.

Allow me to revisit what I wrote in the Introduction concerning what Palmer (1998) has written. He claims, and I agree, that much of educational reform is wrongly caught up in an exclusive focus on externals, such as, curriculum, interest groups, availability of financial and human resources, and so on. He contends that while these things are important, we ought also to look to inward transformation in order to reform education. Quoting Havel, Palmer acknowledges the need for a "global revolution" in human consciousness and for 'salvation,' and I concur. Where I depart from Palmer

(1998) and Havel (In Palmer, 1998) is in their seeming faith in us, in human beings, to rise up and save our selves, to 'revolutionize the planet' for the good of all. I am not sure whether I want the planet revolutionized by a Palmer or a Havel. Would this be a good thing? For whom, really?

Marsden (1997) writes that as the history of the twentieth century shows, human beings are "fatally flawed creatures" (p. 97). Marsden goes on to say that in Niebuhr's terms,

> this built-in flaw has a deeply ironic quality, in that we tend to turn our virtues into vices. We use our technological gifts to build horrible weapons of destruction. Our economic expertise, on which we build prosperity, also breeds uncontrollable greed so that we exploit the weak and destroy the environment. Our enlightened political systems and our hopes to create systems still more enlightened justify unprecedented warfare, enslavements, and exterminations of civilization populations. As Niebuhr puts it, a too confident sense of justice inevitably leads to injustice. These human vices are impossible for us to eradicate because they are built on our best qualities: our abilities to create, to choose, to build, to bring order and justice. Even our ability to love turns into inordinate love for our own family, community, interest group, or nation. At the heart of all our vices is ... the belief that we can be "as the gods," the unlimited creators and rulers of our own destiny. (p. 97)

There was a time when I might have been swept off my feet by the view of humankind evident in the discourse of Palmer and Havel, but now I am more apt to raise questions and to articulate concerns like, "How can human consciousness, which is in need of 'salvation,' to use Palmer's words, save itself?" Questions and concerns like this will undoubtedly have a bearing on the curriculum I decide upon for the courses I am hired to teach. At this point, some readers may be getting a little nervous or hot under the collar in anticipation of my making a case for selecting only that literature which has "Biblical" roots. Let me set those readers at ease. That is not at all what I would propose.

As I have said, I am not interested in trying to convert people to a belief in Jesus. I was much more interested in converting people to feminisms and various other "isms" five years ago, and the curricular choices I made were indeed predominantly of the worldview I espoused. I was more of a proselyte then than I am now, and I used to get all riled up trying to convince others to 'listen to reason' and to at least try to understand my point of view. Those days are gone. I am no longer on a mission to change people, to try to argue them out of their point of view (and into mine). My only mission now is to love Jesus and to love my neighbour, both in and out of the classroom, and as often as called upon so to do, to talk about that with others, and if some come to know the Saviour as a consequence of having spent some time with me then glory be to God. In other words, I do not have to work to transform the world. The world around me, systems within which I am will ineluctably change just because He is in me, and I am in them and constitutive of them.

This radically different posture has been incredibly freeing. It means having much more time and energy available to be for those others who come into my life, into the classroom, the staff room, the boardroom. It means having a peace that passes all understanding that enables me to receive wise counsel when it is most needed, that is, under trying circumstances whether inside the classroom, or out, such as when I run up against systemic discrimination against this or that group of people. It means having an inexhaustible source of energy when work needs to be done for which my own resources are not adequate. It means having a refuge to run to, a strong tower, when all hell is breaking loose around me. It means having a shelter from the storm.

It means having a view of individuals which enables me to be more encouraging, more light-hearted, more focussed on drawing out what is good in them than on trying to hammer out what seems to me to be wrong with them, and that translates into different kinds of responses from others. It means being able to inquire of the Lord about my classroom practice. Increasingly, over the course of the last nine years, teaching has become less and less about my mastery of a craft, and more and more about a partnership with the Master Teacher.

It is well-known in teacher education circles that in general, either we teach the way we were taught, or we teach in reaction to the way we were taught. Either way, how we have been taught (and not only in schools) has a profound impact on how we will teach. Since I have come to know the Lord, my professional education as a teacher has been taken over by the Master Teacher, and as I am being taught by Him, how to live, how to love, how to serve, and so on, I am un/learning to teach.

Application:

So what might all of this mean for the practice of education?

Let me now consider some of the implications of this study for teacher education curriculum and pedagogy in the context of growing racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity in educational institutions. I shall begin by reviewing McCarthy's (1997) recommendations for 'critical multiculturalism;' Boler's (1997) call for teachers to engage themselves and their pupils in what she calls 'testimonial reading,' and what the Scriptures have to say about the relationship between knowledge and love.

McCarthy (1997) recommends that teachers openly acknowledge that the "knowledge" presently taught in schools is not only a socio-cultural product, but has been

and continues to be deeply implicated in perpetuating social inequity. He also recommends including in the curriculum different perspectives on "the great stories" of Modern Western culture, that is, accounts of those same events, but as told by people whose voices have historically been overlaid, like a bad voice over in a television advert, with the result that social, economic, and political systems have been constructed that privilege some and at the expense of others.

Boler (1997) recommends the practice of testimonial reading; it requires readers to come to terms with their complicity in the reproduction and maintenance of such inequitable systems of relations, and to rethink our own assumptions, to confront the internal obstacles we encounter as our views are challenged. The Scriptures say, "knowledge causes people to be puffed up (to bear themselves loftily and be proud), but love (affection and goodwill and benevolence) edifies and builds up and encourages one to grow [to his full stature]" (1 Cor. 8: 1b-2a). So, what might a course based on this foundation look like?

Curriculum

If I were designing a graduate course on the development of educational programs, for example, I would take care to expose students to various kinds of cultural products, narratives, expository writings, journals, novels, short stories, poems, dramas, and movies which make visible some of the systemic barriers to equality of opportunity, and which are produced by individuals from a variety of perspectives, making sure that these products are contextualized.

Pedagody

Teaching would involve engaging students in the practices of testimonial viewing, reading and writing; encouraging them to attend to and to examine carefully their various cognitive and affective frameworks, to begin to think about how they have come to think, speak, feel, and act as they do; respecting their individuality; being transparent about where I am coming from as a teacher and why, and making it clear in word and in deed that students are not required either to adopt or agree with the convictions of the professor; encouraging students to undertake inquiries for themselves; lovingly encouraging them to press through to the bottom of the issues which surface in the context of their studies.

Disposition: Taking the position of, "Here I am. I am at your disposal."

I take this position first before God (who empowers and enables, who supplies and sustains, who loves and encourages, who shields and defends) and then before others – authorities, colleagues, peers, pupils, family members, etc. In practice, this means service. It means extending patience, grace, mercy, encouragement, hospitality, and assistance where there is a need, regardless of how I might feel about it. It means laughing with, crying with, and refraining from passing judgment, criticizing, accusing, condemning, boasting, gossiping and slandering. It means providing clothing for the naked, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, the imprisoned, caring for the disabled, the elderly, the widows and the orphans. It means comforting the suffering, being with the dying, examining and considering regularly my ways, whether I am submitting to God, yielding to His Spirit in all situations, allowing Him to respond through me (as opposed to me trying to speculate what Jesus would do *if* He were here, or *if* I were Him), and so

on, for He *is* here, and He *does live* in me, and in every other believer. After all, we serve

the risen Lord, not a dead man, or a figment of our collective or individual imagination,

or a myth. I have the opportunity to teach just such a course this summer. It will be

interesting to see how all of my talk 'shakes down' as 'the rubber hits the road.'

So what about my research? How is my faith in Jesus impacting my practice as a

researcher? Rather than attempt verbally to explain, let me share instead in the next

chapter a paper I recently finished writing. It is the final report of the study my colleague

and I worked on regarding the impact of immigration on lower mainland British

Columbia public schools, and it is illustrative of the impact my faith is having on my

research.

Human being, you have already been told

What is good, what *ADONAI* demands of you –

No more than to act justly, love grace

And walk in purity with your God.

(Micah, 6:8)

The way we have come to know love is through his having laid down his life for us.

And we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers!

If someone has worldly possessions and sees his brother in need,

yet closes his heart against him, how can he be loving God?

Children, let us love not with words and talk, but with actions and in reality.

(1 John 3:16-18)

Chapter 6

Personal holiness: The next step on the path toward social justice?

To know
God
is to love Him,
and to love
Him
is to attend
to the cares of "the stranger,"
the other,
whomever she or he
may be,
and to expect from
him or her
nothing
in return.

The growing diversity in Canadian public schools brought about by the arrival to Canada of persons from an increasingly wide variety of countries and cultures (Dirks, 1995; Fleras & Elliot, 1996) presents challenges for those charged with teaching Canadian youth. Many teachers claim that coping with an increasingly diverse student population is currently one of the greatest challenges school personnel face. Despite efforts to address problems such as racism and ethnocentrism in schools, tensions between and within groups remain. These and many other practical day-to-day problems raise questions concerning teaching in a society comprising members of many of racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic groups.

According to our research, although the overall tone of social and educational policy has changed in the last twenty to thirty years from diversity negative to diversity affirming, the policies themselves do not offer much in the way of practical wisdom that would better equip teachers to serve their changing clientele. Further, it has been reported to us that there are not a lot of external supports (money, material resources, personnel) being made available to improve the quality of education for an increasingly diverse student population (Fleras & Elliot, 1996) and an increasingly homogeneous teaching force (Sleeter & Grant, 1994, pp. 29-30; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon, 1998). What help, then, is available for teachers who desire to serve better their diverse student population, who desire to overcome their own socialization, and who are frustrated and at a loss even for how to be with students from backgrounds that differ radically from their own?

Background and perspectives

Initially, we naively thought we could expect policy at the national and provincial levels to provide guidance for teachers attempting *to cope with* these demographic changes.[91] We assumed that policy at the Ministry level would provide an impetus for implementation throughout the province on the part of the Ministry itself, universities, teacher groups, and other interested parties. We assumed that the users of that policy, that is, districts and school staffs, would receive instruction (inservice or preservice) that would keep them informed of policy developments and at least provide some suggestions about how one might go about putting the policies into practice. But we did not, at least not initially, question the existing policy, either in terms of what it presupposed about the

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[91] It never even occurred to either of us to problematise the notion of 'coping with.'

relations between newcomers to Canada, "Canadians," and Canada's social and political systems, or in terms of the kinds of practices to which such a policy might give rise. Neither did we consider the already established set of policies and practices in use, and how they might militate against change. Nor did we consider either the time it might take teachers to adjust to the ideas embedded in the new policies and to effect the necessary changes to their classroom practices, or that teachers might just be tired of the seemingly endless stream of changes being mandated from above.[92]

We determined early on that upon acquiring and examining the pertinent policy we would contact some of the people who had been involved in the creation of it to find out why they had thought it necessary to develop such policy, and what the intentions were behind its inception. Also, in the interests of hearing as many sides of the story as possible, we planned to take our inquiry into the schools and communities most directly affected by those policies to examine whether and to what extent administrators and teachers were familiar with the policy; to evaluate the extent to which they understood it and were implementing it; and to find out what problems were arising as a result of their efforts. We also wanted to know whether members of community groups working with immigrants were aware of the policy and if so what they thought of it. We intended to seek their input on how the existing policy might be amended to serve better the interests of both teachers and newcomers to Canada.

We began, in other words, from our own (in)experience and necessarily limited and partial frames of reference, as well as a limited familiarity with the literature about the issues we were facing. Aware that our racial and linguistic privilege[93] would affect

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[92] Why these things did not occur to us initially is the subject for another paper.
[93] Both of us are white Anglophones.

our research in more ways than we could think of, we realized that one of our tasks would be to problematize our interpretative horizons as much as possible.[94] We began this process by digging into the literature that grapples with the notion of equality of opportunity as it pertains to education, and which addresses issues of race, language, representation, and identity in curriculum.

I. Problematizing and expanding our frames:

A synopsis of some of the literature

A) Just what is "equal opportunity" anyway?

i) Equality of access?

Lessard (1995) describes three ideas of equal educational opportunity: equality of access, equality of treatment, and equality of results. Equality of access sounds good in that nobody is to be excluded on the basis of race, gender, class, and/or disability. As such, it seems to put an end to the kinds of discrimination that were commonplace in the bad old (assimilationist) days. However, this view is problematic in that it is founded on notions of biological, racial, ethnic, and/or cultural essentialism and it gives rise to an individualist "deficiency orientation" [95] toward problems such as school failure, academic underachievement, drop-outs, and so on. This orientation is buttressed by a belief in a more or less meritocratic social system in which 'the best qualified person' gets the job.

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[94] Note, this is an ongoing, and we anticipate, lifelong process. One of the 'insights' we have come to is that as much as anyone can imagine they understand 'the other,' we/they cannot step out of our/their skins, or out of the language and experiences which have shaped (and continue to shape) our understandings. As finite beings, we can only ever be privy to and offer part of the story (Wachterhauser, 2002, p. 56).

[95] A deficiency orientation focuses on deficiencies to be remediated. A difference orientation focuses on strengths to be built on. Both orientations subscribe to the "human capital" theory of education and society which holds that "education is a form of investment in that the individual acquires skills and knowledge that can be converted into income when used to get a job" (Sleeter & Grant, 1994, p. 43).

On this view it is up to each individual to make the most of his or her gifts, talents, and/or abilities. If one should fail in school, or just plain refuse to participate in the educational project, then one is either just not able, or not sufficiently motivated. The individual, and the individual alone, is responsible. The system is, after all, equitable. No one is excluded.

ii) Equality of treatment?

The idea of equality of treatment is a bit more complex. It is based on an Aristotelian-like notion of balance between horizontal equity, similar treatment of presumed similars, and vertical equity, differential treatment of those presumed to be "different." Children are alike, it is thought, in many ways. They share a multitude of attributes. Therefore, all children will go to school and will receive the same curriculum. But each child is also unique, and so has unique needs. Thus, pedagogy will be adapted to accommodate those differences.

This view of equality of opportunity rests on the assumption that those who gain the most from the education system are generally the ones who are already privileged. Therein lies the attractiveness of this view: it appears at least to acknowledge the existence of social inequity, and to take real steps toward eliminating it. But, like the equality of access version of equality of opportunity, this view is problematic in that it, too, rests on assumptions of biological, ethnic, racial, and cultural essentialism. Further, it does not problematise the "core curriculum" which all students are required to learn. Assumptions about 'unique pedagogical needs' are made on the basis of apparent group membership, group attributes, assumptions about culture in general, and specific cultural groups in particular, assumptions which are more likely to derive from stereotypical

representations of "others" than from any extensive and/or extended contact with living members of 'those' groups. This view would accommodate either a deficiency or a difference orientation to understanding educational "problems".

iii) Equality of results?

The equality of results view may be thought of as a kind of extension of the idea of differential treatment of those presumed to be "different." But in this case, differential equals preferential; that is, unequal treatment favoring the less privileged (Lessard, 1995). The goal of this "preferential treatment" is for children of lower socio-economic status to attain educational outcomes comparable to children from the higher socio-economic strata of society (Lessard, 1995). This view, which is also underpinned by the human capital theory, holds that all children *can* benefit from school (even *'those children'* from lower socio-economic groups, *"other"* races, cultures, linguistic backgrounds, and so on), if only the school system and its personnel would "respect *their* learning styles and pace" (p. 180). According to this view of equality of educational opportunity, and unlike the equality of access view, the responsibility for one's failure in school, or refusal to participate, falls squarely on the shoulders of the school system and/or the society at large in which the schools have their origins and for which the schools do their work.

Again, on the face of things, when examined next to the two previous views, this version of equality of opportunity may seem to some attractive. Even radical. However, while it differs from the equality of access and treatment views, in that it implicates "the system" in the student's academic failure or refusal to participate, it, too, presupposes biological, ethnic, racial, and cultural essentialism, and is founded on the human capital theory, the view that "there is a standard body of knowledge and a set of values and skills

that all … citizens need to acquire" (Sleeter & Grant, 1993, p. 43). This theory is founded on a belief in a meritocratic social system in which the best qualified person (almost) always gets the job, and that those who occupy the lower echelons of the socio-economic strata, i.e., people of colour, the poor, people with disabilities, and women have not had sufficient opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills society needs (Sleeter & Grant, 1993, p. 43).

Finally, all three of these views of "equality of educational opportunity" are predicated upon a particular racial, ethnic, and linguistic standpoint (white, Anglophone, Eurocentric), a standpoint which is more often than not unproblematically taken as the normative standard and applied as a kind of 'corrective' to those who differ significantly from it. This standard is rarely even acknowledged, much less problematised. And therein lies the problem.

B)   3 old discourses and a new one (McCarthy, 1993)

i)   Cultural understanding

In the context of a discussion about curriculum reform, McCarthy (1993) identifies and describes four multicultural discourses: cultural understanding, cultural competence, cultural emancipation, and critical multiculturalism. According to McCarthy, cultural understanding emphasizes transcultural similarities, and argues for such things as increased cross-cultural communication and a reduction of various forms of intolerance. In particular, they speak out against ethnic, religious, cultural, and racial intolerance, and, as a means of bringing into line all of those nasty intolerants *out there*, they propose what amounts to cultural sensitivity training, workshops to teach about "other" cultures, and the like.

ii) Cultural competence

Cultural competence opposes ethnic, religious, cultural, and racial intolerance and presupposes that such intolerance is a function of personal attitudes. The difference between the discourses of cultural understanding and cultural competence is that the latter insists upon the existence and significance of differences that make a difference[96] in 'Western' society. This particular discourse opposes both between-group antagonism and efforts to try to eradicate or at least mask differences and make everyone the same. It presupposes that cross-cultural exchange is both possible and desirable. In educational terms, this view generally translates into curricular add-ons to promote the preservation of the cultural identities and languages of others.[97]

iii) Cultural emancipation

According to McCarthy (1993) the discourse of cultural emancipation also holds that racial, cultural, and ethnic differences make a difference in contemporary society. The end that speakers of this discourse have in view is to "liberate" or "empower" their students by adjusting curriculum and pedagogy in ways that will encourage "minority"[98] students to "buy in" to the school agenda so that they may experience more success in the mainstream, both in school and in the labour market.

The kinds of adjustments to the curriculum recommended by speakers of this discourse typically involve reshaping the curriculum so that it will be more accurately representative of so-called "others," and will include more information about the history

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[96] For example, the ways in which and rates at which children learn are differences about which much difference is made in public education. (McDermott et al., 1993, p. 272)
[97] This is pretty much the language of the policies we examined, although, there is a blend with the following discourse, the discourse of cultural emancipation.

[98] Minority in terms of social power relations, not necessarily numeric representation.

and achievements of members of minority groups and about the valuable contributions

"they" have made to society. The discourse of cultural emancipation is unique, in that it

recognizes that the school curriculum is problematic, but it fails to problematise the

peculiarly Western epistemology that underlies most if not all public school curricula,

and serves in effect, as Lyotard says, to "terrorize" peoples who had no part in writing it.

> It is, after all, a time-, place-, and culture-bound story of human knowledge and, accordingly, is a very bad fit for many sociocultural groups. Worse, by presupposing certain conceptions of knowledge and rationality, it masks the manner in which modern Western societies oppress the many others that exist within them and is thus a bad story for Western societies themselves. (Howe, 2001, p. 202)

iv) Critical multiculturalism

McCarthy (1993) identifies and describes a fourth possibility: the discourse of

critical multiculturalism. This discourse presupposes: that intolerance is not merely a

function of personal attitudes; that cultural identity is not just a matter of personal choice;

that culture is not a fixed entity; and that systemic injustices exist to the detriment of

some social groups – in other words, inequity is built into existing social, economic, and

discursive systems. While intolerance undoubtedly involves personal attitudes, speakers

of the discourse of critical multiculturalism recognize that attitudes are neither innate, nor

do they spring fully formed in the minds of individuals *in vacuo*. Rather, they derive

from the socio-cultural systems into and along with which one grows. On this account,

many of the social institutions, which have over time come to constitute a particular

socio-cultural milieu, were founded as a consequence of (and hence, reflect) such

attitudes.

Like the first three discourses, the discourse of critical multiculturalism

(McCarthy, 1993) decries cultural intolerance, cultural assimilation, and between-group

antagonism. Additionally, critical multiculturalists speak out against cultural hegemony, the domination of one culture's social practices and ways of knowing over those it conceives of as different (i.e., from itself).[99] Speakers of this discourse advocate making explicit the connections between power and what counts as "knowledge." They point out that much of what is considered today to be knowledge is socially constructed and value laden. They also recommend 'coming clean' that there is nothing inherently superior or desirable about the so-called cultural achievements or "heroes" of "the West." Indeed, they call for a critique of the very idea of "Westernness."

Further, critical multiculturalists recommend open acknowledgement that the "knowledge" taught in schools is a socio-cultural product that has been deeply implicated in perpetuating social inequity. They advocate an emphasis on a global ethos;[100] examination of the way members of dominant and subordinate groups are represented both in- and outside of the school context; acknowledgment that social constructions of particular ethnocultural identities are problematic in that they give rise to stereotypes and wholesale characterizations of relations between people; and inclusion of multiple perspectives in the curricula.[101]

Still, something is missing from McCarthy's analysis. All four discourses seem to have as their aim making the other knowable. The chief difference between the first three

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[99] NB the notion of "difference" inheres a normative point of reference that is typically masked.

[100] For example, they would support a critique of the exportation and imposition of one's cultural ideals to/on "Third World" countries vs. interrogating the notion of "the third world," i.e. asking questions about where this notion came from, and in the context of what social policies and practices did this "third world" emerge?

[101] For example, one might teach Canadian history differently by looking at First Nations, French, and English accounts of the processes by which Canada has come to be the country that it is. One might note how events that seem significant to one group are hardly even noted by another. One might also note the difference in how various social practices and political movements are regarded by the different groups. One might teach literature by examining the cultural and historical specificity of criteria for determining whether a piece of writing does or does not count as "literature." And so on.

discourses and the last one is a matter of perspective only. In the case of cultural understanding, cultural competence, and cultural emancipation, the emphasis is on stories told about 'the other' by social scientists, historians, and the like. These stories presented in schools are generally grounded in social scientific reports and taught as 'the truth' about what happened in this or that situation. Historically, the perspective of the authors of these reports was never problematised. It was just taken for granted that because the information was based on "scientific" studies it was "the truth." The discourse of critical multiculturalism renders visible the narrators of these stories, the authors of the studies, and rightly challenges their claims to truth by offering narratives from an 'other' perspective. So, for example, according to critical multiculturalism, instead of Eurocentric "discovery" stories about Canada and the "civilizing" of its "savage" inhabitants, stories need to be told about the invasion of this land we have come to call "Canada" by a self-seeking, violent people, and about the systematic exploitation, co-optation, and erosion of both the First Nations peoples' ways and this land's natural resources.

We believe that in addition to the kinds of changes McCarthy (1993) and other critical multiculturalists call for, there is a need for those hearing, reading, and producing all manner of accounts (pupils, teachers, administrators, curriculum writers, program developers, policy makers, and so on) to examine the ground of our positions, to attend to the frames of reference, the conceptual and affective filters through which we experience reality, filters which, for example, allow us to "recoil with horror at the Nazi idea of subhumans," but "cover over or excuse the attitude of our own soldiers toward the Japanese in WWII" (Noddings, 2004, p. 493). Our belief stems from both our readings

of the literature, and our interviews with stakeholders variously positioned within the public education system in British Columbia's lower mainland. A synopsis of some of the interviews that led us to believe as we do follows. Each of the excerpts, in one way or another, points to the need for all participants in education to pay attention to the frames through which we variously experience reality.

