Five Ordinary Movements for Practical Theological Spiritual Formation

By: Christine Luna Munger

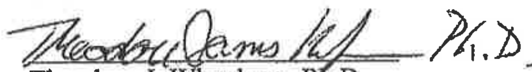
August 18, 2014

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Doctor of Philosophy in Practical Theology

St. Thomas University

Miami Gardens, Florida

Approved:



Theodore J. Whapham, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology
Committee Chair

Mary Carter-Waren, D. Min
Associate Professor, Saint Thomas University
Committee Member

Nancy Pineda-Madrid, Ph.D
Associate Professor, Boston College
Committee Member

UMI Number: 3668211

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS
The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript
and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed,
a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI 3668211

Published by ProQuest LLC (2014). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.
All rights reserved. This work is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

Acknowledgement Form

St. Thomas University

I, Christine Luna Munger, understand that I am solely responsible for the content of this dissertation and its use of copyrighted materials. All copyright infringements and issues are solely the responsibility of myself as the author of this dissertation and not St. Thomas University, its programs, or libraries.

Christine Luna Munger 8-18-14

Signature of Author Date

Gloria R. Blaha 8-18-14

Witness Date

St. Thomas University Library Release Form

Five Ordinary Movements for Practical Theological Spiritual Formation

Christine Luna Munger

I understand that US Copyright Law protects this dissertation against unauthorized use. By my signature below, I am giving permission to St. Thomas University Library to place this dissertation in its collections in both print and digital forms for open access to the wider academic community. I am also allowing the Library to photocopy and provide a copy of this dissertation for the purpose of interlibrary loans for scholarly purposes and to migrate it to other forms of Media for archival purposes.

Christine Luna Munger — 8-18-14

Signature of Author — Date

Gloria R. Blaha — 8-18-14

Witness — Date

Dissertation Manual Acknowledgement Form

By my signature below, I Christine Luna Munger assert that I have read the dissertation publication manual, that my dissertation complies with the University's published dissertation standards and guidelines, and that I am solely responsible for any discrepancies between my dissertation and the publication manual that may result in my dissertation being returned by the library for failure to adhere to the published standards and guidelines within the dissertation manual.

http://www.stu.edu/Portals/Library/images_and_docs/Dissertation%20Manual_June2012.pdf

Christine Luna Munger 12-15-14

Signature of Author Date

12/15/14

Signature of Chair Date

Abstract

This work responds broadly to a concern for pastoral situations in which problematic linear, compartmentalized theological and spiritual formation frameworks limit discernment of the Sacred within ordinary knowing and relationality. A framework of Five Ordinary Movements is introduced in response to the need for layered approaches to practical theological spiritual formation that emphasize holistic knowing and interpersonal practices. The author suggests that the need for layered approaches and interpersonal practices in practical theological spiritual formation arises from the complexity of ordinary experience. Through review and critique of linear, compartmentalized approaches in theology and spirituality, this work suggests that attentiveness to the category of ordinary experience addresses epistemic and relational gaps found within linear, compartmentalized approaches (e.g., overemphasis of cognition or the personal or communal aspects of being in relationship). The complexity of ordinary experience is established by defining it and, in doing so, by naming the holistic nature of knowing and the concentric nature of relationships. Through the lens of intercultural encounter, intentional spaces can be cultivated in which interpersonal interactions occur as part of practical theological spiritual formation. Emphasis on the interpersonal layer suggests a need to attend to both the personal and the relational aspects of ordinary experience simultaneously. In particular, intercultural theology and ministry provide examples of holistic approaches to spiritual formation that specifically address the epistemic gaps related to knowing and the relational gaps related to practice.

Having established the complexity of ordinary experience, with the intercultural approach as an example of how to respond to such complexity through layered

approaches in formation models, this work suggests *movement* as a layered metaphorical theological category and proposes a specific framework of Five Ordinary Movements, with five corollary interpersonal practices, as an approach to practical theological spiritual formation. The effectiveness of the Five Ordinary Movements framework is investigated through case studies both in the context of a retreat in daily life and in the classroom setting. The multifaceted methodological and formational potential of the movement framework is reviewed and further explored through the methodological implications for practical theology and spirituality.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank three women for helping to lay the path toward the completion of this dissertation. Mary Reuter, OSB, PhD, introduced me to and helped me name the Sacred within ordinary experience early on in my personal and academic journey. Diane Millis, PhD, encouraged me to pursue graduate studies, during which time the first four of the five movements were constructed. Mary Carter-Waren, DMin, also supported and challenged me throughout the writing process; thank you for the cardinals, among many other signs of affirmation.

Additionally, I would like to say thanks to Drs. Rhodora Beaton and Todd Hanneken for their collegial and technical support in helping me to manage the process of formatting this work. Many more hours would have passed without fruition, were it not for their knowledge and generosity.

Finally, I would like to offer my gratitude to the students in my classes and the women retreat participants for their perspectives and sharing about the Five Ordinary Movements in daily life.

Dedication

To my mother, who inspired the pursuit of higher education.

To my husband, Agustin, and our son, Alex, whose arrivals marked the beginning of doctoral studies.

To my daughter, Elisa, whose arrival marked the beginning of the dissertation writing process.

Table of Contents

Five Ordinary Movements for Practical Theological Spiritual Formation 2
Acknowledgement Form iii
St. Thomas University Library Release Form iv
Dissertation Manual Acknowledgement Form v
Abstract vi
Acknowledgements viii
Dedication ix
Chapter One: Introduction 14
Invitation 15
Goals and Preview 19
Key Terms 23
Practical Theological Spiritual Formation 23
Ordinary Experience 23
Holistic Knowing 24
Concentric Relationality 25
Interpersonal Practices 25
Chapter Two: A Conversation about Ordinary Experience 26
The Challenge of Defining Experience 27
The Neglect of Ordinary Experience in Theology 36
Ordinary Experience as Non-specialized 36
Ordinary Experience as Non-elitist 42
Ordinary Experience as Non-separatist 45
Tension between Sacred and Cultural Experience 51
Chapter Three: Ordinary Experience as Contextual and Relational in Intercultural Theology and Ministry 59
Culture 61
The Challenge of Defining Culture 61
Layers of Location within the Scope of Culture 67
Situatedness 67
Context 69
Cultural Makeup 72
Interpersonal Dynamics within the Scope of Culture 75

Power/Privilege 75
Difference/Alterity 77
Hybridity/Mestizaje 79
Intercultural Theology 82
Background 83
Goals 85
Intercultural Ministry 91
Eric Law’s Approach to Intercultural Ministry 93
Interpersonal Practices 95
Chapter Four: Contemporary Theological Treatments of Ordinary Experience 104
Voices in Practical Theology 106
Voices in Spirituality 121
Voices in Feminist Theology 129
Voices in US Latino/a Theology 135
Chapter Five: Introducing Five Ordinary Movements 150
Ups and Downs 154
Ups and Downs as Metaphor in Daily Life 154
Openness/receptivity as Interpersonal Practices 155
Back and Forth 157
Back and Forth as Metaphor in Daily Life 157
Mutuality as Interpersonal Practice 159
Cycling of Spirals 159
Cycling of Spirals as Metaphor in Daily Life 159
Dynamism as Interpersonal Practice 161
Tension of a Web 162
Tension of a Web as Metaphor in Daily Life 162
Ambiguity as Interpersonal Practice 164
Vibration of Concentric Circles 165
Vibration of Concentric Circles as Metaphor in Daily Life 165
Resonance as Interpersonal Practice 167
The Five Ordinary Movements in Communal Prayer Practice 169
Chapter Six: Statement of the Pastoral Situation: Five Ordinary Movements as a Response in Practical Theology and Spirituality 172
Statement of the Situation 173