II. Interviews with insiders

Our interviews with individuals involved at different levels in the making and implementing of the policies we examined show first that there has been a 180 degree turnaround in the emphasis of social and educational policy in the last forty to fifty years, from mandating the eradication of cultural and ethnic difference to mandating the maintenance and celebration of ethnic and cultural difference. But, as our respondents point out, that shift has precipitated something like mental whiplash among teachers who were raised up and trained in the ways of assimilationism. All of our interviewees seem to agree that there is a need for parties involved to get to know our own history, to get to know ourselves, how we have come to think, speak, and act the way we do, to become familiar with the ground of our positions.

In one way or another, all of our respondents called ignorance a significant contributing factor to poor between- and within-group relations. Only, each seemed to conceive of the problem of ignorance a little differently. For one of our interviewees, ignorance constitutes an absence of knowledge by 'us' (that is, Canadians of European ancestry) about 'them' (immigrants, especially members of visible minorities), about their conceptions of education, about their expectations of schools in Canada, and so on. Another of our interviewees focused on an absence of knowledge on the part of

Canadians of the uglier side of our own national history, such as the internment of Japanese Canadians in prison camps during the Second World War, and the treatment of First Nations peoples. Another of our respondents pointed out that ignorance also has something to do with the "knowledge" that is already in place, that ignorance is not merely an absence of true information; rather, the problem stems from the erroneous information which is already in place and which must be exposed and rooted out in order to make way for 'the truth'.

Early on in our work together, we interviewed a secondary school teacher of 22 years, who works primarily with severely emotionally disturbed students who have learning disabilities. Like us, he is white and English speaking. His family, though, is of mixed origins, and has suffered the effects of racism and discrimination. Indeed, it is from these experiences that his interest in matters of diversity and education spring. Our interviewee reminds us that large scale change is terribly difficult to orchestrate, for one has to deal with an already constituted set of widely held ideas, practices, ways of talking, and habits of mind, such as the mindset of assimilationism. He told us,

> Most teachers that I know[102] were trained prior to 1988 in a climate that viewed diversity as essentially negative. Even after 1988, there was nothing really to change the views of teacher educators and so assimilation practices continued for a number of reasons. One is simply that the universities themselves were somewhat divorced from the public schools. The teacher educators, too, came, as I said before, from that period of time when an assimilationist view was dominant.

He pointed out that not only the teachers and teacher educators, but the curriculum, too, is inherently assimilationist. He said,

> ... it astonishes me that to this day, the Europeans coming to North America, taking this land, moving across the continent in a systematic fashion, imprisoning First Nations people on reserves, is regarded as a normal process. We use terms like "march of progress," "inevitable

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[102] At the time of the interview, our interviewee had taught in schools in British Columbia for 22 years.

settlement," and all of these are regarded as acceptable. And we regard any kind of Indian or First Nations uprisings or resistance as "savagery" or uncivilised". Yet when you talk about any other country, we use words like "freedom fighters" and "resistance" ...

This has been one of our chief observations as we have considered our data, that policies have changed over the past twenty or thirty years, and practice is expected to follow suit, but there is a major problem – the mindset of assimilationism. While we may agree intellectually that assimilationism was the wrong way to go, and is the wrong way to go, 'we' have some distance to go before our hearts (and our practices) are 'converted.' But converted to what? The question remains, if assimilationism was and is wrong, then what is the right way to go? What are the alternatives? It is so much more complex than saying, we're just not going to think, say, or do these things any more. Or, we're going to think and say and do this instead.

Have you ever tried to change a habit: to quit smoking; to quit mindlessly throwing things away[103] and start recycling; to stop drinking alcohol; to stop using 'foul language'? There is so much more to it than just changing behaviour. There are the relationships with people who are of a similar mindset that get challenged when someone changes his or her mind about something as significant as how to be in relationship with people who are "different". What about the heart? What about the emotions? How are they to be 'retrained'? re-'educated'?

Have you ever tried to start liking something or some group of people you've really learned to hate? How do you fare with that aunt, uncle, cousin, sibling, parent, or spouse who just gets on your last nerve all of the time? Or that co-worker? The one who talks and talks and talks and never *ever* says anything positive about *anything*. Or the

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[103] Just where is "away" anyway?

student who sits there in the middle of your classroom, day after day, arms folded, glaring at you, as if to say, "I dare you to make me learn something." Or the new administrator who has a cheery slogan everyday, and expects everyone else just to fall into line with all the changes she or he envisions for the school, the one to whom it never seems to occur to listen to the questions, comments, or concerns of the staff? Or the custodial worker who is, it seems, surly to bed and surly to rise?

How are we to overcome the socio-cultural 'brainwashing' we have all experienced, our deeply entrenched patterns of reacting to different kinds of situations? Do we know better now than we did then? Really? Have we got it all figured out now? No more assimilationism. Full steam ahead with … with what? Is pluralism the answer? What new problems will this 'new' mindset engender? Is it really a 'new' mindset?

According to our respondent, before we can move forward, there is a need for us to come to terms with our past. He told us,

> I sense that there needs to be much, much more … discussion, much more thinking about it, much more pondering of the issues and the implications. There's just not a lot of knowledge. … There are all kinds of people who don't know about the internment in prison camps of the Japanese in Canada during the Second World War. I teach a class in which my students, none of them, knew that there was a two citizenship policy in Canada until 1947. They do not know that people were not allowed to vote, be on the voter's list, because they were, say, of Japanese ancestry, Chinese, Black, no matter how long they had been in this country, no matter if they were born here, and their grandparents, and they had no idea of the significance of not being on the voter's list, that you couldn't teach. … people were shocked. … they don't understand what the issues are. They don't know why we are where we are, and if you don't know why we are, why we talk about these things, then you can't go forward.[104]

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[104] Just in case one might think that this information is dated because the interviews were conducted in 1997 and 1998, I recently taught a graduate course in the development of educational programs, and students in that class, many of whom have been teaching for a number of years, were also shocked by some of this information.

We also interviewed two individuals working at the district level, a man and a woman, both white, both Anglo-Canadian. With regard to the inception of a provincial Multicultural policy and provincial support for multicultural initiatives in districts and in schools, we were told,

> Teachers are having to look once again at a significant change in their clients, in their students. They've been teaching this way for so many years and it's worked, or it seemed to have been successful, and now we add the language barrier and what's happening with the ESL students who are being integrated into all classes (because that's our policy) ... But ... because we are limited with our funds, we can only have so many hours per day, and so what that does is it gets kids into regular courses and they're having a hard time speaking, let alone understanding. So for teachers, I think it's added stress. ... What we see on an increasing basis is a much, much heavier demand for in-service classroom teachers to accommodate diversity ... Basically, the classroom teacher has been left to accommodate ... kids that 4-5 years ago would have had some support in transition. They're just not getting it now. It's fallen too much on teachers.

According to our respondents, while the Ministry has provided a kind of skeletal framework with respect to how "diversity" is to be regarded, and that something is to be done to ensure that, in practice, this view of "diversity" is both respected and promoted, it is left to the people employed within the various local school districts, schools, and related community organizations to develop a plan to suit the local situation, to sort out what that "something to be done" might be, what form or shape it might take, and so on. Given the observation of the previous respondent, regarding the remaining vestiges of the mindset of assimilationism, this is highly problematic.

In terms of curricular development, we were told there has been,

> ... some in-service again, strategies for teaching ESL students, different modes of teaching, knowledge frameworks, using visuals, looking at literacy. You know, a lot of high school teachers maybe have students

who are non-readers, and they've never taught students how to read because they've always had students who could read.

These respondents, too, stressed that a 'lack of knowledge' is largely responsible for many of the problems experienced both by teachers and pupils adjusting to the demographic changes in schools. Only, their emphasis was a little different. Rather than expressing concerns about individuals not knowing enough about their own backgrounds, they raised concerns about teachers, administrators, and district personnel not knowing enough about the backgrounds of the pupils in their classrooms. They said,

> Some of our parents, some of our students are coming from war-torn countries where they haven't had a formal education. Some come with the value that school is highly esteemed, and the teacher is a guru, and others come from a system where school wasn't valued ... So what we're trying to do is just inform people and provide information, and how we do that is through ... workshops and also resources. ... We've spoken with [the local universities] about the need for there to be some kind of training for all teachers, particularly for teachers that will be teaching in such a diverse community as the lower mainland.[105]

They told us of the added frustrations that both school and district personnel have experienced as a result of a dearth of settlement services. For instance, they said, the year before we conducted the interview (that would have been in 1996), they had had 45 children, refugees from Afghanistan, none of whom had been to school, ranging in age from grades one through twelve appear,

> ... virtually overnight in our community. ... No information. No preplanning. ... We had one parent commit suicide with two kids in the school. Of course, the mother is left to deal with the father who committed suicide. I spent four days phoning all over the lower mainland trying to find a counsellor who could understand their language.

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[105] From my recent conversations with teachers, they are still crying out for this kind of training.

All of these circumstances add up to greater pressure on teachers to 'be all things to all people.' What kinds of support might be made available to teachers, school administrators, and district personnel in dealing with these kinds of issues on top of all of their other day-to-day responsibilities? What mind-sets might have to be overcome?

We also interviewed the vice principal of a local middle school. This man of African ancestry had some very interesting and valuable things to tell us about his experiences of growing up Black in a Canadian city. Like the first teacher we spoke with, he indicated that large-scale change is very difficult to orchestrate. He spoke of the importance of small scale steps towards larger scale change, and of the need to proceed with care. Like our first interviewee, he told us that the education system in the lower mainland seems to be stuck at the first or second level of multiculturalism (food, festival, and dress), and that there is a need to go deeper, to probe and to problematise the cognitive frameworks and emotional reactions of individuals to the demographic changes that have taken place in Canada in recent years. In reference to the Ministry of Education's mandate, that all school districts develop multicultural and/or race relations policies, this respondent said,

> I applaud the Ministry and I applaud specifically this school district ... for some of the policy initiatives that they have launched. ... That was kind of significant out here in so-called suburbia ... in the 90s, that people actually took the initiative to actually drive and develop a policy.

Still, he pointed out to us that the policy-drafting process itself was not without its problems. Of the group that had originally gathered to draft the new multiculturalism and race relations policy in his school district, our respondent told us,

> They had representation from everybody. At first, it was an all white group. [One person] kind of put the skids on everything and said, 'Wait a

minute here,' and looked around the table and said, 'You don't have all the representation.' Some people walked out, 'You don't need representation. We know what we're talking about. We're professionals. What are you talking about?' She put the brakes on the process, and they brought in a couple of people.

One person was from [a local community organisation] in [the district] who worked on the policy. They brought in a couple of people from the [name of district] Multicultural Society, who made a presentation and that kind of … caused major, major rows, because these people basically came in and slapped them in the side of the head by saying, 'You know what? There's structural and institutional racism.' People were basically, 'What are you talking about? There's none of that here. Like, these people [who were brought in] are loony. It's doesn't exist here.' … They basically came in and said, 'You guys are working on this policy on racism, okay, here is what we know about racism. It's institutional and it's structural. It's part of the very fabric of your organization. We don't have any reason to believe that your institution would be any different than any others.' People were, 'Forget it! No way!'

… I think that the level beyond that is recognizing that, well, the terminology I suppose used by a lot of teachers, a lot of parents, is that "white" is still synonymous with "Canadian". Even myself, I'll be asked by teachers or by parents, what country do I come from? My family's been here for 200 years. And colour is still … still not "Canadian". … Banks talks quite a bit about the importance of a central canon, for example, in curriculum, but the question is, who develops the canon? Who gives the information? Who determines what's in and what's out? What are some of the things that we are not paying attention to that are invisible to us?

In other words, the predominant mindset regarding multiculturalism remains, as our first respondent said, assimilationist.

One example he offered of how this mindset is manifest in the schools is that despite the large numbers of Asian students who can clearly be seen at the lunch hour eating rice with chopsticks, "we are still a cheese burger and fries driven cafeteria. We don't have rice in the cafeteria. It is a simple thing and it's one of the most invisible things." And concerning the curriculum, he told us frankly,

It scares the heck out of me when you walk in the classrooms and we're still looking at Africans living in these round huts and here's what they lived in, and nowhere in the lessons does it talk about the capital city of Nigeria, of the country you are studying, with 10 million people in it. It's a city and it's got high-rises. Here is what people are, right here and now. Let's take a look at First Nations history, and masks and culture. These are all great and wonderful things to study and should not be neglected, but let's take a look at treaties. Let's take a look at treaty negotiations right here and now. Let's take a look at that. Take a look at statistics [and ask] 'Okay, why is this?' ... Let's include the histories and stories of everybody in the central canon. ... The curriculum, a lot of the traditional textbooks and a lot of the traditional approaches. How it's delivered and how we're teaching kids to ask questions. Or not to ask questions. What's not being asked? What is being asked? What's being left out?

Our respondent also informed us that for his masters' research, he had interviewed people who were involved in the development of the district's policy. He told us that the three questions he posed, (Why did you get involved in the policy? How do you see race relations? I.e., how are people getting along in your community and here in the school? And, if the policy really works, how will we know? What will be different?). That, he said,

... created more conversation than anything. It was fascinating. By and large, I found the same things that people like Christine Sleeter found ... and that a lot of educators still say (a) "There really is no racism"; (b) "If there is racism, then it's by and large brought on by the visibles themselves";[106] and (c) "As soon as people assimilate, gather language proficiency and eat cheese burgers and play hockey, we'll be fine. That's how we know the policies work." That's going to be increasingly difficult to do ...

I grew up in Winnipeg. I went to an all white school. There was me and my sister. We fit in. We integrated totally. We could fit. But we had no choice. But there is a choice increasingly in school when you have thirty or forty percent of a school population speaking your other language, or having some of your cultural mores. When I got together with some of the fellows in Winnipeg, at other schools, we would slip into some other practices that we would do at home, in terms of our speech patterns, etc.,

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[106] Again, in my recent conversations with teachers, there continues to be a denial of race related problems and a 'blame the victim' mentality among some school personnel.

etc. But I wouldn't do that at school. Even though I was Canadian, and I don't speak another language, I was still bi-cultural, by and large.

I'm finding it interesting that at more and more of our schools, people have the option. They don't have to assimilate anymore. They can have and maintain their own practices at school. I think that's alarming to a lot of traditional Canadians. ... I think that's very alarming to a lot of teachers. In terms of ESL instruction, they walk in the door and there shouldn't be any other language except for English. That's it. Research shows so clearly that that's not necessarily the way to go to acquire the language.

When asked if he were developing a new policy for his district, how it would differ from the current one, and how he would know when it was implemented, our respondent replied,

I think the first thing we need to do is we need to get to know ourselves a little bit [my emphasis]. I went through the process of doing my thesis after a lot of work in this area. ... What is culture? What is ethnicity? All these questions, and what is it that I really believe? Because I found that most people, educators, have high ideals. They wanted to do the right thing for people. They believe in Canada. They believe in equity. They believe in those things. And they want to believe in them, and they believe that's the way to go. You get under the surface a little bit, these same people would start to move in their chair a little bit when they started thinking about their neighborhood becoming fifty, sixty, seventy percent "different." It's honest. ...

I think the first thing we need to do ... is getting underneath the surface, and really understanding what our own cognitive frameworks are. Where are we getting our ideas? How do we really make sense of culture? How do we really make sense of what I want in the school and what I don't want? What's okay and what isn't okay. We need to kind of come to grips with that ...

Getting a little more specific about what the substance of these small group dialogues in schools might look like, he went on to say,

What does this mean in this school, when we celebrate diversity? ... I think that's one of the problems, we have a lot of policy. People are looking, "Oh, it's another policy." It's looked at as another add on as

opposed to just being brought right into the core of the school and said, "Hey, this is what we believe about kids. This is what we believe about our society. That's what we believe about justice. Let that be the driver of what we are going to do in our schools. *Number one, getting to know ourselves a lot better.* Two, really setting up some ideals ... Then, and I believe only then, we start looking at some really solid Pro-D and really good work in terms of what culture is, and what race is. In the now. It's not these old-fashioned, biological definitions necessarily, but it's also not some social construct that ... as soon as we get rid of terms like "Black" and all these other labels and we can call ourselves Canadians, we won't have the problems, right? Not necessarily true. Like, we've had four or five hundred years of racial significance really being significant and really determining life opportunity, etc. Don't expect it has gone away simply because you may want to think in an egalitarian sense. It hasn't. It just looks different ...

However, our respondent noted there is a general reluctance of people to delve deeply into the issues, into their own cognitive frameworks and emotional reactions to specific issues. He said,

I think it [i.e. digging deeply] really wrecks havoc with our vision of who we are. We are the district. We are individuals. We are teachers. It's ugly and we don't want to believe this about ourselves. We believe we're for justice. We believe we're for rights of people and there's a lot of very good teachers working actively putting in multicultural lessons in their classes, and the last thing they want to hear is that the environment in their classroom is not open and inclusive. They don't want to hear that. We've got to find other ways of telling them. It's counterproductive to tell them, 'Hey, you know what? You're screwing up. Your classrooms aren't warm for everybody.' We've got to do more work celebrating and working from positives. ... We are not just going to go in there and slam people over the head and change their attitudes. (Interview, October, 1997).

When asked about the policies currently in effect concerning Multiculturalism, another of our respondents, an Indo-Canadian woman, told us,

We have a general school policy. Generally, the policy in this district is open integration. Integration of every student. It's open doors to every student. You can move here right now from any country in the world and you can come to a school. If you live in our catchment area, we will enroll you. We do our best for every student in this district. I used to teach ESL,

so I know this. Sometimes in September we would register students for August. Sometimes in September there would be 90 students all of a sudden that were not originally on our list, that had just arrived from a different country. ... Keep in mind, I've taught in Japan for 2 years, so I think that we just have an amazing open door policy to any student from anywhere ... in the world.

... [I]n Japan, you might have one foreigner in a group of maybe 10,000 ... We [in Canada] are very accommodating as a group. You try and incorporate that child's cultural preference. You have teachers reading up about different cultures and trying to ... take the time.

She also told us that the school's policy states that, ... there will not be any form of racism or discrimination tolerated in the schools, and it will be dealt with in an appropriate manner. There's a firm statement in our school handbook that says that. If a kid ever did anything that was interpreted as racist, or hate, or discrimination, the penalties could range from temporary suspension to being kicked out, to being dealt with by administration. If it was serious, it would be dealt with.

Still, she noted that,

... your staff doesn't get it unless you have it in your school in their professional development time. They have to sit down and listen to it. I think that this kind of education comes from first educating the teachers. Then dealing with the kids. ... At my old school last year, for the last two years, it was always pushed to the back of the agenda: "We can deal with that later." That's sad. It should be one of those things brought up right at the beginning. Because I'm sure there are teachers at this school, that have some views that could be considered racist. I mean, quite frankly. Maybe I even do. Even though I'm a minority, that doesn't mean anything. We probably have some views that are racist.

Regarding one of the interviewer's questions about "problems in dealing with diversity," our respondent answered,

Problem number one is, can I call it ghettoization? We are now getting to the point where different ethnicities are grouping off. They feel comfortable hanging together, speaking their own language. ...

I guess to take your question again, there's not a diversity problem. The problem is a commonality problem. I mean, there's nobody coming together. ... Language. That's part of the whole ghettoization issue.

English as a Second Language students do not feel comfortable hanging out and talking in English. They feel like it handicaps them to speak English. So, whenever they can, and I've taught ESL, so I know this, they will revert back to their mother tongue. Which is great. I don't think we can mandate people speaking English. However, if you have a country that doesn't have a language that everyone speaks, you are missing something in that country. You are missing a coming together. ...

[Y]ou've got people coming here from India, from China, that can live in Surrey ... in Chinatown. You can live in certain parts of certain places and not ever have to speak English or read English. This is not a student issue. This is a community issue. We have Chinese [news]papers. We have Indian papers. We have Chinese programs, Chinese radio, Indian radio, Indian programs. You don't have to bother with English. So what does this mean?

Regarding her own experiences, growing up as a second generation Indo-Canadian, this secondary school teacher told us,

I'm a child of immigrants. I was born here. So I have a real passion for seeing kids that are coming here ... For them to be able to assimilate and deal with things. There needs to be a sort of forum for them.

She also told us of how she had difficulty fathoming the kinds of treatment to which she was subjected, especially, the failure of many to recognize that no 'cultural group' is monolithic, i.e., that there is as much within group diversity as there is between groups. She said,

It was really hard for me to even talk about it for a while. But when I grew up, I'm pretty sure in my all white neighbourhood, there were some incidents and they are very vague, now, but I remember when I was five someone writing something on my driveway. I don't remember what it was. I remember that it was bad. It was to do with us being Hindu. I know that. I know another couple of times people have called me, in grade 8, in high school, I was called "Paki" and sometimes I was called Punjabian and I'd get confused. I'd say to my parents, "Well I'm not. Why are they calling me a different religion?" Because I'm Hindu. So I never got it. And I was one east Indian. There were two East Indians in a school of 800 other, basically all white, or all sorts of European backgrounds. But now, if you go into a high school, you see an explosion. My old high school is more Indian now than it is non-Indian. ...

You now have this group of the old Chinese, who have lived here all their lives and the new Chinese who have just arrived here and they don't even like each other. There's issues between those two groups. Then you have the people that are non-Chinese looking at all of them and mopping them all into one group, saying "Oh, look at all those Chinese. They all do everything the same." I would be very insulted if someone said, "Oh, look at all these Indians. They get here. They don't know how to do anything. I would say, "Excuse me, I am just as Canadian as you are."

There's subtle racism [in Canada]. If you step on the Sky Train and you just watch people's faces. You don't have to say anything. You know....

Our respondent talked to us a little bit about the potential power of a student 'speaking as' an immigrant, of speaking forth about their experiences of racism and discrimination.

I wish you could have been in my English 10 class today. A kid stood up, a Chinese kid. He got here five years ago, and he gave a speech about racism. He basically said, I'm experiencing it right now. I experienced it yesterday. He started getting really shaky. He started to shake because his English isn't even good, but the whole class was just totally quiet. It's a very respectful class, of any student in the class. ... He's in the class. He's part of our group. But when he spoke today, I think a little bit of education happened in my classroom by one student educating the class. He basically said, do you think it's my fault that I can't speak English the way you can? Do you think it's my fault I look different? ... Because I can relate on some level. Even though I was born here. I know what it felt like to be brown when I was growing up. So I could totally relate to what he was saying. ...

Yet, she also acknowledged, from personal experience, how difficult it can be to do this. She said,

I have experienced some racism earlier in my life, and I have totally blocked that from my mind. It's very uncomfortable for me to think about it. ... I think I just tried to get rid of it. Then if another kid my age talks about – in [the teacher preparation program I went through] they made us talk about it. ... I was sort of sweating that day ... when I was talking about it. I'm like, "Oh my God, I was discriminated against." It's kind of like, God forbid, I don't even want to compare the two things, but if you're raped, you don't want to think about that. You don't want to identify that. ... Maybe that's what I'm doing ...

Getting underneath the surface:

An account of an ongoing process of transformation

As far as we are concerned, our interviewees have a point when they suggest that there is a need for 'us,' for all who call ourselves "Canadian," to consider our ways, to inquire into the history of this nation, into our own personal histories, into why we think the way we do and why we speak the way we do (and do not think and speak otherwise), that is, to examine closely our own frames of reference to see whether and the extent to which they are implicated in the production and maintenance of obstacles that 'the other' must confront and overcome in Canadian society. It is also our view that it is incumbent upon those who historically have had the 'upper hand' to begin the process. In other words, it is time for us white Anglophones of European ancestry to humble ourselves, to acknowledge the advantage taken by our ancestors, to acknowledge our past and present privilege, our complicity in the oppression of others, and, for lack of a better word, to "repent," that is, having become aware of the error of our ways, to change our minds and hearts, and to forsake our habitual ways of being in relationship with those whom 'we,' historically, have othered. And perhaps, in time, forgiveness, healing, and true reconciliation will become manifest. But where do we begin and how?

Dion Fletcher (2003) writes,

> The continuing injustices and inequality that plague First Nations people in this country [Canada] are overwhelming. Our resistance alone cannot end the oppression. The non-First Nations people of Canada must accept responsibility for their role in accomplishing change. Recognizing the legacy of injustice and its implications for the present and the future is a crucial first step (p. 344).

Delpit (1995), too, writes about this, for the need for 'us', that is, who have historically been the oppressor, to open ourselves to, and allow ourselves to be affected by these 'alternative' voices. She writes, "... it is those with the most power, those in the majority, who must take the greater responsibility for initiating the process" (p. 46), that is, the process of communicating across difference and addressing the more fundamental issue of power, of whose voice gets to be heard in determining what is best for poor children and children of colour. "To do so," she continues, "takes a very special kind of listening, listening that requires not only open eyes and ears, but open hearts and minds" (p. 46). She goes on to say that it is not with our ears and eyes that we hear and see, but that our beliefs serve as a kind of filter or screen.

Like hooks (1994), Delpit (1995) acknowledges that the process can be painful, for it "means turning yourself inside out, giving up your own sense of who you are, and being willing to see yourself in the unflattering light of another's angry gaze. It is not easy," she writes, "but it is the only way to learn what it might feel like to be someone else and the only way to start the dialogue. ... We must learn to be vulnerable enough to allow our world to turn upside down in order to allow the realities of others to edge themselves into our consciousness" (p. 47). That is to say, we who have historically been the oppressor need to learn to hear differently.

Un/learning to hear 'alternative' voices:

The first step on the path toward social justice

In her critique of Nussbaum's advocacy of what amounts to "passive empathy"[107] training as a means of moving toward social justice in an inequitable society, Boler (1997; 1999) recommends a practice she calls "testimonial reading" as one of the steps on the pathway to social justice, that is, as a way of proceeding towards more equitable social relations between groups of individuals and between individuals within groups.

Reading, Boler (1997) points out, has as much to do with the disposition that the reader adopts when she or he encounters the text of an other, as with any kind of activities of interpretation she or he is to perform. On Boler's account, testimonial reading consists in acknowledging one's responsibility for social injustice, that is to say, "recognizing oneself as implicated in the social forces that create the climate of obstacles the other must confront" (p. 263), and doing 'one's own work' which, at the very least, involves allowing one's own assumptions and world views to be exposed, examined, and challenged. But then what?

What is a testimonial reader to do with this tremendous burden of responsibility once it finally dawns on him or her? It is a terrible thing to come to the realization that one is indeed both implicated in the marginalization and disenfranchisement of others, and caught in a net of power relations from which there seems to be no way out, to come to the realization of the tremendous burden of responsibility for the well-being of the other (Levinas, 2001). What is a person to do? To whom might one turn in order to

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[107] Passive empathy is a term coined by Boler (1997) to denote a too easy identification with the other, which allows the reader/hearer to avoid acknowledging responsibility for his or her complicity in the formation and maintenance of obstacles and barriers the other must confront. On her account, "passive empathy produces *no action toward justice* [my emphasis] but situates the powerful Western eye/I as the judging subject, never called upon to cast [his or] her own gaze at [his or] her own reflection" (p. 259).

un/learn how to be differently in the world? To whom might one look for encouragement throughout what will undoubtedly be a lifelong, uphill battle against the forces that are now constitutive of one's very 'frame' or self? Can one look to one's colleagues? Friends? Administrators? Government officials? Can one look to the 'experts,' the 'professionals,' the 'knowers' in society? Can one in this day and age of cutbacks expect any financial, material, or human resources to be forthcoming to assist in such a major undertaking?

The narrative that follows responds to these questions. It is an account of one woman's journey through testimonial reading/hearing from ignorance born of privilege, to awareness, through despair, to hope, to love, love being the foundation for social justice. Following the narrative is a discussion of some of the implications of this story for curriculum and pedagogy in teacher education in a context of increasing racial, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity in educational institutions today and a climate of 'scarcity' in terms of resources and support services.

Getting underneath the surface: Considering my ways

> ... Consider your ways and set your mind on what has come to you. You have sown much, but you have reaped little; you eat, but you do not have enough; you drink, but you do not have your fill; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages has earned them to put them in a bag with holes in it. Thus says the Lord of hosts: consider your ways (your previous and present conduct) and how you have fared. (Hag. 1:5-7)

Although selfish, privileged, and ignorant, I did not, prior to beginning my doctoral studies, deliberately harbor any ill will toward anyone. Neither did I set out to hurt anybody. But I was fearful of people who were 'different,' people who were not like me, not only in terms of culture, language, ethnicity, and race, but also physical and

mental ability, gender, social class (those both 'higher' and 'lower' on the socio-economic scale), and education. I was afraid, timid, shy, and fearful of inadvertently offending others, fearful of rejection, judgment, and condemnation, and I was easily intimidated by those I perceived to be 'superior' to me, people of monetary means, men, and people with 'higher' education, greater intellect, and so on.[108] I was also defensive about literatures that even hinted that I might be complicit in the maintenance of social systems that are at the very core oppressive.

As I began to read and to listen testimonially to the narratives of "others'" experiences, I was touched, affected, even 'wounded'. My first reaction, not surprisingly, was defensive. I felt unjustly accused. After all, I had not personally to my knowledge done anything on purpose to bring hurt or harm to anybody, and I resented the implication that I had. Still, because of some of the circumstances of my own life, I found that I could relate to, identify with, understand, and empathize at least somewhat with the perspectives of others.[ii]

As I advanced academically, I got introduced to the literature that deals with gender issues in schools, academe, and society at large. I had had some exposure to feminist critiques of English literature as I worked through my undergraduate degree program, but I could not seem to grasp what I read. It made no sense to me at all. My first real introduction to feminist scholarship came in the context of a course about school and society during my B. Ed. year. Initially, I could not relate to what I was reading, and I was inclined to ask, just who is funding this research anyway, and what are their motives? I had not to my knowledge ever been discriminated against because of my

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[108] I do not mean to suggest that I no longer feel fear when faced with "difference". However, I am in the process of learning how to respond differently to it, not just outwardly, but from my heart.

gender. I had always believed I could do or be whatever I wanted, as long as I worked hard and 'kept my nose clean'. And my experience seemed to have borne that out. I had never to my knowledge been shut out of any path I had chosen because I was female. What were all those feminists so upset about anyway? Was it not just a case of sour grapes? And why was I being forced to read this stuff? I resented having to listen to these angry women. I just wanted to get on with learning to teach. I had a *lot* to learn. For instance, I had no real knowledge of the battles women had had to fight just for me to have the 'equal educational opportunity' I so took for granted. I still believed in the idea of a meritocratic social system. After all, I had "succeeded" hadn't I? And was I not a woman?

My M.Ed. year was rather quiet in terms of the politics of education. I had settled into a comfortable niche at the university, and my self-selected program of study in education psychology did not expose me to this 'politicized' literature again.[109] However, during this year and the year that followed, I was a member of an instructional team which, as part of the course we were teaching, dealt with 'social issues,' such as race, class, and gender, in public education. As a result, I found myself having to read articles and to lead and moderate classroom discussions about these 'hot button issues' to which I had never really given much thought. My main concern was that these discussions not get 'out of control'. I did not want anybody getting hurt in my classes (as I had been in previous classes). I did not yet realize that people were already being hurt as a result of my ignorance.

It was also during these two years that I 'found out' I had grown up within the "working class," that is, according to class theory. And I began to "see" some of the

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[109] As though the other literatures to which I was exposed did not themselves have political implications.

systemic barriers that I had had to 'overcome' in order to get where I was, and I began to feel pretty good about myself, about my determination, persistence, and efforts. I began to get more and more puffed up about my capabilities, not yet realizing the extent to which my white-skinned, Anglophone privilege (not to mention God's grace) had contributed to my 'achievements'.

At this stage, I remained 'unconverted' to feminist thinking; however, as I began my doctoral studies, I was required to read more feminist literature than ever before, and I began, suddenly it seemed, to have some of the kinds of experiences I had been reading and hearing so much about. Also, I began to see how my interests and desires had been channeled early on in life in particular directions (e.g., toward helping and service) and not others (i.e., leadership, administration, and so on). I began to see that I had indeed been on the receiving end of discrimination because of my gender. So, I began to look at curriculum for how it represents women. In what kinds of roles are women depicted in the picture books read to children in elementary school, and in the novels read in high school? How are women represented in poetry? In mathematics problems? In science? And so on. And I began to wonder why I had never really questioned these things before. I was angry, very angry, at having been 'kept in the dark' for so long. And the more I read, the more I began to 'see' through these lenses, the angrier I got.

In order to fill this gap in my so-called education, I immersed myself in the literature concerning "gender issues," and the issues of race, culture, ethnicity, and heritage language, and I found that I could 'see' to some small degree where 'they' were coming from. I could not know what they felt. I could not get behind their eyeballs and be them. For instance, I could not know what it would be like to grow up Black in a

predominantly white culture that is inherently prejudiced against people of color in general, and of African ancestry in particular, or to grow up as a person of First Nations ancestry in a country where the descendants of the first peoples have been systematically abused, denigrated, and taken advantage of since the invasion of the Europeans so many years ago.

I could not know what it would be like to have had to leave my country of origin having experienced all the trauma of war, loss of loved ones, refugee camps, and more only to arrive in my new 'home' which promised 'equality of opportunity' for all and find that my professional qualifications were not recognized, that I was not welcome but reviled, and that what I had been led to believe about my new country, about freedom, opportunity, and a better life, was not the whole truth. I could not fully identify with their suffering, but I could relate a little bit. I could 'sympathize' (Boler, 1997).

I knew what it had been like for me, a female, growing up in a male dominated culture. But as a white, Anglophone, Canadian of European ancestry, I was convicted by what I read. Whether I liked it or not, whether I had opted for it or not, I was part of a socio-cultural system that inherently privileges some and marginalizes, disenfranchises, and oppresses those whom it others. In addition to growing angrier (now at myself), I also grew more and more fearful. People were legitimately angry about how they had been and continue to be treated by people 'like me'. And I did not know what to do about my part in the marginalization and disenfranchisement of others, or about my runaway emotions over how I had been misinformed and mistreated on the basis of my class background, gender, and disability.

I did not want others to be angry with me, and I did not like how I felt or how I acted when anger, bitterness, and resentment gripped my own heart. Instead of feeling empowered by the critical discourses which were supposed to be emancipating me as a woman with a disability and working class origins, I felt victimized and a sense of hopelessness about ever overcoming the myriad barriers that I now knew stood between where I was in academe and where I wanted to be. In terms of the discourses concerning race, ethnicity, culture, and first language, although they, too, moved my heart and changed my mind, making me aware of my complicity in the disadvantaging of others and causing me to want desperately to do something about it, they afforded me no real hope of changing myself or the conditions of possibility for discrimination and prejudice, other than endless critical self-reflection, communal accountability (that is, holding myself accountable within a particular community of like-minded people) and seemingly futile social action.

In other words, the more I read, and the more I began to view my life and the conditions of others through the lenses of what I had been reading: the critical, feminist, post-colonialist, queer, and post-structuralist discourses, the more convinced I became of their veracity, their "truth value."[110] However, while they offered some solace in that I became aware that I was not alone in my suffering, they were not life-giving discourses. They were neither emancipating, nor enabling, nor empowering. Instead, they led me into a pit of fear, anger, and despair. These discourses afforded no practical wisdom for how to be differently in the world. I wanted to be different from what I was. I wanted to be "other-centred" and "other-wise." I wanted to participate in changing the inequitable

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[110] The irony of this is that in its own way, each of these discourses either tacitly or explicitly presupposes that the notion of capital "T" truth is a fiction, that there are only perspectives, some of which have been legitimised, and some of which have not.

social systems, but I did not know what that meant in practical terms. What was I to do differently? How would I know? What was I to think? To say? Not to think? Not to say? What about the fact that there are differences within communities? That would mean that a certain course of action (or inaction) might satisfy one or some, but not others. What then? Who was I to follow? I desired deeply to turn from my old ways (of thinking, saying, doing, and being). I did not want to continue to participate in an inherently inequitable socio-cultural system, but I could see no way out.

On the other hand, neither did I particularly want to open and surrender myself to angry and bitter others who might return 'evil' for my attempt to be and/or to do 'good'. I also did not want to become like so many people I had seen who had become so deeply embittered by what they had seen and/or experienced, that they had themselves become the very thing they professed to hate, closed-minded toward, and filled with contempt for those they considered to be different from themselves. I was paralysed. No matter what I tried, I could not seem to help myself. I could not turn off the thoughts that drove me through the day, and disturbed my sleep in the night. There was no rest, it seemed, for my weary and troubled mind and heart. I needed help. But where was I to turn? Where would my help come from?

I had long ago given up on religion in general, 'the opiate of the masses,' as Marx called it, and the religion of Christianity in particular. After all, historically speaking, the church (in my critical estimation) had failed adequately to represent God's love for humankind, what with the Inquisition, the Crusades, the burning of women at the stake, the Biblical justifications bandied about for slavery, denial of the vote to women, apartheid in South Africa, anti-Semitism expressed by people professing to be Christians,

the sexual abuse of children by 'men of the cloth,' the bullying and murder of people identified as "homosexual," the murder of doctors who perform abortions, and so on. Where was the love of neighbor, the love of 'enemies' in all of that?

My foray into the critical and post-structuralist discourses dealt a fatal blow to my faith in Modern Western Science and social science, and so to any kind of counseling, all of which is driven by this, that, or another theory, the legitimacy of which continues to be hotly debated on academic conference floors. Furthermore, my studies of the history of ideas and my experiences at philosophy conferences, that is to say, witnessing that there are only communities of agreement and ongoing debates concerning various questions of interest, and that today's "wisdom" is tomorrow's history, had begun to destroy my faith in the philosophies of men and women. My help would not come from them.

I was at a loss. Having lost my faith in the "knowledge" and "wisdom" of the professionals, the experts, the "knowers" in society, ancient, pre-modern, modern, and post-modern, and having had my confidence, my trust, my 'faith' in myself and in others shaken to the core, I did not know where to turn. I was desperate, and I came as close as ever I had to wanting to escape from this 'veil of tears' by ending my own life. But I just could not do the deed. 'Coward,' I thought, 'you can't even get that right!'

Love lifted me: An account of my spiritual conscientization

Co-incidentally, at around the same time, despite my deep misgivings about the organized religion of Christianity, I began to wonder about and to be attracted to the historical *person* of Jesus. Jesus the teacher. Jesus the healer. Jesus the compassionate one. Jesus the champion of the oppressed. One of the things which drew me to him is the way he is recorded to have lived and died, loving not only those who loved him, but,

remarkably, those who hated him. "Father, forgive them," he uttered as they drove iron spikes into his wrists and feet. How could he do that? Why would anybody want to do that? I allowed myself to wonder, what would it be like to live that way? For love genuinely to be my first response even to a small offence against me? And why was it not?

So I began to read about him. I read autobiographies of some of the "saints" to get their perspective, Theresa of Avila, John of the Cross, and others who claimed to know this Jesus. I began to read theology. I read some of the published sermons written by Martin Luther King. I read a book by South African Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu, *No future without forgiveness*. I read books of inspirational quotations by Mother Theresa. I even went on a weekend "retreat" at a monastery. I read the books of a Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hahn, who venerates the historical Jesus along with Buddha, and of a guru of Yoga psychology who acknowledges in some of his books some of the timeless truths of the Bible.

I attended a talk at the university by Canadian pastor, Dale Lang, whose son Jason was gunned down and killed in a community high school in Taber, Alberta, and who, remarkably, has forgiven from his heart the boy who took his beloved son's life. I even for the first time in my life began to read the Bible itself, looking for ... what? To see whether the ancient stories offered anything in the way of practical wisdom for relationships with others? Looking for inspiration, for more information about this person, Jesus? To find out how he could have done what he is recorded to have done at the cross? I was desperate, but I was also very skeptical.

I had grown up hearing about and believing in Jesus, but I had since, I thought, put away such "childish things." That is to say, I had set aside that 'mythology' once I had become more 'sophisticated' in my thinking, once I had become 'better educated,' and once I had become acquainted with the darker side of life, with all of the hurt, pain, and suffering in the world (surely a loving God would not allow this). I never imagined when I began to seek to know more about the historical person of Jesus that I would ever have my own 'Damascus Road' encounter with the Risen Saviour. But when my whole world began to cave in on me, I found that I had not lost my faith in God after all, for it was a small grain of faith, no bigger than a mustard seed, that kept me from taking my own life. That was something I just could not bring myself to do. Instead, I cried out to God, and remarkably, He answered me.

I remember the day that I took my first big leap of faith.[111] It involved a rather traumatic move from one set of circumstances into another, and I was not happy about it at the time at all. Yet, despite my deep concerns about the situation, especially about the people involved, and my own broken heart, I experienced a peace that makes no sense, a peace I could not explain, a peace that "passes all understanding". All of the inner 'chatter,' the constant thoughts that had plagued my days and wasted my nights for so many more years than I had even realized just stopped. Completely. Suddenly. As though somebody had thrown a switch. And that silence was the loudest thing I have ever heard. For three days I walked around astounded by the inner quiet. I kept saying to those closest to me, "I can't believe it. It's just so quiet in here (in my mind)." That

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[111] I.e. faith in the Lord Jesus. I had taken many, many steps of faith in other things, in myself, in the knowledge and wisdom of humankind, in other people, in ideas, and so on.

encounter and the ongoing, personal relationship that I have with the Lord is slowly but radically, steadily transforming my life.

But so what? Of what possible relevance could my personal salvation and my ongoing relationship with God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ be to social relations, to the kinds of social injustice to which I articulated I was bearing witness prior to my 'conversion?' Of what relevance could it be to the preparation of persons to teach or do research in classrooms characterized by diversity? Is not my "Christianity" an impediment? Is not "Christianity" inherently antithetical to "education"? to plurality? Is not the Bible at the root of all of our social problems today, including bigotry, intolerance, and prejudice? To listen to some, one would think that is the case, and there is a time when I would have been the first to stand up and agree that it was. But I was wrong. It is not. Allow me to illustrate.

Steps toward personal holiness in the Lord are steps on the pathway to social justice

> "I will write it [*Torah*] upon their hearts." Moses wrote the words of the covenant upon "tables of stone" (Exodus 34:1); now God will write the covenant upon the hearts. The heart is the person. What the prophet seems to predict is not abolition of the *Torah* but inner identification with it. ... The source of identification is the intimate union of the Word and the conscience. (Heschel, 1966, pp. 174-175)

> Therefore because you tread upon the poor and take from him exactions of wheat, you havebuilt houses of hewn stone, but you shall not dwell in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine. For I know how manifold are your transgressions and how mighty are your sins – you who afflict the [uncompromisingly] righteous, who take a bribe, and who turn aside the needy in the [court of the city] gate from their right. ... Hate the evil and love the good and establish justice in the [court of the city's] gate. It may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant ... Take away from Me the noise of your songs, for I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice run

down like waters and righteousness as a mighty and ever-flowing stream.
... (Amos 5:11-12; 15; 23-24)

> For if the [eager] readiness to give is there, then it is acceptable and welcomed in proportion to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. For it is not [intended] that other people be eased and relieved of their responsibility and you be burdened and suffer unfairly, but to have equality ... your surplus over necessity at the present time going to meet their want and to equalize the difference created by it, so that [at some other time] their surplus in turn may be given to supply your want. Thus there may be equality. As it is written, He who gathered much had nothing over; and he who gathered little did not lack [Ex., 16:18]. (2 Cor. 8:12-15)

First of all, my personal salvation and my ongoing relationship with God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ is of tremendous relevance to social relations, to the kinds of social injustice to which I articulated I was bearing witness prior to my 'conversion.' As the Scriptures cited above (and many, many more) suggest, God is a God of justice as well as a God of mercy and grace. These are all facets of His character, and they are not in tension with one another. As His teaching, *Torah*, is written on my heart, as I submit to the authority of His Word, as I identify more and more closely with the Living *Torah*, as I die daily to self, take up my cross, and follow Him, I am transformed into His likeness. And as I grow in personal holiness out of love and reverence for my heavenly Father, as these facets of His character – grace, mercy, love, justice and righteousness – are more and more deeply impressed upon me, I become a vessel through which His righteousness, justice, love, mercy, and grace may be made manifest in the earth.

I am convinced that personal holiness in the Lord is the Way to social justice. For although the climate of obstacles "the other" must confront are systemic, systems are made up of individuals. A significant transformation of one individual within a system can have a significant impact on that system. A significant transformation of two or three

individuals within a system can have an exponential impact on it. Furthermore, if the transformations taking place are the result of the power of God at work in those people's lives and are not the result of the individuals' own self-efforts, the greater the impact on that system will be. Furthermore, pride cannot enter into and contaminate the result.

On an individual and practical level, this has to do with how one regards and treats others. In "The risks of empathy: Interrogating multiculturalism's gaze," Boler (1997) writes that she understands her role as an educator to be, "to teach critical thinking that seeks to transform consciousness in such a way that a Holocaust could never happen again" (p. 255). But is "critical" thinking is what is lacking? Is, as several of our interviewees and the authors of many of the sources we consulted suggest, an absence of knowledge, or the presence of 'wrong information' 'the problem'? What other kind of "knowledge" might be called for? What else could so radically transform consciousness that a Holocaust, or other similar large or small scale atrocity could never happen again?

It has been said that "knowledge" "puffs up," causing the one who thinks she or he knows to become arrogant, and that arrogance tears down. But love edifies. Love builds up (1 Cor. 8:1b). Could it be that what we are lacking is not knowledge (true information) about the other, but love, that is to say, radical, self-sacrificing, systemic other-esteeming love? I have become convinced over the course of my studies of the past nine years that only love – not knowledge (as it is most commonly conceptualised in 'the Modern West'), not critical thinking, and certainly not sentiment or emotionalism, but intentional, wilful, radical, self-sacrificing, supernatural love, the love of God which surpasses knowledge, flowing without obstruction through people, can turn the tide of human cruelty one to the other, and usher in true righteousness, peace, and joy.

"Christianity" is not inherently antithetical to "education," although it may be considered by some to be so given certain conceptions of education. But consider this radically different conception of education, which is espoused by some people of the Jewish faith. Wilson (1998) writes,

> In comparison with other cultures, Jewish education was meant to be education with a difference. ... All education was directed to this end: to be different was the law of existence. ... 'You shall be different, for I the Lord your God am different.' ... On this point rests the quintessence of Jewish education: "the ideal of holiness, of separation from all other peoples in order to belong to God." ... Jewish education was for all people and concerned the whole person. ... The aim of the Jewish teacher was not so much to develop certain intellectual or practical faculties in his disciple but rather to summon his learner to submit to the authority of the divine message of the Scripture upon which he as commenting. Here the Jew's whole personality is involved; to be taught called for radical obedience to that higher divine reality outside oneself. To sum up this point ... The Hebrews learned in order to revere." (pp. 289-291)

On this account, education is not about the acquisition of a body of knowledge (i.e., true information) and a set of generalizable skills (although that may be involved), but rather it is about the cultivation of reverence for God. Does our secular system of public education in Canada truly 'respect' this 'different' view of education? What is the normative backdrop against which this view appears "different"? Is there room for a view like this one within the present system of public "education"? What are the dangers if there is not?

As to whether all of our contemporary social problems are rooted in this "religion" called "Christianity," let me say that I am not talking about the organized religion that has grown up around Christianity. There have been many terrible atrocities committed by people who called themselves Christians, the Crusades, the Inquisition, "witch burnings", and so on, and the Bible has been used to justify the marginalization,

disenfranchisement, and persecution of all manner of peoples. It was used by some of the founding fathers of the United States as a justification for slavery. It was used to deny women the vote. It was used by those who instantiated the reprehensible Apartheid regime in South Africa to justify their actions. It has been used to justify the persecution and even murder of persons who identify themselves as homosexual. It has been used to justify the murder of doctors who perform abortions. And so on.

Regarding the public view of religion in society, Heschel (1976) writes,

> It is customary to blame secular science and anti-religious philosophy for the eclipse of religion in modern society. It would be more honest to blame religion for its own defeats. Religion declined not because it was refuted, but because it became irrelevant, dull, oppressive, insipid. When faith is completely replaced by creed, worship by discipline, love by habit; when the crisis of today is ignored because of the splendour of the past; when faith becomes an heirloom rather than a living fountain; when religion speaks only in the name of authority rather than with the voice of compassion – its message becomes meaningless. (p. 3)

And I agree, only I would add that when religious observance replaces vibrant relationship with the Living God, when radical passivity or surrender to the Living Word becomes pious activity, as when we begin to try to please God by doing our best to follow the Biblical "prescription," pride creeps in and stirs up haughtiness, arrogance, and self-righteousness.

But let us remember that Jesus Christ Himself eschewed this kind of "religion." He reserved His most scathing remarks for the "religious" people of His time, for those who were convinced of their own righteousness, who were in fact more concerned with minding everyone's business but their own, and who were more interested in the outward appearance of observing rules, rituals, and regulations, than with keeping their hearts and their private conduct right before Him. And as far as people who were not living

according to Biblical standards in His day, that is, sinners, are concerned, Jesus did not

condemn them. Neither did He condone others condemning them, much less taking their

lives. I am not talking about organized religion. I am talking about an ongoing, vibrant

relationship with the Living God through His resurrected Son Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, my relationship with the Lord is transforming how I view people in

general (myself included), and it *is transforming*[112] what I cherish, and how I respond in

all kinds of circumstances, to all kinds of situations. For instance, I believe that what the

Scriptures say, that everybody is made in the image of God, is true. Not one. Not a few.

Not some. Not most. Not all these people, but not those. *Everybody* is made in the

image of God. And my faith in His word, that every person is "fearfully and wonderfully

made," "skilfully knit together" by His *loving* hand (Ps. 139:14, 15), is broadening and

deepening. I believe that He loves each and every person unconditionally, so much so,

that He was willing to lay aside all of the privileges of His deity, to be made flesh, and to

stretch out His arms and die for each and every one of us.

Imagine if you will just for a moment the deep implications of believing this.

What might this mean for a person's relationships with other people? Not just some

others, but all others. If everyone is fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God,

skilfully knit together by His loving hand, and if He humbled Himself, was made flesh

and died for all, as the Bible tells us, how then ought I to regard all others? How ought I

to respond to all others? What is to be at the root of my relationships with other people,

if I say that I am a follower, a disciple, a friend of the Lord? How ought I to live?

Does it bring honour to His name for me to be afraid of others, to harbour

prejudice of any kind in my heart, to think more highly of myself than I do of "them," to

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[112] It is important to notice that this process is *ongoing*. It is by no means complete.

treat preferentially people who are like me, to take part (whether by speaking, or by just remaining silent) in conversations in which others are ridiculed, denigrated, made the butt of jokes, blamed for all kinds of social problems? Does it bring honour to His name if I clutch and grab for all I can for me and for my own at the expense of others, whoever they may be? Does it bring honour to His name when I say "not in my back yard" to the construction of a toxic waste incinerator, but say nothing when it is going to be built in a neighbourhood that is considered by many, if not most, already to be 'lost' (Kozol, 2000), that is, overrun by drug dealers and prostitutes (each one of whom, by the way, the Lord made, loves, suffered, bled, and died for)? Or to a new skytrain line? In a word, no.

I also believe what the Scriptures say, that all have sinned; all have fallen short of the glory, the perfection, the wholeness, the completeness of God. That means first, that I am no better than or superior to anyone else. Every person who has ever lived, except Jesus, has violated in one way or another, the integrity of *Torah* as it was revealed by God to Moses. And to stumble in any one aspect of it is to break the integrity of it,[113] which is to say that it is not a list of behavioural objectives on which it is sufficient to score 60 or even 99 %. It is either 100% or nothing. That's quite a test! And so, as a law breaker who has been shown mercy, I have no business judging anyone else for his, her, or their transgressions. I am even directly admonished strongly not to do so, "So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of *liberty*. For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment" (James 2:12-13).

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[113] For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder [and Jesus said that to lust after another in one's heart is to commit adultery, or to bear hatred in one's heart is to commit murder], you have become a transgressor of the law (James 2:10-13).

By the same principle, I am set free from the burden of the fickle judgments of others (and of myself). God has seen fit to show mercy to me[114] and so if anyone has an issue with that, they can take it up with Him. I cannot even begin to tell you how much mental space and overall energy has been freed up in my life since this truth began to lay hold of me. Now, having been shown mercy does not mean I can treat others any old way I please. It does not give me a license to love or to hate as I see fit. Indeed, I am called to the highest level of accountability in my relationships with others, each and every one of which He oversees, each and every one of which I am to live out in the awareness of His presence. As Christians, we are called to love one another, to love our neighbours (whoever they may be), and even to love our "enemies." But what does it mean to love?

It does not mean what Schneller (2002), Britzman (1997), and others seem by their writing to think it means. In her review of the movies *I am Sam* and *A beautiful mind*, Schneller (2002) writes,

> ... disabled people need love, of course, but they need a lot more than that – they need money, respect, patience and help -- endless, bottomless, fathomless reserves of help. Ask the parents of children as disabled as Sam, and they will tell you that "all you need is love" is a heap of stinking dung. What kind of impoverished concept of love can be operating here? Does not love entail financial aid, respect, patience, and "endless, bottomless, fathomless reserves of help?" Or is love nothing more than a sentimental, mushy, ooey-gooey feeling?

Or does it merely reduce to *eros* as Britzman (1997) implies in her piece, "What is this thing called love?" In an appositive utterance, Britzman equates love with "the pleasures of [sexual] desire" (p. 200). Her use of the word "love" throughout the text (the

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[114] He has not made a special case of me. He has no preference for me over others. He has shown mercy to all, if they will only receive it.

word appears six times, including the title) is consistent with this sense of the word. I do not mean to suggest that love may not entail sexual desire. So much the better in a marriage if it does! Glory to God! But perhaps what these writers are getting at is the kind of 'spectating' love that so troubles Boler (1997), Waterstone (2000), and I, that is, "passive empathy," a too easy, consumptive identification with the suffering of a far distant (i.e., far removed from our own lived experience) "other".

     While writers like Schneller and Britzman may be brought up short for the impoverished concept of love they are employing, we, the church, I, must remember that it did not spring fully formed *ex nihilo*. They raise an important and indicting question for the church: where are we when ...? Where are we today in the case of Terry Shiavo, the severely brain-damaged woman in Florida who is being fed by a tube, but whose husband has decided after 15 years to 'honor her request' and respect her 'right to die'. Where have we been? Have we helped this man, this family in their crisis? We were all ready to pray, or to make phone calls to politicians, or to take an unscheduled trip to Florida to carry a sign in order to have legislation passed that would require that Terry not be deprived of food and water, and we are certainly all ready it seems to accuse, judge, and condemn this man and his supporters, those 'liberals,' to say, "How could you?" to ask 'the medical people,' "How could you ...?" but where are we now? Are we offering to help? Are we willing to go in and brush her teeth for her, or to change her sanitary napkins?[115] Are we showing our Saviour's love? Are we allowing ourselves to be used by Him as He wills? In addition to asking Him to intervene in situations and to do this or that, are we also making ourselves available to Him to be used as vessels of His

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[115] I realize that there are laws and regulations in place which may prevent people who are willing to helping in this kind of way, that those regulations are there to protect the patient and that sadly, such laws are necessary.

love, praying, "Lord, is there something You would have me do in this situation to show Your love, Your grace, Your compassion to this family, to this person?"

Many members of the body of Christ were delighted about the recent passing of legislation in the United States to stop late term/partial birth abortions. But where are we when teenage girls or anyone else becomes pregnant out of wedlock? When families are devastated to hear the news that the child they are going to have has a severe disability? (And where are we to question why it is that we are 'devastated' at such news, to problematize the whole concept of 'normalcy'?) Where is the church? Where are we? Where am I? Am I there to cry with? To suffer with? Am I there to offer myself, my time, my energy? To 'go the extra mile'? To help look after the child? To walk the floor with the child so the young mother can get some sleep? To help the young person finish school? To give (without looking for it back) needed financial aid? To forgive the thousand faults? Are we there with bags of groceries, diapers, and baby wipes? Prepared meals? Words of encouragement? "Endless, bottomless, fathomless reserves of help?" Or are we there with rocks in our hands, ready to stone the unwed mother for her having had sexual relations outside of marriage?

Where are we when a family breaks down in our midst, because of economic hardship, general stress, the absence of a loving extended family, infidelity? Were we there, doing all we could to help the couple out – bringing news of job openings? Bringing bags of groceries? Prepared meals? Offering to baby-sit so that the couple could take a little time out for themselves? Did we know that one of the marital partners was feeling lonely and unloved in the relationship? Did we take a moment to speak graciously, gently, lovingly with the other party to let him or her know? Did we see the

woman's often blackened eyes? See the man looking gaunt and fatigued? Did we look the other way? Did we 'pass by on the other side'?

Where are we when a family who has a child with a disability moves into our neighborhood? Do we commit ourselves to learning all we can about the disability in order that we can be ready to assist the family in anyway that might be required or asked of us? Do we invite the family over for a meal to welcome them into the neighborhood? Do we do what we can to make our own homes accessible to all members of their family? Or do we hide behind the idea that it takes a 'special person' to get involved, only wishing we had what it takes to help, admiring them from afar, but not making ourselves too available lest they should they get the idea that they can call on us at any time?

And where are we when the young people Britzman (1997) talks about are suffering, when they are being teased, taunted, tortured, even killed because of how they identify themselves or are identified by others in terms of their gender identity/sexuality? Where are we, as the church? Are we there, giving the love, grace, and mercy that is so freely given to us? Are we there to defend their lives? Or are we the ones gathering the stones, thinking self-righteously, that we have the right to throw them? Where were we when Brandon Teena bled to death? When Matthew Shepherd was brutally beaten, tied to a fence, and left to die? Do we even remember these names? Or do we judge ourselves as more worthy of God's love, grace, and mercy than 'them'? How is it that we were 'saved' again? By our works? By our own righteousness? Or was it by God's grace, through faith, and that the gift of God, so that none may boast? (Eph. 2:8-9). Jesus said,

> … unless your righteousness (your uprightness and your right standing
> with God) is more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never
> eat of the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to the men
> of old, You shall not kill, and whoever kills shall be liable to and unable to

escape the punishment imposed by the court. [Exod. 20:13; Deut. 5:17; 16:18.] But I say to you that everyone who continues to be angry with his brother or harbors malice (enmity of heart) against him shall be liable to and unable to escape the punishment imposed by the court; and whoever speaks contemptuously and insultingly to his brother shall be liable to and unable to escape the punishment imposed by the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, You cursed fool! [You empty-headed idiot]! Shall be liable to and unable to escape the hell (Gehenna) of fire. (Matt. 5: 20-22)

Are we the ones with the bandages or the rocks in our hands? Are we the ones with words of love and life or words of contempt and death on our lips? Are we the ones with love or murder in our hearts?

Let me begin my discourse on love by acknowledging first my own guilt, my complicity in carrying rocks, speaking words of contempt, and harboring malice in my heart, in falling way fall short of the mark to love the Lord my God with *all* my heart, and *all* my mind, and *all* my soul, and *all* my strength, and love my neighbour as myself. It is only in the last few years that I have even begun to learn what it means to love. Conceptually, for me as a Christian, love is not merely a feeling, or an emotion. It is a practice, and it entails having what I am calling Christ-centred other esteem – to regard others as better than, superior to, more important than myself (Phil. 2:3) safe and secure in the experiential knowledge of my kinsman Redeemer's unconditional love for me.[116] This Christ-centred other esteem is predicated on an ongoing awareness of my own brokenness before God, my own 'status' as a transgressor of the Law, a criminal. In other words, since I am no better than anybody else (no matter how well I or they can manipulate complicated mathematical equations, or how many languages I or they can fluently speak, and so on), I am not to be high minded, thinking more highly of myself

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[116] I do not mean to suggest that I have been perfected in this love. I am only just beginning to learn what it means to walk this out.

and my ways than of others, but to hold others in greater esteem than I do myself. After all, I received mercy, not judgment at the cross.

This is not a matter of self-deprecation, of engaging in morbid introspection about how sinful I am, and joylessly sitting in ashes, beating myself with a cat o'nine tales, depriving myself of the basic necessities of life, chanting "I'm not worthy. I'm not worthy." Self-deprecation is, after all, self-centred. And it is not a matter of exalting 'the other' to the status of a god. My faith is not based on what I have or have not done, or on what others have or have not done, but on what Christ has done. Christ-centred other esteem means first and foremost to esteem the Absolutely Other, God, the Most High, more highly than myself, to acknowledge His ways as higher than my ways, to exalt His word, to put Him first in *every* area, including the minutiae, of my life. In my relationships with my husband, children, parents, in-laws, relatives, friends, colleagues, students, members of my community, *all* of them, even the least acquaintance; in my finances; in my thought life; in my speech; in my work; in my leisure; in my wardrobe; in my diet; in *every* area of my life I am to put God first, asking, does this bring honor and glory to my Father's holy name? This is no small challenge, and I am only just beginning to learn what this means in terms of walking it out day by day, step by step.

I am called always to be considerate of the other, putting myself at his, her, or their disposal to help, to assist, to encourage, to wait with, to laugh with and/or weep with, to serve as they need (not as I imagine they need based on my own needs). I am constantly to put their interests ahead of my own, being patient, acting kindly, not envying or coveting what they have, not boasting about who I am or what I have, serving as I have opportunity so to do (as I am invited to do, or as it is laid on my heart to do),

exercising gentleness, being a faithful friend, supporting, encouraging, not being easily provoked; taking no account of wrongs (real or perceived) done to me; not seeking either my own gain, or recognition, or insisting on my rights or my own way; not defending myself.

Sometimes it means just letting the other be to live his or her own life, letting go, and bidding farewell, still, keeping the other in one's heart, and keeping one's heart tender toward him or her, lifting him or her up in prayer, standing ready to respond in love when invited so to do. Other times it means going the extra mile with a person even when everything inside just wants to go home and go to sleep. It means being ready at all times to believe the best of the individual, not making presumptuous judgments, e.g., about their hearts, their motivations, about what I would do if I were him or her, if I were in those circumstances, and so on. It does not, however, mean 'bucking up and loving Jesus,' as though our external patterns of behaviour prove our love and loyalty to Christ. This is a treacherous pursuit because when we adopt this attitude, "something bad happens on the inside. As we master codes of conduct, we are victimized by pride and forget that the real issues of life are defined by what is in our hearts" (Stowell, 2000). We love, we obey His commands, because we are loved, because the love of God has been shed abroad into our hearts by His Holy Spirit, not because we are trying to please God, to earn His favour and/or avoid His wrath.

In terms of my relationship with God, Christ-centredness is essential because it is written that without faith in Him, in the finished work of the cross, I am separated from God by my wrongdoing, by my failure to live, to walk out with a pure heart the whole of the *Torah.* I need Jesus. I need the guarantee of forgiveness that comes through Him and

I need the enablement, the empowerment of His indwelling Holy Spirit, the expression of God's Word, to walk in His love because my own is so puny and partial.

In terms of my relationships with other people, Christ-centredness is essential, because His counsel, His love, His discipline, and His healing are crucial to loving the way that He calls me to love, and to withstanding the blows that inevitably come when one truly steps out in faith to esteem others as better than and superior to oneself, to withstand the pain of seeing myself in the unflattering light of another's angry gaze, to give up my own sense of who I am (Delpit, 1995). It is His love for me that will encourage, impel, motivate, drive me to press on, even when I feel most like giving up, when others disappoint. Without Him, without His sustaining power, loving like this, loving perfectly from a pure heart, loving everyone regardless of whether they return it, or whether they return evil for it, is impossible. As one other Christian writer has put it, "Without the love of God nourishing my behaviour, I bring only a dead faith to a dying world." And we have certainly had enough of that over the centuries.

Indeed, this X-treme self-giving love that is rooted in the love of God is to be the mark of Christ on my life. *"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another"* (John 13:35). Do all know that I am His disciple by the love I have for others? Are my relationships with others characterized by

> ... an undefeatable benevolence and unconquerable goodwill that always seeks the highest good of the other person no matter what he or she does. It is the self-giving love that gives freely without asking anything in return. It is the unconditional love God has for the world. (*SFLB*, p. 1694)?

Do I seek only the highest good for others? This love needs no chemistry, affinity, or even a feeling. This *agape* is the love with which God loved the world when He gave His only begotten Son" (*SFLB*, p. 1578).

Imagine for a moment if you will what kind of world this would be if each and every one of us loved all others with this kind of love. Can we even conceive of it? Each going out of our way unassumingly, not seeking any recognition or gratitude for our good deeds, to ensure the welfare of the other, sometimes by giving generously, sometimes by receiving gracefully? Sometimes by serving, sometimes by being served? Can we imagine being on both the giving and receiving end of perfect patience, kindness, gentleness, and fidelity, perfectly righteous speech, and unfailing hope? To feel nothing but joy at the prosperity of another? Never to feel irritated or angry or resentful about anything? Never to complain? Never to fear? Forever? It sounds like heaven on earth to me. If it were not possible in Christ, would the Lord have commanded it? Are those who confess a faith in Jesus Christ known throughout the world even for loving one another with this kind of love (not to mention loving our unbelieving neighbors and our enemies)? Am I?

Testimonial Living

What kind of 'witness' am I? Is this kind of unfailing love readily apparent in my relationships with my brothers and sisters in the Lord? How about with others? Or am I a lot better at preaching with my words than with my life? When I examine my life in the mirror of His word, I see that I have a long, long, long way to go in learning to love like this, even in the context of my own family. I'm a lot better at talking about it than doing it. And so I give thanks for His tender mercies, for His great love, and I ask for the grace

to live a life that brings honor and glory to His holy name, and I ask Him to help me to be all that He has called me to be in love.

So, if I have not yet been perfected in this love, what has changed since my 'conversion'? Perhaps most importantly, my first response to challenging circumstances is changing. At one time I would react emotionally, and then try as best I could to deal with both my own reaction and the particular circumstance, bringing to bear on the situation at hand all of my "knowledge" and "skills," crying out to my friends and colleagues for advice, solace and/or practical assistance, looking to the "experts," the "professionals," the "knowers" to tell me what to think, say, and do, and how to be. Now, having had my faith in the knowers, professionals, and experts shaken to the very core, I cry out to Him, sometimes aloud, sometimes in the quiet of my heart, in all kinds of circumstances.

I cry out to Him for grace, for patience, for strength. I cry out to Him for courage, for energy, for wisdom. I cry out to Him to give me a sense of humour. I cry out to Him to chisel more of the dross off of me. I cry out to Him for discipline. I cry out to Him to deal with me severely in the areas of my speech and my tendency toward pride, unforgiveness, and fear. I cry out to Him for mercy and forgiveness. I cry out to Him for help, for ideas, for strategies, and so on. Sometimes I just cry out to Him, and I do not know why; I just know that I have to but I have no words. Sometimes I just cry before Him. Other times I sing to Him. I have even been known to dance for Him, though I don't do that nearly as often as I should. And I am learning to praise Him and to give thanks to Him both in *and for* all things.

The remarkable thing is that He is always there. He never fails me. He never does not show up. It may not seem to me like He always shows up on time – sometimes, like Martha and Mary outside Lazarus' tomb, I wonder why He tarries, but usually, later on, it becomes clear what His purpose was for having me wait. Sometimes it does not, but I am learning to trust Him in those times because of who He is, Faithful and True, and to continue to wait on Him. As I grow in my love walk with Him, as I cry out to Him and turn my attention to Him, as He answers me, showing Himself faithful and strong in the daily situations of my life, and as I become progressively less concerned with myself and more concerned with His glory, I have more peace. Consequently, I am that much less apt to become irreparably rattled in difficult situations. I am less likely to be hurt, or remain hurt, or to nurse a hurt when someone offends me, or someone I love. Such situations serve only to drive me deeper into Him. I am also better able to hear wisdom speaking. I am better able to hear from Him how to be, and what to do in all kinds of circumstances. I am enabled to be truly and fully present and attentive to the other in my midst, if not right in that moment, then very shortly thereafter. I am enabled to practice love, hospitality, forgiveness, and so on.

In other words, the relevance of my relationship with the Lord for social relations, for teacher preparation and in-service for diversity is in the impact it is having on me and on my relationships with others. I am no longer on my own trying to figure out what to do or how to be to try to please everybody. I have only one Judge, and His name is Mercy. I have Someone I can talk with, 24/7 at no charge, who will give me wisdom, if only I will ask, wait on, and hear Him. I am no longer left to worry and fret about my own welfare and the well being of those I love and care for. I have someone looking out

for me, who loves my loved ones better than I can, if only I will entrust them and myself to His tender loving care and learn to wait on His timing. And I am no longer left feeling powerless about seemingly overwhelming circumstances. I have Someone I can go to who has the power to change either me or the circumstances (or both), if I will learn to wait, to stay 'connected', and to act when called upon so to do. All my needs are met in Him, and so I am set free to hear from Him and to attend to those who present to me with needs, to be a vessel of His provision for the other(s), whoever she, he, or they may be.

When I find myself in a situation that evokes righteous (or even unrighteous) anger in me, I can turn to the Lord, to my Father in heaven, knowing that He loves me, and tell Him how I feel, thankful that He already knows what is in my heart. I can ask Him to change me on the inside so that the next time I encounter a similar situation, I will react differently. I will not be so undone by it. I can ask Him to change the situation. I can pray for Him to touch the lives of the people involved, to help them in whatever way that is needed. I can pray for His will to be done. I can ask Him for Scriptures that will help me to understand what is going on, and/or that will heal my heart from whatever hurt I may have experienced. I can also ask Him to heal the other person or people involved. It is a comfort to me to know that even under duress, I can be guided and directed to a course of action which has the best interests of everyone involved at heart, that I can at any time ask for wisdom and help and be assured of receiving it.

Summing up

This paper began with one question: what help is available for teachers who desire to serve better their diverse student population, who desire to overcome their own socialization, and who are frustrated and at a loss even for how to be with students from

backgrounds that are radically different from their own? In the course of our initial collaborative investigation we found that existing social and educational policy does not afford teachers any practical wisdom for how to do their work in increasingly racially, ethnically, culturally, religiously, and linguistically diverse settings. We also found that the agencies that created the policies are not really supporting teachers in any substantial ways. Yet, in the course of my secondary inquiry, I found that indeed there is help available for teachers who desire to serve better their diverse student population, who desire to overcome their own socialization, and who are frustrated and at a loss even for how to be with students from backgrounds that are radically different from their own; that there is a social and educational 'policy' that offers teachers practical wisdom for how to do their work in increasingly diverse settings, the Bible, and that the Agency that created that 'policy,' the Lord, stands ready to support teachers in very substantial ways. Further, I have found that that same Agency has already provided a perfect model of service Who is both able and willing to work closely, gently, tenderly, lovingly with each and every one who will ask Him to help them to overcome their socialization, to teach them a more excellent way.

Chapter 7

The study in review

What 'problem' in teacher education does this study address?

To be specific, teachers graduating from teacher preparation programs often feel inadequately prepared to render professional service in classrooms. New teachers feel physically and emotionally isolated and generally unsupported in their work. Veteren teachers feel frustrated, tired, tried, and demoralized as circumstances seem to get worse not better in the realm of public education. Increasingly, teachers at all levels of experience are being asked to do more and more with less. The socio-political landscape of public education is fraught with crises, conflicts, unfulfilled promise, and broken dreams. Given that we are not likely ever to bring about the optimal circumstances facilitating the practice of teaching, it is needful to equip teachers with the inner resources to enable them, to enable ourselves, to withstand the storms of classroom life.

According to Purpel (1999), Palmer (1998), Miller (1999; 1996), Huebner (1991) and others,[117] meaningful educational reform is wrongly preoccupied with externals. Not enough attention is given to the inner life of teachers. Each of these writers in turn points to the need to attend at least as much to the who of teaching, as to the what, where, how, and why. We prepare the student for employment; we impart information and we teach skills, we train what Heschel (1976) calls 'the outward man,' but we neglect the 'inner man'. The 'problem' to which this study addresses itself is the neglect of the

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[117] See also Buley–Meissner et al. (2000); Haggerson (2000); Almon (1999); Cajete (1999); Samples (1999); Sardello & Sanders (1999); Starkings (1993); and Heschel (1976; 1966).

'inner man' or human spirit both in the field of teacher education, and in the context of the preparation of teachers for life in classrooms

Buley-Meissner et al. (2000) draw attention to the inequities in the social fabric of America. They agree with the interpretivist critics of education that changes are needed to challenge tacit premises that frame education today. They claim that the reason the interpretivists have failed to effect educational reforms that will transform society in such a way as to establish social justice is that they have failed to ground their political critique in moral possibility. Huebner (1991) suggests that for too long, people in the field of education have believed (and have stepped out in faith in the belief) that if we could just educate the children and youth to live rightly, then we could clean up "the idols and sinfulness of the world," and social justice would necessarily follow, but, he asks, what about the parent, the teacher, the teacher educator?

> We tie heavy burdens on children and youth in the form of catechisms, boring classes, textbooks. We love to have the places of honor, to be greeted with respect in the marketplace, and to be called teacher. (p. 399)

Huebner suggests that what is needful is for the parent, the teacher, the teacher educator to clean up his or her own act in order that others "can feel the warmth of the Holy Spirit, can see the radiance of God shining through our work, and can hear the Word in our language" (p. 400). This longitudinal qualitative study represents one teacher educator's attempt to do just that, and in conclusion, I submit that in order not only to weather with a minimum of material supports the various storms that are raging in the field of education, but to flourish in the midst of them, one must have a solid ground upon which to stand and a 'shelter from the storm' for one's spirit. The preceding narrative is an account of how I came to this conclusion.

Foundations: The ontological, epistemological, and methodological ground

This study arrives at and settles upon a Christian worldview which presupposes that there is more to life than meets the natural eye; that the Bible is the word of God; that Jesus is the embodiment of the Word of God, the Word enfleshed, the Living *Torah*/teaching; that knowledge inheres doing; and that a relationship with Jesus Christ is the way one comes to the knowledge of the Truth. That is to say, He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Epistemologically, this work is located on different ground than the debates between what Howe (2001) calls the "postmodernists" and the "transformationists,"[118] that, pragmatists, critical theorists, and certain feminists. While on the basis of my readings and lived experiences over the past ten years or so I agree with the postmodernists, that all knowledge claims made by human beings are necessarily context-bound and masks for interests and power (Howe, 2001, p. 202), I also agree with the transformationists. That is to say, I am convinced that Truth exists, and that there is a ground upon which knowledge claims can be founded reliably and validly (Howe, 2001).

At first glance these two views may appear to be mutually exclusive, but upon closer examination one finds that that is not necessarily the case. These two assertions would be mutually exclusive if the ground upon which they are predicated were secular materialism. But as I have said, that is not my ground. I do not share the postmodernists' incredulity toward *all* metanarratives only those which are man-made. Neither do I share the transformationists' view, that contingent human experience is the best ground that we can hope for in terms of working out defensible conceptions of knowledge. Nor do I share the postmodernists' and the transformationists' rejection of what they call the

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[118] An admittedly problematic but useful classification Howe (2001) acknowledges.

"traditional" philosophical quest "for ultimate epistemological touchstones that transcend contingent human experience" (Howe, 2001, p. 202).

I believe in capital "T" Truth. I believe that the Bible is not a just another "metanarrative," or a collection of myths, legends, or unverifiable but interesting *petits recits*, that is, 'little stories,' written by socio-culturally and historically located people, but rather that it is the inspired Word of God, spoken through/penned by particular individuals at different moments in history. And I believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that God raised Him from the dead. That is how I am able to hold these two seemingly contradictory views at the same time, both of which are not inconsistent with Scripture. I do not mean to suggest that postmodernism and transformationism are not inconsistent with Scripture, but rather the two propositions, that is, that all man-made systems of knowledge are context-bound and masks for interests and power; and that Truth exists and can be known (that is, encountered, experienced existentially through His acts of grace and love) if only in part as through a glass dimly.[119]

What are my claims?

I am not making any claims *per se*. Rather, I am testifying to the Truth of the claims of Scripture (as opposed to the truth of the claims of this or that philosophy, religion, ideology, or movement) concerning reality, knowledge, and the way to knowledge. I believe the testimony of Scripture. I do not profess to understand it all. I cannot explain how God has done what He has, or why He has not done what He has not

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[119] "[F]or our knowledge is fragmentary (incomplete and imperfect), and our prophecy (our teaching) is fragmentary (incomplete and imperfect). But when the complete and perfect (total) comes, the incomplete and imperfect will vanish away (become antiquated, void, and superseded). ... For now we are looking in a mirror that gives only a dim (blurred) reflection [of reality as in a riddle or enigma], but then [when perfection comes] we shall see in reality and face to face! Now [we] know in part, but then [we] shall know and understand fully and clearly, even in the same manner as I have been fully and clearly known and understood [by God]. (1 Cor. 13:9-10, 12)

done. I cannot prove empirically or rationally some of the more seemingly incredible things claimed in the Scriptures. But I can say that when I have acted in faith, even faith "as small as a mustard seed," taking the claims of Scripture at face value, putting His Word first, when I have been granted repentance and have turned from my own way of dealing with things and yielded to the Lord's way, I have found Him always to be faithful and true, even when He has responded to my steps of faith in ways I might not either have expected or wanted at the time.

As I said in an aside in chapter three when I introduced the quotation from Campolo (2000), about how an "intellectual," an "academic" in this day and age could believe the Bible, I have not reasoned my way to faith, but I have taken steps of faith and found God always to be true to His word. In other words, like Purpel (1999), I reason from my faith in the Word of God, just as others reason from faith in themselves or in this or that set of foundational or anti-foundational or non-foundational principles. As I appropriate, or receive at face value, the claims, promises, the testimonies of Scripture on faith, by little and little God shows Himself always to be faithful and true to His word.[120] If I am making any claim at all it is simply that I know (that is to say, I have a personal relationship with) the Living God of the Bible through His Son Jesus Christ and that that relationship is radically transforming for the better all facets (down to the smallest of the minutiae) of my life, including my practice as a teacher, teacher educator, and researcher.

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[120] Just as I take *on faith* the claims, the promises, the testimonies of Scripture to be the Truth, so do others take *on faith* the claims, the promises, the testimonies of Scripture to be false, unreliable, invalid, untrue.

How do I know?

How do I know? I believe by faith.[121] God responds. And then I know. In other words, I take one of the promises of God from the Bible at face value, and by His grace and deliberate determination I believe it, even though I cannot see or feel the evidence of it, and I hold onto it, no matter the circumstances, trusting that the One who has promised is faithful to fulfill it. And then sometimes right away, sometimes in a short while, sometimes not for some time, God responds and I come to see the evidence of it. In the process, I come to the knowledge of God, of His character, His faithfulness. This knowledge summons from me another response, another step of faith, and so it goes. Knowledge happens in the delicate interplay between the Living Word and the respondent.

Responding to the question, how does one know, hinges on what it means, "to know". The question, "How do you know?" is a question that is most often asked by individuals who already espouse a particular concept of knowledge, that is, who regard knowledge as verifiable conceptual propositions, who want 'proof' or 'evidence' to be shown before they will confer upon an account the status of "knowledge," or upon a person the status of "knower," as though they themselves, having decided or agreed upon

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[121] It is written that "Faith is the substance (realization) of things hoped for, the evidence (confidence) of things not seen (Heb. 11:1). It is "the established conviction concerning things unseen and settled expectation of future reward. The Greek word translated "substance" literally means 'a standing under,' and was used in the sense of 'title deed.' The root idea is that of standing under the claim to the property to support its validity. Thus, faith is the title deed of things hoped for" (*SFLB*, 1991, p. 1889). In the Amplified translation, the passage is rendered, "Now faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the 'title deed') of the things we hope for, being the proof of things we do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses]" (Heb. 1:11). In other words, in contrast to the "commonsense" belief, "I'll believe it when I see it," faith says, "I'll see it when I believe it." But it is not merely a matter of just believing anything we want in order to see it made manifest, but rather believing in the Truth of the Word of God, and submitting to it, acting upon it in faith in God's faithfulness to perform His word, to keep His promises, and then bearing witness to His faithfulness.

a set of conceptual criteria, were in a position so to do, that is, to confer this status. But on what ground do they formulate their concept?

The ground for this dissertation's concept of what it means to know is the Word of God. I take "to know" to mean to encounter, to experience, to share in an intimate way (Wilson, 1989). Knowing is "an act involving concern, inner engagement, dedication, or attachment to a person. It also means to have sympathy, pity, or affection for someone" (p. 289). This concept of knowledge derives from the Hebrew verb *yada*, "to know," and embraces the whole human personality. So, "to know" the Lord is not to intellectualise about Him. Rather, it is "to experience his power existentially through his creative acts of grace and love" (p. 177).

It is my concern for, inner engagement with, dedication to, and affection for the Lord and the solidity of the ground, the trustworthiness of His Word that is enabling me increasingly to weather the various storms I encounter in my life in general, and in the field of education in particular, storms which prior to my coming to know Him in this way left me helpless and all but hopeless. It is the relationship I have with Him that is enabling me to stand strong in the crucible of experience – in the midst of various crises, conflicts, unfulfilled promise, shattered myths, and broken dreams – and to respond in Christlikeness, that is to say, to transcend both self and circumstance and respond with, in, and out of His love. I know that I know Him because of the fruit of that relationship that is growing in my life.

I know myself well enough to know that it is not my nature to respond with humility, grace, mercy, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22) under pressure. My nature is much more volatile.

'Squeeze me,' and I am by nature more inclined either to fear, and/or outbursts of wrath and indignation, and/or to 'inbursts' of guilt, angst, worry, and depression, and I could trot in a wide variety of people who could bear witness to the Truth of this claim (perhaps even a few folks who would disavow a belief in 'capital T' Truth!). But my relationship with the Lord requires and is increasingly (as I *yield* to Him, as I *respond in love to His love* for me) enabling me to respond not just behaviorally, but from the heart, in love to others, regardless of what they have or have not done – for example, to respond with forgiveness when I, or someone I love, has been wronged. I do it not necessarily for them, but out of love for Him.

I am learning to respond to Him and not to whatever is being manifest in the individual or circumstances before me. I do not mean to suggest that I have attained maturity in this area. I am really only beginning to learn. Still, it is only my relationship with Him (which is predicated on His perfect love for me) that causes me to long to, and is increasingly enabling me to lay down my life daily, my wants, my desires, my rights, my reactions, to take up my cross (to die daily to self), and to follow Him. For it is Him, my Prince of peace, my solid ground, my shelter from the storm, to whom I run when the pressures of life threaten to overwhelm me. The words of the 23rd Psalm are not just words – they are the Truth: *He maketh me* to lie down in green pastures. *He leadeth me* beside the still waters. *He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me* in the pathways of righteousness *for His name's sake*. And yea, though I may walk through the valley of the shadow of death, *I shall not fear*. His rod and His staff (His discipline of me as His child) *they comfort me*. They reassure me of His presence, of His involvement in my life. And as I appropriate these words by faith with thanksgiving, I am comforted,

strengthened, and enabled to go on. He speaks. I respond in faith. He responds in His faithfulness. And then I know.

How do I know that I know?

I recall one time, several years ago, when I was a 'newborn Christian' and I was struggling hard with something. I cannot recall what the particular issue was that day – perhaps it was doubt. Anyway, I prayed, asking for the Lord to please reassure me. And then I opened my Bible to one of the most convicting passages of Scripture I have ever read, and I heard it to the circumstances of my life, that is to say, I read it not literally, but testimonially, and I was undone by it for it reached down deeply into an area of my life that I would just as soon not even have acknowledged, much less have exposed before the Living God. But at the same time, in some strange way, I was tremendously comforted deep within – by the knowledge of His presence, by the inner work of His Holy Spirit – I did not feel condemned,[iii] but there was no way I could escape the truth of His word and the awfulness of it. And it made me to weep and mourn for my sin, and to tremble at His knowledge.

Now, I had been hoping for and expecting a kind of 'feel good' spiritual experience that would communicate to me that, "Everything's okay." But that is not what I got. In retrospect, I can honestly say, that is not what I needed. Instead, I experienced something terribly profound deep within me, which I could not possibly put into words. To be sure, the firm but gentle hand of His discipline was exactly what I needed, and more reassuring to me, than a hug and a pat on the shoulder ever could have been. Having had more experiences of His discipline since that time, I can only affirm what I have already said. Indeed, in some ways, it is those very experiences of His loving

discipline that often take me by surprise that have strengthened my faith, that enable me to say, "I *know*" with certainty when someone asks me, How do you know? It's kind of like when you ask your mother, "How will I know when I'm in love?" and she answers by saying, *"You'll know."* I know.

I know that I know because when I run to Him during times of trial, times of suffering, times of loss, times of conviction, and seek His face, His presence, His kingdom, His righteousness, when I say to Him in prayer, "I praise You Father for Your ways are higher than my ways, and I submit (in) this situation to You," then the power of God comes to rest on me and I am enabled, truly empowered to stand tall and strong in the midst of the storm. There is a wonderful worship song that I love to sing to Jesus:

> You're everything to me; You're more than a story, more than words on the page of history. You're the air that I breathe, the water I thirst for; You're the ground beneath my feet, You're everything to me.

He is everything to me. He is the ground, the solid ground, beneath my feet. Not this or that doctrine. Not this or that religion. Not this or that philosophy or set of principles or beliefs. Not this or that ideology. But Christ.

Even as I am writing this, even as I am looking back at that very convicting passage of Scripture, I am awed – by how well He knew (and knows) me; by what He was saying to me at that time that I did not fully understand, not that I claim now fully to understand. But my understanding is being deepened, and my knowledge of Him – of His absolute righteousness, of my former condition and of His great, unfathomable mercy in sending His Son 2000 plus years ago to die for *all* of sinful humankind, including me (not just me), and in sending His Son for me several years ago to salvage, reclaim, and redeem my life. I have no words – I cannot even fathom how thankful I ought to be. I can only sit

quietly in wonder, awe, and reverence in His glorious presence and worship Him. Of such moments, Heschel (1976) writes,

> ... unlike scientific thinking, understanding for the realness of God does not come about by way of syllogism, by a series of abstractions, by a thinking that proceeds from concept to concept, but by way of insights. The ultimate insight is the outcome of *moments* when we are stirred beyond words, of instants of wonder, awe, praise, fear, trembling and radical amazement; of awareness of grandeur, of perceptions we can grasp but are unable to convey, of discoveries of the unknown, of moments in which we abandon the pretense of being acquainted with the world, of *knowledge by inacquaintance*. It is at the climax of such moments that we attain the certainty that life has meaning, that time is more than evanescence, that beyond all being there is someone who cares.(p. 131)

As I ponder the question, "How do I know?" and as I formulate this response to it, I am reminded of a passage from A.W. Tozer's (2001) *The attributes of God: Deeper into the Father's heart*, which is worth quoting at length. Tozer writes,

> You see, if your faith stands in human argument, someone who is a better arguer can argue you out of it again. But when the Spirit of God reveals truth to your heart and God manifests that truth to your heart, nobody can argue you out of it. If you know God through Jesus Christ the Lord, nobody can argue you out of it.

> When I was in my twenties, I used to read more philosophy than I did theology. I readbooks by psychologists and philosophers, yards and yards of them. I tried to make myself acquainted with what the great minds of the ages have thought. And sometimes I would run into somebody with an argument I couldn't answer, which made it look bad for the Bible and bad for me. Then I would get down on my knees and say with joy in my heart, "Lord Jesus, this man got to me too late. I have found Thee, and though I can't answer his arguments, I have Thee and I know Thee." And I would have a joyful time of worship on my knees. My head couldn't enter, but my heart was already in, on its knees, saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty."

> Since then I have learned that nobody knows enough to contradict the Word of God successfully. Some people think they do, but they don't. One man told me, "Sometimes I am troubled by the foundations of my faith. But when I'm worried about the foundations, I dive deep down into

the Bible and examine the foundations. And I always come back out and shake the water out of my hair and sing, "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!" You may be sure nobody knows enough to contradict the Word of God. …

The wisdom of God is something to be taken on faith. Anselm tells us, as I have said before, that we do not reason in order that we might believe, but we reason because we already believe. If I have to reason myself into faith, then I can be reasoned back out of it again. But faith is an organ of knowledge; if I know something by faith, I will reason about it.

For this reason I make no attempt to prove God's wisdom. If I tried to prove that God is wise, the embittered soul would not believe it anyway, no matter how perfect and convincing the proofs I might bring. And the worshipping heart already knows that God is wise and does not need to have it proved. So I will not attempt to prove anything, but simply begin with the statement that God is wise. (pp. 111-112; 124-125)

Likewise, then, let me not attempt to prove anything, but simply begin with the

statements that God is; the Bible is the Word of God; and Jesus is the Incarnate Word, the

Word made flesh; the Way, the Truth, and the Life. That is my starting point (much the

same as the starting point of other scholars is that God is not (or never was, or is dead);

the Bible is nothing more than a collection of myths (at best); and that Jesus is nothing

more than a great teacher (at best) or a guilty witness[122] (at worst), deserving of the

vicious and tortuous death He suffered.

"Findings:" Holy ground is solid ground

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the Solid Rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand. (Mote, 1832)

My ground is the Living Word of God. He is my ground, my authority, my

warrant. He is my justification. I am His story. My radically transformed life bears

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[122] See Sartre in Felman and Laub, 1992, pp. 184-185.

witness to the Truth of what the Scriptures claim. I did not intend when I entered the doctoral program eight years ago to write what I have written. I did not intend even to go near a Bible. Indeed, the mouths of people who knew me then are apt to hang agape when they read or hear the testimony I am giving now. The process by which all of this has come about is in itself a testimony to my relationship with the Lord. I could not have, would not have done what I have done here without the strength, courage, and faith given to me by the One I claim to know and by whom I claim to be known.

If someone had told me eight years ago that this was the dissertation I was going to write, I would probably have had to be hospitalized for the injuries I would have incurred as a result of falling down hard on the ground laughing. Or perhaps I would just have flown into another closed-minded rage about Right Wing Religious Bigots. The dissertation in its present form is not even what I wanted to write as recently as 1999 when I 'gave my life to Christ,' and there are plenty of witnesses who could testify to that. But as I have said, a funny thing happened to me on the way to completing my dissertation. Gradually, by little and little, my wants changed. You know how it is when a person who is in love wants to get up and shout from the rooftops, "I'm in love!" and talks incessantly about his or her beloved all the time? So I am becoming where Jesus is concerned. The more deeply I come to know Him, the more I want to share Him with others, His attributes, who He is, what He has done, is doing, has promised, and is still promising.

But, some may ask, could this 'relationship' that I claim to have not just be the product of a very fertile imagination and wishful thinking? No. I have had too many of the kinds of moments of insight Heschel (1976) talks about to believe that. I have over

the past five years had what you might call a 'critical mass' of "God-incidences," that is, experiences of His speaking into my life this way by His Holy Spirit. As I said above, I wrote this thesis on my knees. There were many nights when I did not have a clue where to start or what to write, and rather than dive deeply into the scholarly literature that is 'my discipline,' I would, like Tozer's friend, dive deeply into the Word of God, spend time in prayer, praise, and worship. Sometimes it was enough for me just to get down on my knees and bow my face to the floor and say, "I worship you Jesus," and then without any effort on my part, without any forethought at all, pages and pages would come, so fast sometimes I would have to say, "O Lord, please slow down. I cannot write fast enough."

And yet there were other times when I got caught up in myself, my wants, my needs, my desires (e.g. to finish) and/or circumstances (e.g. a deadline to produce a particular amount of writing within a particular period of time) and then proceeded as I would have in the days of old, slogging through this or that article and growing more and more frustrated with myself for not making any headway, for my inability to 'make sense' of what I was reading, and for my inability to write anything intelligible. Then, mercifully I would be enabled to look up and I would be instructed in the way that I should go and guided with His eye (Ps. 32:8), and I would forsake my slogging, enter into worship or the study of His Word, and then find myself receiving understanding of that which I formerly could not understand.

Another way in which I could 'validate' or corroborate my testimony would be to catalogue all kinds of similar testimonies of others across cultures, across history, and from all walks of life who have had similar kinds of experiences as I have and who claim

the same thing that I do – that is, that they have a personal relationship with the Living God of the Bible through His Son Jesus Christ, and that it has transformed and continues to transform their lives and the lives of others in remarkable ways. Here is but a small sampling: C.S. Lewis (1955), literary critic, David Wilkerson (1963), small town boy turned New York city pastor, Corrie Ten Boom, (1971; 1978) Dutchwoman whose family hid Jews during the Second World War and who survived Ravensbruk, Joni Erikson Tada (1987), able-bodied teenager turned quadriplegic by a diving accident, now a minister of the gospel for people with disabilities, Jackie Pullinger (2001), missionary to the walled city in China, Tony Campolo (2000; 1985), sociologist and activist with Habitat for Humanity and World Vision, Ben Carson, (1990), M.D.; Phillip Yancey (1995; 1999), journalist, Debbie Morris (1998), public school special education teacher and author of *forgiving the DEAD MAN WALKING*, Lee Strobel (2000), journalist, the "daughters of hope" written about by Marshall Strom and Rickett (2003) who have experienced the power of God in their lives in small villages and big cities all over the world, and are holding fast their confessions of faith under intense persecution.

The remarkable thing is that these names (other than Lewis, whose literary criticism I encountered during the course of my four year undergraduate degree in English language and literature – interestingly, no mention was ever made of his commitment to Christ) and their testimonies were utterly unknown to me prior to my own 'Damascus road' experience in the spring of 1999. In other words, I did not become convinced of the Truth of the gospel as a result of having heard testimony after testimony after testimony. Rather, like the apostle Paul, I became convinced first by my own first-hand, awe-full and unexpected encounter with the Living God of the Bible, by having

experienced for myself the convicting power of the double-edged sword, the Living Word of God which in my case most certainly did "separate between soul and spirit" (Heb. 4:11). Reading these testimonies after the fact has only served to confirm the experiences I have had as I un/learn to walk by faith in the Lord. I did not go looking for the testimonies. Instead, I seemed time after time just to 'happen upon' exactly what I needed at a particular time, under particular circumstances, to strengthen my faith.

Having had these experiences, knowing the benefits of living this way, when I look around at a world that is hurting and see people suffering, weighed down by all sorts of burdens, knocked down by the crises, conflicts, and broken promises that litter the landscape of their lives, I long to cry out, "Are you anxious, fretful, full of fear? Are you angry, bitter, resentful, preoccupied with past injuries, present hurts, and/or the thought of future wounds? Do you suffer from depression, envy, loneliness, jealousy, perfectionism, a general malaise or heaviness of spirit? Do you seem to have deep cravings for more, more, more (of whatever – good food, fine wine, electronic gadgets, cars, clothes, shoes, information, entertainment, houses, deals, thrills, and so on), cravings that no matter how much you acquire never seem to be satisfied? Do you bear a burden of guilt for something you (believe you) did or did not do?

Are you exhausted from trying to 'be all that you can be'? Are you fretting and fuming trying to change people who 'just don't get it'? Are you tired of trying to 'do the right thing' and being spat upon for it? Are you fed up with trying to 'be all things to all people?' Are you tired of talking and talking and talking but no one seems to be listening? Are you frustrated with and frightened by circumstances that seem to be 'spiraling out of control'?

Do you want to know the peace that passes all understanding? Do you want to experience what it is like truly to be loved beyond measure, unconditionally, no matter what you have done, by someone who will never harm you? Do you want to be free from the burden of all of your wrongdoing? Do you want to experience satisfaction even in want? Do you want to be content no matter the circumstances? Are you searching for solid ground upon which to stand when all hell seems to be breaking loose around you? Are you looking for a shelter from the storms of life, a safe haven, a "tower of refuge and strength"?

Then let me introduce you to the love of my life, my friend, my counselor, my fortress, my healer, my deliverer, my contentment, my strength, my Shalom, my Lord, Jesus Christ. He's available 24/7 at no charge. He is patient, kind, longsuffering, and trustworthy. He will never betray you. He is merciful, compassionate, righteous, and just. He is always faithful and true, and He delivers on His promises. "Come to Me, you who labour and are heavy-laden and I *will* give you rest," He says. "Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

I have found it to be true that glad, wholehearted surrender to the sovereign control and will of the Creator does not strip me of dignity or freedom, but rather is the source and means of true freedom and fullness (DeMoss, 2003). On my own I would most likely have quit the program I am now finishing. I would have lacked the courage, strength, and hope, not to mention the stamina, time, perseverance, energy, and even the inclination, the will to do what was necessary in order for this dissertation to be birthed. This thesis is a gift to me. The process of writing it has also been a gift. It has been a

faith building experience to be sure. I have, both literally and figuratively, written most of this dissertation on my knees. It truly is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, of much prayer, praise, worship, Bible study, and love – His love for me. It is also my response, my "Yea and amen," to His call on my life.

But others' testimonies will take you only so far. If one really wants to know for oneself, beyond the shadow of a doubt, then one has to do one's own research, taking steps of faith; calling upon His name; putting one's trust in His Word; opening one's mind and heart to Him, adopting that posture Boler (1997; 1999) calls "testimonial," that Chinnery (2000) calls "radical passivity," that is, a disposition of heart and mind which displays itself as an activity of welcome, and that Heshusius (1994) calls "participatory consciousness," and then watching to see for oneself what will happen. I am convinced that anyone who would dare to do this wholeheartedly in faith would find him- or herself on a most amazing, delightful, and truly thrilling adventure. Do not take my word for it, or the word of other believers. But do not take the word of non-believers, either. Let the various testimonies serve instead as a jumping off point for your own inquiry, your own search for ground. Find out for yourself, would be my recommendation. Whether anyone does or does not undertake such a study is entirely up to them. I merely put the recommendation forward for consideration.

Am I out to convert everyone to Christ? No. For although I long for others to come to know Him as I am coming to know Him, as true and faithful Friend, trustworthy Confidante, Sustainer, Encourager, Provider, Defender, Healer, wise Counselor, mighty Deliverer, righteous God, merciful Saviour, kinsman Redeemer, Prince of peace, Ancient of Days, Master Teacher, Alpha and Omega, Lord, conversion is not my business. I

believe that conversion is the business of the Holy Spirit. My business is to share my testimony with whomsoever He chooses, and to love Him and my neighbour.

I read a story recently by Carol Geddes (1995) entitled, "Growing up Native." In the story she tells of missionaries who would come to her community and "lecture us about how we had to live a Christian life" (p. 194), and of a teacher who having humiliated one of the older boys in her class, yelled at her to read, "and when I didn't she smashed her pointing stick on the desk to frighten me. In terror, I wet my pants. As I stood there fighting my tears of shame she said I was disgusting and sent me home" (p. 195). How far from the Jesus who rebuked the disciples who tried to send the children away from Him. How far from the Jesus who said that the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these, that is, little children. How far from the Jesus who said love one another, love your neighbour, and love your enemies. How far from the Jesus I know, whose Holy Spirit convicts me when I lose patience with my own children. And yet that is the vision many people have of Christ because of how those who bear His name have treated one another and others over the ages. What a shame.

This brings us to some of the potential criticisms of a work such as this being put forward in a social context of plurality and the context of academia. Some of those criticisms will stem from its being a spiritual inquiry. Others will stem from its being personal and testimonial. Allow me to address these potential concerns in turn.

Is there a place for "religious" inquiries in academe? Should there be?

In order to respond to these questions, let me first consider two of the possible arguments against such inquiries, one of which has to do with scientific standards of

objectivity, and the other, with political standards of neutrality in the context of socio-cultural plurality.[123]

No room in the academy, Part I:

Rejecting religious perspectives on the ground that it violates scientific

standards of objectivity

Since at least as far back as Plato's *Republic*, arguments have been made both for and against the inclusion of religion in "the academy".[124]   Arguments have been put forward concerning rationality as the most valuable standard for truth; however, in recent years, these arguments have been shown to be problematic because the argument for rationality as the standard already presupposes it to be the standard. Regarding some of the more contemporary arguments concerning the inclusion of religious perspectives in academe Marsden (1997) writes that there has in the recent past existed an unwritten rule, that in order to be "part of the mainstream academic profession one had to lay one's religious faith aside" (p. 28). This rule was predicated on the false premise that it is possible for people to free their minds from "elementary biases" or "prejudices," that science provides the most valuable standard for truth because it provides conclusions on which all fair-minded observers can agree (p. 27). It was founded on a belief in the possibility of scientific objectivity. This rule, Marsden (1997) continues, fails on at least four counts.

First, "attempts to extend the empirical model of natural science to other fields of academic inquiry have failed to unite people on the larger questions concerning society and human relationships" (p. 28). Empirical science has shown itself to be incapable of

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[123] There are undoubtedly more than two kinds of arguments against the inclusion of "religious inquiry" in the academy. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, I shall address only these two.
[124] A broad survey of these arguments is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

providing definitive answers to the 'big questions' of life, such as love, truth, justice, morality, and so on. As such, the idea that empirical scientific models will eliminate sectarianism proves false. Academic inquiry continues to be driven largely by special interests and politics (Marsden, 1997).

The second problem with the argument that one must lay aside one's religious faith because it is not empirically based is that this standard "is not consistently applied to other nondemonstrable beliefs that play prominent roles in the secular academy" (p. 28). Marsden points out that many academicians today base judgements concerning their research and teaching on their belief in the value of social equity, of the value of equality of opportunity, access, treatment, and results[125] for people regardless of race, gender, social class, ability, and so on, or on their belief in the sanctity of human life (or all life), or on their belief in the importance of respect for others, and so on. These are moral commitments and while empirical arguments may be brought in to defend these positions, the beliefs themselves are held "inviolable" and are not up for debate. Moral commitments like these shape scholarship in important ways, often determining what one chooses to study and how one evaluates human relationships. Marsden writes,

> So far as dependence on empirical verification is concerned, many religious beliefs fall in the same category. Religious people may see in the immensity of the universe evidence confirming their belief in a creator, but they cannot empirically prove that point. On the other hand, neither can one prove the opposite. Yet the equally undemonstrable supposition that there is no creator is routinely accepted in academic inquiry. So there seems to be no consistent academic rule that all beliefs must be empirically grounded and hence that all religously derived beliefs can be excluded on the grounds that they are "non-empirical" (pp. 28-29).

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[125] For an explication of these terms, cf. Chapter 6, *The journey toward social justice begins with steps of personal holiness.*

The third problem Marsden identifies with the rule that religious faith must be laid aside in academic pursuits is that it cannot be done. One can no more lay aside one's religious commitments when one walks into the research lab or 'naturalistic setting' or university classroom or faculty meeting than one can lay aside one's race, gender, class, or dis/ability. One's religious commitments cannot but influence one's thinking and practice as a researcher, teacher, committee member, and so on.

Marsden (1997) goes on to say that "[t]he actual rule is not that religious beliefs are excluded because they are irrelevant to scholarship – they are relevant to many issues – but that academics should *act* as though they are irrelevant. Just as people have historically been urged to keep quiet about the relevance of their race, gender, class, dis/ability, and/or sexuality to their scholarship and teaching, people with religious commitments continue to be silenced about matters that are of utmost importance to them and which cannot but inform their academic work. If it is wrong to silence people about the relevance of race, gender, class, dis/ability, and/or sexual orientation to academic inquiry, it stands to reason that it is also wrong to silence people about the relevance of faith commitments to academic inquiry.

The fourth defect of the rule Marsden identifies is that "it unduly favours scholarship based on purely naturalistic presuppositions" (p. 29). He writes,

> It is worth repeating that this rule is not itself a conclusion of empirical investigation. Rather, it is a working premise that has been widely successful in much of natural science and which is therefore proposed as a standard for all disciplines. Because this premise has a privileged position in so much of academia, it is common for scholars to draw conclusions from their investigations that are actually based on the premise, rather than on the investigations themselves. (p. 29)

He notes that in such cases, while there may be some validity to some naturalistic explanations of phenomena, it does not necessarily follow "that the naturalistic explanation is the whole explanation – unless that is your premise" (p. 29). In sum, the contemporary academy, *on its own terms*, has no business excluding all "religious perspectives" on the grounds that they are not empirically based.

No Room in the Academy, Part II:
Rejection of religious perspectives on the ground that they violate the political standard of neutrality in the context of socio-cultural plurality

The second argument against the inclusion of "religious perspectives" in academe has its roots in a fear that including religious perspectives, especially what some would call "traditional Christianity," could reverse "some hard-won gains for diversity and tolerance" (Marsden, 1997, p. 32). Marsden, himself a Christian historian, acknowledges the historical dominance of Christianity in the West. He writes,

> Christianity was long the official religion in the Western world; even after it was disestablished in nineteenth-century America, Protestants were dominant in a more informal cultural establishment. In twentieth-century America ... this informal establishment was largely dismantled in the interest of promoting diversity and equality in public life. (p. 32)

As Heschel (1976) notes, religion itself, not secular science or anti-religious philosophy, but religion may be to blame for its own erasure not only from the academic landscape, but from the public landscape as well. Of Protestant Christianity in particular, he writes,

> The preoccupation with personal salvation has, it seems, a tendency to weaken one's openness to history as it unfolds in its secular and social aspects. Social ills produced in the wake of major economic, political and social revolutions seem to stir and to arouse the sensitivity of the so-called secularists sooner than they do the conscience of the pious – a situation parallel to that in Judaism when preoccupation with ritual may weaken

sensitivity to social issues. In biblical days prophets were astir while the world was asleep; today the world is astir while church and synagogue are busy with trivialities. (p. 174)

Given the historical failures of the church to represent the grace, love, mercy, and compassion of Jesus to a hurting world, might not a fear of "resurgent Christian imperialism" be justified? Perhaps, but the question remains, are we willing to settle for what amounts in the end to nothing more than another form of cultural imperialism? Does this fear constitute sufficient ground to justify the effective silencing not only of "conservative Christians," but of all "religious perspectives"?

Marsden (1997) suggests that there remains a deep ambiguity about the ideal of diversity in mainstream academia. Is the goal "assimilation" or diversity? He writes,

> Peoples of diverse cultures are welcomed into respectable academic culture, but only on the condition that they leave the religious dimensions of their cultures at the door. The result is not diversity, but rather a dreary uniformity. Everyone is expected to accept the standard doctrine that religion has no intellectual relevance. (p. 35)

In other words, people of faith are being asked, in effect, to 'erase' a most significant (for some perhaps the most significant) aspect of their personhood from their scholarship and teaching in the name of academic purity. Academics are *encouraged,*

> to adopt a standardized stance of "neutrality" with respect to the implications of beliefs such as that God exists, that God created the world, that God might reveal himself to humans, or that God may have instituted a moral law. Such "neutrality," of course, is not neutrality at all, but rather conformity to the standards of a modern mainstream academic culture. In this area, at least, the claims to diversity and multiculturalism have masked the opposite" (p. 35).

This is changing, as people like Huebner (1991), Starkings (1993), Buley-Meissner et al. (2000), and others challenge predominant assumptions within academe, namely, "that open discussion of spirituality should be silenced rather than encouraged; that religious

beliefs should be discarded rather than examined or deepened; that 'higher' education in particular means moving beyond faith to reason" (p. 1). Like Marsden (1997), they ask, "If pluralism, diversity, and inclusiveness are guiding concepts of educational reform, why are students so often silenced into intellectual conformity" (Buley-Meissner, 2000, p. 1). And what about professors? Still, religious perspectives remain especially "susceptible to restrictions in academe in the name of multiculturalism" (Marsden, 1997, p. 36).

No room in the academy?: Some concluding thoughts on the inclusion of religious perspectives in academe

While it is more or less accepted in academic culture today that all 'man'-made stories of human knowledge are necessarily time-, place- and culture-bound,[126] the question remains, "Did it ever happen that God disclosed His will to some men for the benefit of all?" (Heschel, 1976, p. 167). Many respond, "No". Others respond, "Yes." Either way, scholarship is ineluctably affected by the response scholars give to this elemental question. There is no real possibility of laying one's "religious faith" aside in the academy. One must either attempt to 'closet' it, or transfer one's allegiance, or stand up and say, "No," in response to the implicit call.

Newbigin (1989) writes that knowing always begins with an act of faith. There is no other possible way to begin. If our scholarship and our teaching cannot but be influenced by our response to the question, "Did it ever happen …?" is it not advisable that we explore our own faith commitments, the ground of our positions, and make them explicit, if only for the purpose of rendering them visible and, thus, contestable? It would seem so, particularly in this day and age of religious extremism.

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[126] This brings us back to Heschel's (1976)

I believe that it is best to be as straightforward and transparent as possible about one's moral, spiritual, and "religious" commitments, about where one is coming from as a researcher, teacher, teacher educator, whatever. But in order to be able to be explicit about 'where we are coming from,' we, as researchers, teachers, and preparers of teachers for life in classrooms, need to know where it is we are coming from. We need to know our ground, what it is we believe. What are our cognitive, affective, and spiritual frameworks?

I could no more hide my commitment to the Lord and His way today than I could hide my commitment to post-structuralist, feminist, separatism yesterday. It is just who I am, and others are better off for my being honest and transparent about that. Like Lyons and Kubler LaBoskey (2002), I am convinced that it is important to make teachers' knowledge "conscious and public and open to scrutiny" (p. 12). When the frameworks through which we experience life are made visible, then they can be questioned, contested, and challenged. Such frameworks are most insidious when they remain hidden, especially to the person who holds them. If those frameworks cannot withstand the pressure of questioning, contestation and challenge over time, then perhaps they would be better off abandoned.[127]

This study adds one more voice to the "Bakhtinian dialogic Carnival" (Scheuric in Lather, 2001) that is being called for in the field of qualitative research in education. The question remains whether this voice will be welcomed or excluded. Why should anybody take the word of a "born again Christian" seriously, especially in an "academic" setting, and especially given the undeniably shameful history of a people who have claimed to

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[127] Just as an aside, that one of the things that makes this study unique within the field of teacher education – i.e., the 'framework' or ground is a person, not an ideology, philosophy, or religion.

put their faith in Jesus Christ? And why should teacher educators in particular bother to read this testimonial narrative? Allow me to address these questions in turn.

I recall several years ago, giving a testimony at AERA of a similar kind, but very different in substance, and no one (to my knowledge) challenged it, either the worth or the importance or the validity of it. No one asked me to justify my claims to knowledge. No one asked me for warrants. Instead, I was congratulated for the courage it must have taken in order to go public with my testimony, and I was encouraged by my academic colleagues to write more. Does not such an invitation suggest implicitly that the kind of writing in which I was engaged, that is, testimonial writing, would be welcomed? Well, all that has changed since that time is the position from which I am writing. The kind of writing I am doing under the signifier "born again Chrsitian" is more or less of the same kind as I was doing under the signifier "feminist separatist". There was a time when the latter testimony would have been met with disdain, if not outright hostility. That has changed, and please let me go on record as saying that for this I am *very* glad, for no human being ought ever to be regarded with disdain, or treated with hostility or cruelty.[128] That is how Holocausts are born.

Today, however, 'coming out' as a Christian (especially a "born again" Christian), especially in academe, is to put oneself at risk of just that, that is, of being summarily dismissed as having nothing to say that is worth the hearing. Perhaps that is so because, as Campolo (2000) suggests, we (those of us who have professed with our mouths to believe in Jesus Christ) have tried to live out the Great Commission, "Go out

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[128] Recall what I spoke of in chapter six, in the study I revisited through the eyes of faith? Every human being is created in the image of God. Fearfully and wonderfully made. And God loves each one very, very much. He does not play favourites, and "is no respecter of persons". We are to regard one another through the eyes of love, in humility, in recognition of the fact that no one of us is any better than anybody else.

into all the world and preach the gospel/good news," without first living out the Great

Commandment: to love the Lord our God with *all* our hearts and *all* our minds and *all*

our souls and *all* our strength, to love one another as Jesus has loved us; to love our

neighbour as ourselves, to love our enemies. Having said that, let me turn now to the

question, concerning the potential value of a testimonial narrative such as this and what it

can possibly contribute to "knowledge" in the field of teacher education.

Why a "testimonial narrative"? Of what value is this as an 'academic' undertaking?

Allow me to suggest first that this particular testimonial narrative serves as an

illustration of how having a solid ground to stand on and a shelter for one's spirit helps

when the storms of life, crises, conflict, unfulfilled promise, and shattered dreams,

threaten to overwhelm. In particular, it shows how having a relationship with Jesus helps

me, not just in my everyday life, but in my work as a teacher, teacher educator, and

researcher, and this might, in turn, help somebody else. One of the merits of personal,

political, and professional testimony is that it has the potential to bring under the scrutiny

of light the framework(s) through which the researcher experiences life. In the case of

this particular testimony, it renders visible not only a process of personal, political, and

professional transformation, but also the ground upon which that transformation is based.

Britzman (1992), has written of the danger of teachers going into classrooms and

without necessarily realizing it, practising in such a way as to get their own needs (e.g.,

for affirmation, fulfillment, happiness and so on) met. In Christ, all of my needs are

already met, even the ones of which I am not yet aware; all of my old wounds are healed,

even the ones I may not remember; and all of the trying circumstances in which I find

myself somehow fit into God's plan to reveal His perfect love. As I grow up into the knowledge of this, I am enabled and empowered to transcend self and circumstance and render more effectively my professional service as a teacher, teacher educator, and researcher.

I cannot say what the ultimate value of this study will be in the final analysis. Only God knows. While it is true that the inquiry has already been of inestimable valuable to me, personally, the implications of my 'findings' extend far beyond the personal to the realms of the social, the political, the professional, and the spiritual. Few today would argue that it is not beneficial to society at large for one who was raised during the era of assimilationism both to become aware of that mindset, of how it has shaped and influenced the development of one's personality and so one's conduct in the social world, and to engage in earnest with the process of having that mindset systematically dismantled from within.

Indeed, today, that is the very kind of work that is called for in the fields of qualitative social science inquiry in education in general, and teacher education in particular. But that kind of work is a major undertaking, and may seem to some, as one of the respondents in one of the studies put it, "largely impracticable." By serving as an exemplar of what this 'work' might look like, this study lays some groundwork for people who are both interested and inclined to participate in a similar process. It could also serve as an encouragement to folks who are already engaged in such a process. Noddings (1999) writes that while engaged in conversation, people "learn about one another. But they also learn *from* one another" (p. 332). She suggests that while being transparent about our ground without imposing it on others, we teachers, researchers, and

teacher educators, can convey all sorts of messages about all kinds of things. It is difficult to calculate how much it might mean to a particular reader (student, teacher, teacher educator, fellow researcher, 'lay person') to hear a scholar say, "I have struggled in that area, too, and this is how I was helped." Such a message may or may not resonate for any given hearer or reader at any given time.

This study ought also to have implications for others in that as I am being transformed into the likeness of the Lord in character, I am becoming better equipped to be in truly loving relationships with others in both personal and professional contexts, to be an instrument of God's love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control[129] in the lives of others, and this is especially needful in this day and age of the kinds of crises, conflicts, and unfulfilled promise I have spoken of both in the introduction to this thesis, and earlier on in this chapter.

Coming back to the issue of professional development, I am convinced that processes of professional development are essentially processes of un/learning how to be in particular kinds of relationships with others – a process that involves unlearning old patterns, habits, and mindsets as much as it involves learning something new. Cole and Knowles (2000) write that, "teaching is rooted in the 'personal' and powerfully influenced by prior experiences within and outside professional contexts" (p. xiii). Britzman (1991), Huebner (1991), Simon (1995), Weber & Mitchell (1995), Palmer (1998), and other teacher educators concur. Indeed, I anticipate that there would be very few individuals either inside or outside of the field of teacher education who would

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[129] See Galatians 5:22.

disagree. Further, many scholars,[130] as well as practitioners are talking and writing about the necessity of 'self work' in the social sciences, in education, and in teacher education. Huebner (1991) puts it this way, that the call of a teacher is to clean up his or her own act, so that all with whom we come into contact in our daily lives, including our students, their families, our colleagues, and our superiors, "can feel the comforting warmth of the Holy Spirit, can see the radiance of God shining through our work, and can hear the Word in our language" (p. 400). This study, in part anyway, is a response to that call.

Still, while many write about doing the work, few teacher educators seem to be showing it, that is to say, making visible their own struggles and processes of transformation. There are many self-reflexive teacher narratives out there, but not so many teacher educators'. Why show the work? What purpose could that serve? Why not just engage in the process and have done with it?

Let us say that having had a 'political consciousness raising' experience, a student teacher or a teacher educator is inclined to undertake the work of getting to know him or herself a little bit, as several of our respondents have suggested we need to do, the work of getting underneath the surface to expose the frameworks of understanding through which we experience reality, of looking down into that place within ourselves 'where fear of difference dwells and see whose face it wears' (Lorde, 1984), but it just seems so daunting, so overwhelming. Perhaps they don't know where to start. Perhaps they are afraid of what they might discover about themselves, or of how others might respond to them in their vulnerability.

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[130] Boler (1999; 1997), Ellis (1997), Ellis & Bochner (2000), Lorde (1984), Palmer (1998), Pinar (1981), Pratt (In Boler, 1997), Waterstone (2000) to name a few.

Or perhaps they have already begun, but have become discouraged, disheartened, even depressed in the process by what they have found. Or perhaps they have given up altogether, thinking it is an impossible task under the pressing circumstances of their lives. Or perhaps they are not convinced of the value of engaging in such a process. A study like this could serve to offer hope where there has been despair, encouragement where there has been discouragement, inspiration and a desire to persevere where there has been a loss of motivation, healing where there has been injury, forgiveness and restoration where there has been broken relationship, and so on.

Since my testimonial narrative is, to a degree, self-reflexive, it has the potential to be helpful to those who hear it, for example, teacher educators, to come to the knowledge that they too can be vulnerable, that they can open themselves up and allow themselves to be gazed at instead of always being the gazers (Bannerji, 1993). This is especially important in teacher education contexts where student teachers are often required to open themselves up in processes of critical self-reflection. hooks (1994) writes,

> Professors who expect students to share confessional narratives but who are themselves unwilling to share are exercising power in a manner that could be coercive. In my classrooms, I do not expect students to take any risks that I would not take, to share in any way that I would not share. When professors bring narratives of their experiences into classroom discussions it eliminates the possibility that we can function as all-knowing, silent interrogators. It is often productive if professors take the first risk, linking confessional narratives to academic discussions so as to show how experience can illuminate and enhance our understanding of academic material. But most professors must practice being vulnerable in the classroom, being wholly present in mind, body, and spirit. ... (p. 21)

Allowing ourselves to be vulnerable in our reading and in our research may be good practice for allowing ourselves to be vulnerable in the classroom. However, some scholars have rightly pointed out that confessional narratives can be problematic.

Consider what Boler (1999) has written,

> The Socratic admonition to 'know thyself' may not lead to self-transformation. Like passive empathy, self-reflection in and of itself may result in no measurable change or good to others or oneself. The familiar call for critical self-reflection can easily be reduced to a form of solipsism, a kind of 'new age,' liberal navel-gazing. Upon self-reflection I may tell you, "I feel defensively angry when you suggest that I examine my privilege; this is how I feel when I think about racism/sexism/homophobia. It's too scary and hard and I don't want to change.' This statement appears to take responsibility but in fact changes nothing, other than perhaps permitting the well-meaning white liberal to 'feel better' having provided a self-critique. (p. 178)

But while this particular study is confessional, in that it discloses things the knowledge of which by others may be considered humiliating to the person confessing (OED, 1971), it goes beyond that to evidence a transformation. Further, in the end, the work is not self-elevating, not the latter part of it anyway. It does not boast about personal or professional achievements or accomplishments. Rather it contritely acknowledges weaknesses, mixed motives, and failures.[131]

A study like this may also be warranted for the ethical purpose of making oneself accountable. I can easily report that I am doing x or y, that I am un/learning racism, ethnocentrism, fear of difference, that I am learning to love my neighbour whoever she or he might be, or whatever. I can even engage in research about others' struggles and processes of transformation. But unless I make visible the process by which I am being transformed, no one knows for sure whether I am, in fact, engaged in such a process, and, if I am, what that might look like. Am I truly unlearning old ways of thinking? speaking? writing? being? Am I truly un/learning what I claim to be un/learning? What evidence is there to substantiate my claim, that I am being transformed from the inside out?

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[131] I shall have more to say about this a little later on when I address specifically the problem of narcissism in self-study.

A study like this makes me accountable in terms of whether my actions are consistent with my words. Having gone public with my faith, with the standards up to which I am called to live, teach, and do research (love your neighbour; love your enemies; bless those who curse you; forgive and you will be forgiven, knowing has implications for the knower, and so on), I can expect that I will be increasingly called to 'put my money where my mouth is,' so to speak. I am reminded as I write of a story told by Corrie Ten Boom (1971, 1978), a Dutchwoman whose family made a hiding place in their home for Jewish people during the Second World War, and who were discovered, captured, and imprisoned by the Nazis.

She and her sister were sent to Ravensbruk, a concentration camp, and suffered terribly at the hands of their captors. Corrie's beloved sister Betsie died there as a result of the conditions to which they were subjected. Corrie's life, after she was released from the prison, was dedicated to serving the Lord and giving talks about the necessity of forgiveness to deep healing. Having given many such talks, she was confronted after church services one day by one of the guards from the camp where she and her sister had been interned. The man had since become a Christian, and he stretched out his hand to her asking if she would forgive him. It is worth quoting her at length. She writes,

> It was in a church in Munich that I saw him – a balding, heavyset man in a gray overcoat, a brown felt hat clutched between his hands. … It was 1947 and I had come from Holland to defeated Germany with the message that God forgives.
>
> … One moment I saw the overcoat and the brown hat; the next, a blue uniform and a visored cap with its skull and crossbones. It came back with a rush: the huge room with its harsh overhead lights; the pathetic pile of dresses and shoes in the center of the floor; the shame of walking naked past this man. I could see my sister's frail form ahead of me, ribs sharp beneath the parchment skin. *Betsie, how thin you were!*

The place was Ravensbruck and the man who was making his way forward had been a guard – one of the most cruel guards.

Now he was in front of me, hand thrust out: "A fine message, Fraulein! How good it is to know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea!"

And I, who had spoken so glibly of forgiveness, fumbled in my pocketbook rather than take that hand. He would not remember me, of course – how could he remember one prisoner among those thousands of women?

But I remembered him and the leather crop swinging from his belt. I was face-to-face with one of my captors and my blood seemed to freeze.

"You mentioned Ravensbruck in your talk," he was saying. "I was a guard there." No, he did not remember me.

"But since that time," he went on, "I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. Fraulein," – again the hand came out – "will you forgive me?"

And I stood there – I whose sins had again and again to be forgiven – and could not forgive. Betsie had died in that place – could he erase her slow terrible death simply for the asking?

It could not have been many seconds that he stood there – hand held out – but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do.

... And still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion – I knew that too. Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. "Jesus, help me!" I prayed silently. "I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling."

And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.

> For a long moment we grasped each other's hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God's love so intensely as I did then. But even so, I realized it was not my love. I had tried, and did not have the power. It was the power of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Romans 5:5, "... because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (1978, pp. 53-55)

What I especially appreciate about this story is the transparency of it. It is not just a simple matter of obedience, to forgive this man. Miss Ten Boom acknowledges the impossibility of the situation and the thing she must do. She acknowledges that she does not, of herself, have what it takes to forgive this man, but God does, and He is faithful to supply all her need according to His riches in glory when she asks, when she indicates her willingness but inability to do things His way. My hope rests in God to meet me where I am, and to supply all my need as well in all of the challenges that He allows to come into my life.

Mirror, mirror on the wall ...: Self-study and the problem of narcissism

Still, one of the criticisms of self-study is that despite intentions to the contrary, it tends toward self-absorption and narcissism, a process of endless, morbid introspection, a process which, in the end may change nothing, other than perhaps permitting the well-meaning individual to 'feel better' having provided a self-critique. What, if anything, makes this study different? Allow me to suggest that three things make this study unique: Christ-centredness, true repentance, and the power of God to transform a life.

Narcissism is a term that alludes to the myth of Narcissus who, upon gazing into a pool of water, caught sight of and fell in love with his own reflection. What does it mean, to 'fall in love with'? Among other things, one of the 'signs' that one has fallen in love is that one generally devotes a great deal of one's time, energy, attention, and resources to the beloved and one's pursuit thereof. Is it true of me that in the course of

writing this dissertation I have devoted an inordinate amount of time, energy, attention, and resources to myself, to my own "reflection"?

Yes, it is especially true of the front end of this project, but that has changed, and is changing, and will continue to change. As the Lord grows me up in Him, apart from bringing to light my sins for the purposes of confession, repentance, renunciation, and the restoration of my soul in order that I might live for Him, to love and serve others as He has loved and served me, He draws me to focus my time, energy, attention, and resources on Him. As I do, I am 'set free' from my habitual preoccupation with myself, my circumstances, and the selves and circumstances of those whom I love and with whom I identify. I am also 'set free' from the detrimental effects (both to self and to the other) of devoting an inordinate amount of time, energy, attention, and resources to others, to gazing at them, trying to 'make sense' of 'their' ways, trying to 'help' them, to emancipate them.

But as I focus on Him, I am brought to a broader and deeper awareness of the plight of a wider scope of others that includes not only the people I love and with whom I identify, but also people with whom I have little to nothing in common, people with whom I have little to no affinity, people for whom I have little to no affection, people who 'rub me the wrong way,' people who have 'done me wrong,' people who are 'surprisingly different.' Furthermore, as I grow up in Him, I am enabled and empowered by His grace to respond to all with, in, out of, and through His perfect love.

In the end, this study, this account of my search for ground and a shelter from the storms of life, is not a self-study at all. The account I have given of some of the details of my own lived experience is nothing more than a frame through which the love, mercy,

grace, compassion, righteousness, truth, integrity, and justice, in other words, the glory of God, might be seen. It is more His story than it is mine. I am but a witness, a living testimony or memorial to *His unfathomable love*. That is the real story here, the real thesis.

Heschel (1966) writes, "When we are gasping with despair, when the wisdom of science and the splendour of the arts fail to save us from fear and the sense of futility, the Bible offers us the only hope: history is a circuitous way for the steps of the Messiah" (p. 238). When I was desperate, when I thought I could not go on, when I was so depressed that I could hardly drag myself off of my bed, when I was eyeball deep in my own failure and misery – in my own selfishness, fear of others, anger at others and myself, bitterness, resentment, guilt and so on – and going down for the last time, when I was not able to help myself, much less serve anybody else, when others were not able to help me, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, the express image of God who is Love drew me to Himself and saved me. When nothing else would do, Love lifted me. Glory be to His name.

I have been saved *by Him*, saved from sin, self, and circumstance. I am *His workmanship*. The transformation of my character is being *accomplished by Him* for His glory in His timing and on His terms. That is what redeems this work from narcissism. Boasting is excluded.

All of the self work I did up to the point where I surrendered my life to the Lord really was nothing more than self-centred navel gazing, no matter how I tried to rationalize or justify it. The first part of this dissertation bears witness to that. It was all about me, my wants, my needs, my rights, my desires, like Boler's 'well-meaning white liberal'. That is what makes the whole of this work different – in the end, it is not about

me at all. Yes, I am the one in the process of being transformed, but the story is about the One who has transformed, is transforming, and will continue to transform me. It is about who He is. It is about what He has done and is doing and will do.

The transformation of my character is not a result of self-effort on my part. It is a by-product of the relationship between my Lord and me. He does the work in me as I submit to His Lordship, as I yield to His Way rather than persisting in doing it my way. He speaks His Word into my life, and *by His grace* I step out in faith and obey. He effects the desired transformation. Any struggles I experience are a result of a reluctance of my will to surrender control to Him, of falling back into my old ways, of trying to do it myself.

But, some may say, this still seems too individualistic. Good on you that you 'got saved,' have 'a personal relationship with the Lord,' and are being transformed. But what about the systemic social inequities that so gripped your heart five or so years ago? What about racism? Classism? Colonialism? Ablism? Sexism? What about the variety of phobias that affect so many people? What about that little aboriginal girl who peed her pants in terror? Or the women who came to Canada traumatized by war and their experiences in refugee camps and are further traumatized by the very society that held out the promise of "freedom"? Or the young man who was pistol-whipped, tied to a fence, and left for dead because of his sexuality? Do you still care about these things? Or are you now satisfied that 'all is working itself out as it should,' and that it is all God's will? You've vacuumed your conscience. You've 'found' absolution. You've assuaged your soul. You are at peace with God. What about those people whose lives still hang in the balance, who are still living under the hobnailed boot of social, cultural, and economic

oppression, those people whom you so graphically depict in your prologue to this very dissertation. What about "them"? As Boler (1997) writes, they don't want empathy, they want justice.

Allow me to say that I care more now than I ever did. The things that break the heart of God, like the perversion of justice, now break my heart. Levinas (2001) says that, "Justice comes from love," and that "Love must always watch over justice. ... God is the God of justice, but his principal attribute is mercy. ... Love is originary" (p. 169). God is Love. And He does watch over justice. His Law is at once simple and impossible: Love the Lord your God with *all* your heart, and *all* your mind, and *all* your soul and *all* your strength,[132] and love your neighbor as yourself. When asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied by telling a story that is so familiar to us today that we hardly pay it any mind at all (much less give it all our mind, all our heart, all our soul, and all our strength): the story of the Good Samaritan. It is a story that is enhanced by having some knowledge of the socio-cultural and spiritual context of the day, of the Jewish laws regarding coming into contact with dead bodies and the lengthy purification rituals, of the tensions between people of the Jewish faith and the Samaritans, how they looked at each other with disdain and treated each other with hostility because of who, how, and where they worshipped, and of the geography of the road between Jerusalem and Jericho – that it was a long and treacherous road where there were often bandits and marauders. One never knew who one might meet on that road, and stopping long enough to help another (a friend, much less a potential 'enemy') could make one an easy target for such unsavory characters.

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[132] Sounds like Heshusius' (1994) 'participatory consciousness,' the 'affection, love, and kinship' with which such scientists as Barbara McClintock (nobel Laureate for her work with corn plants) treat the 'objects' of their research

I find it awesome that for Jesus, the term "neighbor" did not describe another person, but rather inhered in a particular kind of relationship between two or more people, a relationship characterized predominantly by compassion and mercy. In other words, a 'neighbor' is anyone toward whom one extends compassion and mercy. It is not up to us to ascertain who is or is not worthy of such magnanimous generosity of spirit. It is only up to us to keep the commandment, to love our neighbor, and when we don't feel like it, to ask for and trust that we will receive the strength from God to do His will, to put our feelings aside, and give His command first place and trust Him for the outcome (which we may or may never see this side of heaven).

Boler writes that people don't want empathy. They don't want love; they want justice. But justice and love go hand in hand. Love is not love without justice. And justice is not justice without love. Here is what I believe about justice and about why God *seems* (that is, to our small, narrow minds) indifferent to the prevalence of injustice in the world today. I recall driving in my van in the early days of my relationship with the Lord. I was sitting at an intersection in Vancouver, getting ready to make my left turn to go to school. I cried out to God about some injustice I had just heard about, or been talking to Him about, and I said something to the effect of, "Why don't you do something about …" What I heard in my heart shocked me. That still, small voice said to me ever so gently, "Why don't *you* do something?"

God's arm is not too short to save, nor is his ear too dull to hear. Rather, it is our own crimes that separate us from our God. Our sins (that is, our failure to love Him with all our heart, all our mind, all our soul, and all our strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves, to regularly extend to them compassion and mercy, whether or not we feel they

deserve it) have hidden his face from us so that he doesn't hear. For our hands (or our boots) are stained with blood and our fingers with crime. Our lips speak lies, and our tongues utter wicked things. We put each other down. We criticize each other (when we are just as guilty, even more so than those whom we judge and condemn for their offences). We tell lies to save face, to protect ourselves and those we profess to love and care about because we are afraid of what might happen to us if we were to tell the truth.

No one sues with just cause. We blame others for our misfortune rather than acknowledging responsibility for our part in it. No one pleads honestly in court. We trust in empty words and say worthless things. We conceive trouble and give birth to evil. We do not want to accept that evil is what God says it is in His word because to accept that would mean we would have to give up some of our most cherished social practices and ideas about ourselves. The way of *shalom*, of peace, tranquility, safety, well-being, welfare, health, contentment, success, comfort, wholeness and integrity, we do not know. This is why justice is far from us, and righteousness doesn't catch up with us. We look for light, but see only darkness; for brightness, but we walk in gloom. We grope for the wall like the blind; like people without eyes we feel our way. We stumble at noonday as if it were dusk. We are in dark places like the dead. We growl, all of us, like bears and moan pitifully like doves.

We look for justice, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us. For our crimes multiply before God, our sins testify against us. Our crimes are present with us, and our sins, we know them well, rebelling and denying ADONAI, turning away from following our God, talking about oppression and revolt, uttering lies which our hearts have conceived. Thus, justice is repelled, righteousness stands apart, at a distance; for

truth stumbles in the public court, and uprightness cannot enter. Honesty is lacking. He who leaves evil becomes a target.[133] This is why there is no justice. It's not God's fault. It's ours!

Personally, I am coming to the knowledge that what I want, what I need more than justice is mercy. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy (Matt. 5:7), and I ask the Lord to make me more merciful (and I tremble at what I am asking, because one can only truly be merciful when one has something to be merciful about). Nevertheless, I ask that he will make and keep me willing and enable me to speak and act like a person who will be judged by a *Torah* that gives freedom. For judgment will be without mercy toward one who doesn't show mercy; but mercy triumphs over judgment.

I believe what the Bible says, that, "Unless ADONAI builds the house, its builders labour in vain" (Ps. 127:1, *CJB*). I am convinced that only steps of faith toward personal holiness in the Lord can lead to social justice. Here is the ground upon which my conviction is based. I begin with the following premises. God exists. God is good. God is holy. God is righteous. God is just. He has given us not only His Word written down, but His Word enfleshed, Christ Jesus whom He raised from the dead. Since God is good, holy, righteous, and just, if individuals were to choose to surrender their whole lives to Him, responding to the divine message of Scripture with a hearty, "Here I am; I am at Your disposal;" stepping out in faith in His Living Word, and allowing themselves to be transformed by the power of His Holy Spirit from the inside out, to be made over in His image (the image in which we were created), His likeness (holy, righteous, and just), then social justice would necessarily be established, it would "well up like water, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:21), and nothing could ever stop it,

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[133] Personalized paraphrase of Isaiah 59 (Stern, 1998, pp. 529-531)

no power of hell, no scheme of man. For it will not have been by might, or by power, but by the Spirit of the Living God indwelling individual human beings who willingly and diligently seek His face, His presence, allowing the increase of His government in each of us, will the just community, that is, the kingdom of heaven be established in the earth.

If, on the other hand, we as individuals choose to leave Him out, relying instead on ourselves and each other, limited, fallible, partial, context-bound, self-oriented, wilful, interest driven, finite creatures that we are, well then the picture does not look so promising. All of our labour to bring about that which we profess with our mouths to desire will be in vain. I am convinced that there can be no social justice without the Just One.

As we are individually increasingly conformed to the image of God, the likeness of Christ, the express image of God, in whose image we are made, as we are increasingly individually conformed by the renewing of our minds and the tenderizing of our hearts, and by the yielding of our individual wills, our 'agendas,' our desires, to His sovereign will, we approach the establishment of social justice, because He is just. But that means saying good-bye and good riddance to some of our most cherished notions, such as individual achievement, independence, autonomy,[134] and so on, and our various projects which have as their end something other than seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

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[134] From *auto* (self) *nomos* (law), as distinct from *hetero* (other or different) *nomos* (law). Honderich (1995) defines heteronomy as "under some command or impulse which we do not, can not initiate" (p. 69).

For example, if we focus on trying to build 'just communities,'[135] to establish communion with others, if we become focused on these ends, then we run the risk of losing our perspective. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all good things will be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). Unless the Lord builds the house, they that build it labour in vain (Ps. 127:1). The locus for social change is not community or the individual, it is God. We meet with Him because He first draws us to Himself, and we yield to His Spirit in every area of our lives.[136] He, then, effects the changes in us and in society, by drawing people together into communities of His choosing, making, and establishing. That is, communities of people who are walking in obedience to His ways – each attuned to the Master, like all pianos being tuned to the same tuning fork – all in harmony. As each of us draws nearer to Him, we, by default, draw nearer to each other. Knowing Him is to be our principal and primary 'goal.' The establishment of social justice is His business to effect through His willing vessels. The church is to be a model to the rest of the world of a 'Just community.' But He (not we) is the Agent of creation, transformation, and re-formation/redemption of society.

There are many Biblical examples of individuals who put themselves at the Lord's disposal and were used mightily by Him for the purpose of establishing His kingdom here on earth: Esther, Deborah, Elijah, King David, Samuel, Jesus, Paul, Peter, John, Eunice, Lois, and Timothy. Each of these individuals was a part of a community, but they did not set out to try to make the world a better place for all. Rather, they responded personally, "Yea and amen," to God's call on their individual lives. They

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[135] There exists a body of literature that is concerned with spiritual formation, community testimony, just communities, the corporate disciplines and practices of religious communities, and so on, but consideration of it is not within the scope of this dissertation.

[136] This is not just a matter of applying Scriptural principles as best we can, but seeking Him, the impression of His character on us, like the impression of an image on a coin.

made themselves available to the Most High, and allowed Him to use them as He, from on high, saw fit so to do in order to bring about the transformation of the world through them.

As I am given to understand it, God is not asking us to go out and change the world, to figure out what has to be done, how to do it, what resources are needed and how to get them, and so on. Rather, He is asking us diligently to seek His face, individually and corporately, through prayer, praise and worship, and the study of His Word, to turn individually and corporately from our sin, and to walk by faith and not by sight in our everyday lives, and He promises that He will give us the desires of our hearts, namely, for His name to be hallowed, His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, His kingdom to come, and so on. For when we talk about setting out to establish just communities, we are talking about the establishment of the kingdom of God, and that is something that we cannot accomplish. Only God can establish His kingdom here on earth. But He seeks individuals who will cease from their works, from their efforts to do what only He can do, to stop seeking the ends (or Him as a means to an end), and seek Him for Himself. For when we take on, and try to accomplish what only Adonai can accomplish, we get into trouble – that is when Crusades and Inquisitions are born.

God wants us to delight in Him, to take our rest in Him, and to sit at His feet, individually and collectively, and learn from Him, unlearning our ways, and learning His. Perhaps the best illustration of this in the Bible is the story of Mary and Martha.[137] Jesus corrected Martha for her works, her 'fretting and worrying about many things,' but He commended Mary for taking time to sit at the Master's feet and learn of Him.

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[137] Luke 10:38-42.

Despite the likelihood that many will persist in their faith in and reliance on self and/or communities of practice, I remain hopeful. I do still care about the social inequities that so gripped my heart five years or so ago, only today I realize that it was God who was gripping my heart about some of the social evils that so grieve His heart of love: the systemic and individual prejudicial and cruel treatment of people on the basis of race, class, gender, dis/ability, religious faith, first language, culture, ethnicity, sexuality, and so on; the abandonment of women and children to live in poverty; violence against women; child abuse; the degradation of the natural environment; the plight of the homeless; consumerism; bullying; extortion; and so on.

While it is true that the various forms of oppression are systemic and systems shape and affect the constitution of individuals, it is equally true that individuals shape and affect the constitution of systems. Allow me to return to a common thread in the comments made by participants in one of the studies I was involved in several years ago, the one in which a colleague and I were investigating the impact of immigration on lower mainland schools in British Columbia. While all of the participants acknowledged that there had been a change in policy direction in education over the past forty plus years, from assimilationism to cultural pluralism, all agreed that only superficial changes seemed to be taking place at the level of practice.[138] Why?

All of the participants, regardless of cultural or ethnic background seemed to be agreed: because the overall and overwhelming mindset of assimilationism has yet to be dealt with. In my own case, this mindset and many others like it are in the process of being systematically dismantled from the inside out as I am drawn deeper into God's

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[138] More recent conversations with classroom teachers, researcher colleagues, and newcomers to Canada suggest to me that this continues to be the case (2004).

grace and mercy, as I repent before Him, and now before the world, for my complicity in the reproduction and maintenance of social systems that inherently privilege some but are inherently oppressive to many more, and I acknowledge and repent for the sins of both my ancestors and my contemporaries for their implication in the production and maintenance of such systems.

As a Canadian white woman of European ancestry who speaks only English, I acknowledge, turn from, renounce, and ask forgiveness for the sins of fear, anxiety, worry, fretfulness, envy, greed, anger, bitterness, resentment, 'evil speaking,' haughtiness, arrogance, self-absorption and pride in which the social phenomena of racism, sexism, classism, ablism, homophobia, and assimilationism in which I am implicated are rooted. And I am trusting God and promising to co-operate with His Holy Spirit to create in me a clean heart and mind, and to renew a right spirit within me, to enable me to be in the world but not of it, to be differently within those systems in such a way that they, like me, will be transformed by the power of the Living God whose I am and whom I serve.

So what are to be the outworkings of this "repentance" in my practice as a teacher, teacher educator, and researcher in the field of education in general, and teacher education in particular?

Outworkings: A Biblical mandate for social action research and teaching in education

> An expert in *Torah* stood up to try and trap him by asking, "Rabbi, what should I do to obtain eternal life?" but Yeshua said to him, "What is written in the *Torah*? How do you read it?" He answered, "**You are to love ADONAI your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength** and with all your understanding; and **your neighbor as**

yourself." That's the right answer," Yeshua said, "Do this, and you will have life."

But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Yeshua, "And who is my **'neighbor'**?

Taking up the question, Yeshua said: "A man was going down from Yerushalayim to Yericho when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him naked and beat him on that road; but when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a *Levi* who reached the place and saw him also passed by on the other side. But a man from Shomron who was traveling came upon him; and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion. So he went up to him, put oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them. Then he set him on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day, he took out two days' wages, gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Look after him; and if you spend more than this, I'll pay you back when I return.' Of these three, which one seems to you to have become the **'neighbor'** of the man who fell among robbers?

He answered, "the one who showed mercy to him."

Yeshua said to him, 'You go and do as he did.'" (Luke 10:25-37)

Consistent with the conception of knowledge this dissertation espouses, that is, that "to know" implies a response in the practical domain of life, this parable and many other passages of Scripture[139] illustrate how a Biblical faith may be taken as a mandate to conduct social action research in education and to adopt a particular kind of posture toward others in so doing, that is, "Here I am; I am at your disposal," both in the research context and in the classroom. This is not a 'high-minded' emancipatory stance of, "I know what's best for you; let me help you;" but rather, a posture which puts both me and the resources made available to me at the disposal of those who present with particular needs.

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[139] Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18; Micah 6:8; James 2:14; 1 John 3:17-18.

Social action research: Towards a definition

While it is nothing new, that education should directly benefit its "participants," that is to say, the students, it has not historically been the view that research should directly benefit its participants, that is, the "subjects." Yet, while research seems always to have benefited some of the participants in the research process (the researchers), it has not only not benefited, but actually harmed some subjects and their descendants (Banks, 1998; Bannerji et al., 1994; Delpit, 1995). However, the view that research ought not to be designed to benefit participants directly is changing, as researchers set out in the context of their studies to effect some kind of social change that will serve to make society just a little bit more equitable by providing for some need identified by a particular group of people.

This kind of social action research is frequently referred to (pejoratively) as 'advocacy' research. Examples of this kind of research might include studies which endeavor to equip girls and young women with skills in the use of information and/or various audio-visual technologies, or to provide mental health support for immigrant women who have left their countries of origin having experienced the trauma and horrors of war and life in refugee camps only to find themselves unwelcome, isolated, excluded, and subjected to further degradation in their new 'home,' or to provide for teachers to have protected time in the context of their required continuing education for the purpose of developing a conscientized consciousness of their own educational backgrounds.

Due to the deep entrenchment and devastating societal impacts of 'white racism' (Banks, 1998; Sheuric & Young, 1998; Roman, 1993) and the trend in teacher education towards an increasingly homogenous (namely, white) teaching force, I am particularly

concerned with helping 'my people,' that is, white teachers, to mourn and repent of our complicity in the production, reproduction, and maintenance of inequitable social systems. At the same time, I want both to serve as an encouragement to those who take up the challenge to overcome their socialization, and to offer a helping hand and hope to those who find themselves mired down in the burden of our corporate sin. How this will work itself out in my practice as a teacher, teacher educator, and researcher remains to be seen.

I end this dissertation as I do, that is to say, stating that the particular outworkings of Biblically grounded social action research "remain to be seen" not to avoid concerning myself with the future, but rather, to guard against being presumptuous about it. As the "postmodernists" have acknowledged, words do not merely represent reality. They produce it. It is my concern not to limit the future, not to 'constrain possibility' (Yinger, 1990) that leads to my great care in speaking of directions for future research.

In the final analysis ...

The central thrust of this dissertation is that the crises and conflicts in education, teacher preparation, and society at large are not only socio-political but spiritual as well. Like Palmer (2003), Purpel (1999), Huebner (1991), and others, I suggest that what is needed in faculties of education are conversations which take us into the deep places of our inner lives to the bedrock of our beliefs about life, the world, and our relationships within them. I also suggest there is a need for a contextually sensitive and responsive curriculum and pedagogy that strikes a balance between a focus on self and society, the individual and the relational, the rational and the intuitive, and the socio-political and the spiritual.

Context

I have entitled this dissertation, "Un / learning to teach: A double testimonial narrative inquiry." So, let me begin this conversation about it by saying a little bit about what I mean by "un / learning". I mean that there is both learning and unlearning involved in the process of being prepared to teach. Scholars and practitioners say that it is not sufficient for people who plan to teach to become well versed in their disciplines and skilled at the various methods of delivering 'the goods' to their 'clients'. It is also needful for people who teach to have some sense of the context of education, of the ways in which the system, as we *know* it, has historically been structured so that some are privileged and some are marginalized. It is said that teachers need to become more respons*a*ble, that is, able to respond to the crises and conflicts that derive from the systemic inequities in the places where we do our work. But respond how?

Teachers are responding. Up to 30 % of new teachers, some say some of the most talented, are quitting the profession within five years of beginning to teach. They say they feel inadequately prepared for, and isolated and unsupported in their work. Veteran teachers feel exhausted, frustrated, and demoralized as circumstances seem to go from bad to worse, and they are increasingly expected to 'do more with less' and 'be all things to all people'. Some of their deepest concerns include: increasing demands for a more inclusive curriculum; decreased funding to purchase more inclusive resources; increasing numbers of ESL students and students with disabilities in the 'regular' classroom and policies mandating equitable services, and decreased personnel being made available to facilitate the implementation of these policies and the delivery of these services.

Teachers are responding as one might expect. They are tired, frustrated, angry, and afraid. They are losing heart.

Palmer (2003) writes that "when we lose heart, we need an understanding of our condition that will liberate us from that condition, a diagnosis that will lead us toward new ways of being in the classroom simply by telling the truth about who, and how we are" (p. 71). He writes that what is needed in faculties of education are conversations that take us into the deep places of our inner lives to the bedrock of our root beliefs about life, the world, and our relationships within them. This dissertation is my contribution to that conversation.

Un / learnings

Having tasted of the tiredness, frustration, fear, anger, and discouragement in my own experiences of teaching, I still find I must agree with scholars who call for teachers to become 'conscientized.' My lived experience, my readings of the literature, my conversations with colleagues and students, and my observations of the world around me have convinced me that the problems besetting education today are both socio-political and spiritual, and that it is important for people who teach to develop a conscientized understanding of how we have come to think, feel, speak, and act as we do, and how that contributes to the reproduction and maintenance of systemic inequity.

I have also become convinced that it is not right to expect the next generation of teachers to clean up the messes that the present generation (and our ancestors) have made, that we have a collective responsibility to "clear away the clutter and the debris," as Huebner (1991) puts it, to name and smash our idols, and to *call* ourselves and our

friends to repent of the habits of mind, speech, and action that separate us from our God, each other and ourselves.

What, specifically, am I un / learning? I am unlearning habitual ways of being in the world: prideful, vain, self-condemning, haughty, fearful, irritable, judgmental, hypocritical, self-righteous, envious, selfish, self-seeking, self-pitying, and so on. I am also unlearning old mindsets into which I was socialized: assimilationism, Eurocentrism, Anglocentrism, ablism, humanism, secular materialism, and so on. For example, my upbringing, especially my higher education taught me to regard as "primitive" the notion of a realm of the spirit and the knowledge of people who believe in such a thing. It took encounters with people from backgrounds radically different from my own to *begin* to disrupt my thinking of spiritual belief as being inferior to the knowledge of "the truth" produced in and disseminated by 'the Modern university'.

What are some of the things I am learning? I am learning a new way of regarding and being with and for others in the world, a new way of responding to crises, conflicts, and unfulfilled promise in all contexts, a new way of teaching and doing research. This 'new' way is really not new at all. It is an ancient Way, but it is new for me. This ancient Way is the way of faith.

Now, we all have faith in something, or someone. It may be material wealth, technology, a tradition, or a discipline or branch of knowledge. It may be a person, living or dead. It may be oneself, or a community of practice in which one has membership, or it may be in human goodness, or the professionals – 'the experts.' As this dissertation shows, I have at different times in my life placed my faith in all of these, and I have found them all to be wanting, all but one – the person of Jesus Christ, my Master

Teacher. This dissertation represents a very small part of the process by which my allegiance has been transferred from all of these other 'lords' to 'the lamb of God,' and it walks the reader through the process by which I have been 'un / learning' to live and do my work as a teacher educator by faith in Him.

Methodology

These "un / learnings" have come about as a result of my having engaged over the last eight or so years in the practice of "testimonial reading." What does it mean to read *testimonially*? It means to approach the text of an other with a disposition of receptivity, humility, and hospitality. It means to welcome the other, to allow oneself to be vulnerable to and challenged by the other, to esteem the other in recognition of the magnitude of one's own faults, folly, and fallibility. It is to cease to position oneself unproblematically as judge, and to hear as much with the heart as with the head.

Felman and Laub (1992) write that testimony "exceeds the facts, challenges legal and historical claims to truth, and challenges the call for 'just the facts.'" They, Boler (1997; 1999), and others speak of this in terms of trauma, horror, events such as the Holocaust. Boler (1999) writes, "Testimony is trauma's genre: the excess and the unimaginable attempts its own representation through testimony. ...

But testimony is also Love's genre. Heschel (1976) speaks of it in terms of grandeur, the sublime, experiencing "the momentous realness of God" (p. 138). He writes, "All we have [today] is a sense of horror. We are afraid of man. Our proud Western civilization has not withstood the stream of cruelty and crime that burst forth out of the undercurrents of evil in the human soul. We nearly drown in a stream of guilt and misery that leaves no conscience clean. What have we done with our power? What have

we done to the world? The flood of wretchedness is sweeping away our monstrous conceit" (p. 36). He goes on to say that, "[t]he awareness of grandeur and the sublime is all but gone from the modern [and I would add postmodern] mind." We teach children how to measure, how to weigh. We teach them how read, write, and use technology. We prepare people for jobs. We teach teachers content and methods. But we fail to teach them how to sense wonder and awe.

In this dissertation, I bear witness to both – to trauma and to love; to the very real trauma, albeit puny relative to the Holocaust, of coming face-to-face with the depth and magnitude of my own wretchedness, of my and my ancestors' complicity in the marginalization and disenfranchisement of others, and to 'the momentous realness of God,' the awesome wonder of His mercy, grace, and love, and the joy of His Salvation through His Son Jesus Christ which I have experienced existentially.

But testimony is not only about what one professes with one's mouth. It is also about the condition of one's heart and the way one goes about one's daily affairs, even the minutiae, even the 'unseen,' in light of both the horror of the possibility of being complicit in another genocide, and the grandeur of God's love, in light of the unimaginable and excess of human cruelty, and divine mercy.

Testimonial reading regards our reactions to various texts as sites for interrogation of how those texts challenge our investments in familiar socio-cultural values. It saves us from allowing our reactions to become a justification for dismissing the text, regarding its author with disdain, and thus opening the way for yet another 'small' or 'big' act of cruelty to be committed. After all, Holocausts do not just suddenly happen. They are

caused wherever a person is put to shame. *Daily* living, Heschel (1966) writes, is brinkmanship. (p. 43).

Testimonial reading is risky. It exposes and renders vulnerable. It constitutes part of an endeavor to see, think, and live differently as distinct from attempting to make the existential other (or the Absolutely Other) familiar and non-threatening. It requires a willingness to risk being wounded by the other, to risk seeing oneself in the other's angry gaze (or in the Other's tender gaze). In other words, testimonial reading has as much to do with the *disposition* of a reader as with any kind of activities of interpretation one is to perform.

"Findings"

Why then do I call this a *double* testimonial narrative? Double denotes the two-pronged nature of this inquiry – when I began my doctoral studies, I had no intentions of delving into the politics of education in the context of my research. That was just not my area of interest. But my work became "politicized" as I began to become aware of, and undertook to remedy my own political mis-education, to expose the multiple and varied ignorances, untruths, gaps and fissures in my own educational background that were a function of my having grown up in some ways privileged and in other ways marginalized.

Then, just as unexpectedly as the inquiry had become politicized, it also became 'spiritualized.' During the course of the intensive program of study I undertook in order to remedy my political mis-education, I experienced a personal crisis – a crisis of truth, a crisis of faith. The reading I was doing, the research I was conducting, the personal

relationships in which I was involved precipitated within me an affective and cognitive dissonance of what were for my frame breakdown proportions.

I found that I no longer knew how to be with people other than my own little group of friends, and even there, I did not know what I should say, or what I should not say, what I should do or not do. Everything I said or did (or didn't say or didn't do) seemed to come back to torment me. Although I had moments of intense happiness and great pleasure, I was living in a prison house of rage, fear, and depression, and I could see no way out except one day, mercifully, death. But then I began to have nightmares. I had one that so chilled me that I ended up in a church on Easter Sunday morning in 1999. And although I do not remember much of what was said, on that day, I responded, "Yes," in my heart to a priest's invitation to "Just let Jesus be your taxi driver." I had no idea the impact that that response would have on the rest of my life.

Something happened on the inside of me that day. I developed an utterly uncharacteristic appetite for some of the words of Scripture. I was not raised by "The Book." I had never before cared to read the Bible. I knew a few of the stories, especially about Jesus, from my catechism, but to say that I had ever given myself wholly to the study of it would be a lie. It either did not interest me, or it irritated me. Only, rather than regard those reactions as sites for interrogation of how the text challenged my investments in familiar socio-cultural values, asking why it did not interest me, or why I was responding to it with irritation, that lack of interest and intermittent irritation became for me for a time a justification for dismissing both the Text and its Author. But He never dismissed me.

So I call this a *double testimonial* narrative inquiry because it involved a double, that is to say both a political and a spiritual, conscientization, and it involved a double engagement in the practice of testimonial reading as described by Boler (1997; 1999), first in relation to the texts produced by those whose voices have historically been marginalized, if not suppressed or obliterated altogether, and second, in relation to the texts of the Bible.

Mode of representation

While the term "narrative" may seem to those who read this dissertation an obvious choice and one that needs no explanation, allow me to say just a few words about it before I conclude by talking about what it might mean, "to teach". First, I concur with Polkinghorne (1997) and others, that narrative is the most appropriate form for research reports concerning practice. Polkinghorne (1997) writes, "As the syllogism is the appropriate form for expressing a formal logic demonstration, and argument is appropriate for using evidence to convince an audience, narrative is the appropriate form for displaying the logic of practice. Narrative discourse functions to transform a list or sequence of disconnected research events into a unified story with a thematic point" (p. 14). Ellis writes that some narrative research reports tell a personal, evocative story to provoke others' stories, and [to] add blood and tissue to the abstract bones of theoretical discourse" (p. 117).

Narrative is a highly accessible and very engaging means *to promote reflection not only on education, but on the 'big questions' of life as well.* As such, it can be a potentially powerful source of inspiration and knowledge that may stimulate others to *reflect deeply* on their own lives, practice, and the processes by which they have un /

learned to teach. And that is precisely what scholars suggest is needed in faculties of education.

Palmer writes, "We are obsessed with manipulating *externals* because we believe that they will give us some power over reality and win us some freedom from its constraints" (p. 72). But there will always be circumstances that have the power to overwhelm us if we do not have a store of inner resources upon which to draw in times of crisis. Palmer goes on to say that "we are experiencing an exhaustion of institutional resourcefulness at the very time when the problems that our institutions must address grow deeper and more demanding" (p. 76). Given these circumstances, it would seem that we in teacher education ignore the inner life of teachers at our and our colleagues' peril. "Deep speaks to deep," Palmer (2003) writes, "and since we cannot 'sound the depths' of our students' lives when we have not sounded our own," it would seem that precisely what is needed in teacher education is for teacher educators to begin to sound our own depths. This dissertation is an admittedly partial sounding of my own depths for the purpose of contributing to this potentially dangerous but necessary conversation in teacher education, one that will take us into the deep places of our inner lives, to the very bedrock of our beliefs about life, the world, our relationships within them, and this work we call teaching.

So, what might it mean, "to teach"? According to one scholar (Yinger, 1990), to teach means "to show, or to demonstrate," both of which are face-to-face, interactive, communal, and conversational activities" (p. 93), activities which, at the heart, are about relationship, activities which require that one have something to show or to demonstrate.

If we have not begun the work ourselves, how then can we with any credibility engage our students in the process?

Implications for the practice of teacher education

Curriculum

I agree with McCarthy (1993), that we need to acknowledge in our classrooms that the 'knowledge' presently taught in schools is both a socio-cultural product, and deeply implicated in the reproduction and maintenance of systemic social injustice. And like McCarthy, I recommend including in the curriculum different versions of the so-called "great stories" of modern Western culture, that is, accounts of experiences as told by people whose perspectives have historically been marginalized.

Pedagogy

But what good can come of merely exposing students to 'alternative' views of history? Will they not just read these texts through their existing frames of reference without even being aware of them as frames, much less problematising them? Part of the work that needs to be done in teacher education to make the curriculum and pedagogy more contextually sensitive and responsive is to encourage students to identify and test their "inviolables," their first principles, their root beliefs about life. Cultivating the practice of testimonial reading may be one way to promote the identification and testing of that ground.

To conclude, this dissertation offers an exemplar of one teacher educator's process of un / learning to teach for the purpose of encouraging world weary travelers on the journey across the landscape of education. It suggests that the remedy for the social inequities of today in schools and society lies not in the manipulation of externals, such

as curriculum, pedagogy, and context. Redress of historical injustices in these areas is

certainly necessary, but it is not sufficient. I am suggesting that since there will always

be circumstances that threaten to overwhelm us, unjust conditions and imperfect people

that have the potential to get us down and knock us out, conversations in teacher

education must go beyond must go beyond the socio-political to include the

acknowledgement, regeneration, and cultivation of the inner life, that is, the spiritual.

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Endnote

[i] It occurs to me that before I continue with my explication of Boler's article, I need to address the problematics of the terms "difference," "other," and "diversity." First, the idea of difference necessitates a reference point, i.e. something has to be different from something. Nothing is inherently different. Difference exists only in relationship. The same may be said for the term "other". It requires a reference point. Nothing is inherently "other". "Otherness" exists only in the context of a relationship. "Diversity" is another term that is highly problematic. Is "diversity" a reference to the *ipso facto* multiracial, multicultural, multiethnic, and multilinguistic student population in today's schools in Canada, or is it a reference made by members of one group (i.e. the dominant racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic group – white, Anglophone people of European ancestry – to refer to "others," namely, people who are racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically different than we are, people who in some respects are not like us?

Too often it seems in conversations about difference, the other, and diversity, especially among people with white skin who are of Anglo-European origins, a particular socio-cultural point of reference or 'normative standard' is implied, but remains invisible, shrouded, masked, and unproblematized. Over the course of my studies and as a consequence of my personal relationships, I have become convinced that it is very important for that reference point to be brought out into the open, exposed, and called to account for his, her, our individual and collective responsibility for the marginalization and disenfranchisement of those whom our ancestors and we have othered. It is time that 'we' came to terms with 'our' historic and present complicity (regardless of how unwitting it may have been or seemed to be) in the oppression of those whom we have historically rendered "other" or "different," and to "repent" (for lack of a better word), to renounce our old prejudicial mindsets, old speech habits, old patterns of behaviour amongst 'ourselves' and toward 'others,' to forsake 'our' old ways, and to commit ourselves to the lifelong process of un/learning how to be in relationship with all others, i.e. those who are not me.

For my own part, I have found this challenge to be overwhelming. I am too prone to forgetfulness, to lapse back into the old ways, to lose my motivation to change, to preserve my 'self', to defend myself. I know my own personality well enough to realise it is inclined to fear, pride, haughtiness, self-seeking (i.e. for recognition, acceptance, approval, and so on), boasting, self-defence, vanity, discouragement, depression, and despair. I need help, ongoing help, ongoing encouragement, ongoing accountability, ongoing wise counsel the kind of which no one person or even group of lay people or therapists could ever provide.

In other words, I need God. I need Jesus. I need the day-to-day counsel and comfort of the Holy Spirit. I need to live out my life in the light of the Lord's presence, to be called to account and convicted when I 'backslide' into my old ways of being in relationship with people, to be picked up, dusted off, and encouraged when I slip and fall, or get knocked down, to continue on the journey of becoming 'otherwise,' of regarding others as superior in importance to myself (and trusting God to take care of me), and moment by moment, day by day, week by week, step by step walking that out in every one of my relationships, i.e. with members of my own family, relatives, friends, members of my church family, colleagues, students, their families, my neighbours both near and far distant, members of the various communities of which I am a part, and members of the human community at large. Every encounter with another is a call to respond to God's call on my life, a call to Christlikeness.

[ii] For instance, having entered post-secondary school as a 'mature' student with a non-visible physical disability, I experienced discrimination first hand. On one occasion I recall vividly, I was singled out by a professor in class and told that he would not accommodate my need to tape lectures. He told me point blank that if I wanted to take the course I should transfer to another section. I was stunned.

Initially, when I had approached him privately, after class, he had said that there would be no problem. So, when he changed his mind upon having received the official forms from the centre for students with disabilities, I was somewhat shell shocked. Furthermore, he did not take me aside and speak with me privately, but rather made his point of view clearly known to me in front of the rest of the class. As an older female student who already felt as though I stuck out like a sore thumb, I was humiliated. It

would never even have occurred to me at the time to do anything with the tapes other than transcribe them for my own personal use.

Academically, I had been enjoying the lectures and he was considered to be the best professor for the particular subject matter I was studying. I did not want to transfer out of his section of the course. I remember going to the centre for students with disabilities that day and sobbing in the office of one of the counsellors. Interestingly, by the time I arrived home, there was a message on my answering machine from the professor. He had had another change of heart. He apologized to me, and asked me to remain in his class, saying that he would accommodate me in whatever way he could. I accepted the apology, and continued in the class, contributing now and then to discussion, and doing very well on my assignments. In the end, on my last paper, he remarked that he was glad that I had stayed on in his class. So was I.

After I had switched from taping lectures to using a laptop computer for note-taking, I recall other incidents of being singled out, of getting dirty looks from students who, for example, found the sound of my keyboarding irritating and distracting. I remember being told one day by a student I did not know and who did not know me that, "It must be nice to be rich, to have a laptop computer to take notes." Of course, these individuals had no way of knowing that I had a disability and needed the technological support in class, and they knew nothing of my financial circumstances.
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