The Complexity of Ordinary Experience 173
Addressing Holistic Knowing and Concentric Relationality in Ordinary Experience 174
Response: Movement as a Category for Practical Theological Spiritual Formation 176
Movement as a Category in Related Disciplines 178
Foundational movement analysis 178
Faith development theory 185
Contributions to Practical Theology and Spirituality 194
Movement as a relational metaphorical theological category 194
Five Ordinary Movements as model and method in practical theological spiritual formation 199
Action as a relational category in practical theology 203
Moving toward interpersonal practices in practical theology and spirituality 208
Chapter Seven: A Case-study Investigation of Five Ordinary Movements 225
Practical Theological Investigation 227
Design 228
Two Contexts 229
Guiding Questions 232
Conceptual experience 233
Relational experience 233
Active experience 233
Assessing the Five Ordinary Movements 233
Sources 233
Guiding Questions 235
Conceptual experience 236
Relational experience 239
Active experience 241
Implications for Practice 243
Chapter Eight: Conclusion 248
Continuing Conversations in Practical Theology and Spirituality 255
Methodological Considerations 255
Reflection on Practice 259
Review 261
Second Invitation 265
Appendix 1: Images Representing the Five Ordinary Movements 268

Appendix 2: Copyright Permission 269
Appendix 3: Copyright Permission 270
Bibliography 271

Chapter One: Introduction

Invitation

Dar Williams is an American-born folk-rock music artist who has been performing and recording for almost two decades. Williams grew up in Chappaqua, New York. She has produced thirteen albums. The following song lyrics come from her earliest album, *The Honesty Room*, which was released in 1993. The reader is invited to review the lyrics and sit with their meaning:

> I won't forget when Peter Pan came to my house, took my
> hand
> I said I was a boy; I'm glad he didn't check.
> I learned to fly, I learned to fight
> I lived a whole life in one night
> We saved each other's lives out on the pirate's deck.
> And I remember that night
> When I'm leaving a late night with some friends
> And I hear somebody tell me it's not safe,
> someone should help me
> I need to find a nice man to walk me home.
> When I was a boy, I scared the pants off of my mom,
> Climbed what I could climb upon
> And I don't know how I survived,
> I guess I knew the tricks that all boys knew.
> And you can walk me home, but I was a boy, too.

I was a kid that you would like, just a small boy on her bike

Riding topless, yeah, I never cared who saw.

My neighbor came outside to say, “Get your shirt,”

I said “No way, it’s the last time I’m not breaking any law.”

And now I’m in this clothing store, and the signs say less is more

More that’s tight means more to see, more for them, not more for me

That can’t help me climb a tree in ten seconds flat

When I was a boy, see that picture? That was me

Grass-stained shirt and dusty knees

And I know things have gotta change,

They got pills to sell, they’ve got implants to put in, they’ve got implants to remove

But I am not forgetting . . . that I was a boy too

And like the woods where I would creep, it’s a secret I can keep

Except when I’m tired, ’cept when I’m being caught off guard

And I’ve had a lonesome awful day, the conversation finds its way

To catching fire-flies out in the backyard.

> And so I tell the man I'm with about the other life I lived
>
> And I say, "Now you're top gun, I have lost and you have won"
>
> And he says, "Oh no, no, can't you see
>
> When I was a girl, my mom and I we always talked
>
> And I picked flowers everywhere that I walked.
>
> And I could always cry, now even when I'm alone I seldom do
>
> And I have lost some kindness
>
> But I was a girl too."
>
> And you were just like me, and I was just like you[1]

Williams's lyrics tell of a woman who draws upon memories from her past and attempts to make sense of her current experiences as a young adult woman. She is a particular person with a specific story, who is also immersed in a broader culture. The cultural limitations surrounding her as a young adult woman contradict the freedom she felt as a little girl. The layers of her experience are complex. A part of her reflective process includes participation in a vulnerable conversation with a male companion. Through their shared storytelling about the past, each character reflects upon the painful experience of loss in young adulthood. Williams's song exemplifies particular struggles about meaning-making in light of gender and young adulthood; this work responds to a broader concern about meaning-making as part of ordinary experience. As a contribution

[1] Dar Williams, "When I Was a Boy," in *The Honesty Room*, Razor and Tie, 1995, compact disc, http://www.darwilliams.com/releases/music/lyrics-the-honesty-room/. This is one of the songs that was used during the retreat later described as part of the case study for this investigation.

toward a practical theological approach to spiritual formation, this written work addresses a broader concern about meaning-making in light of the complex nature of experience. In particular, the category of *ordinary* experience suggests both the inclusive and deepening nature of ordinary experience, which consists of both the immediacy of experience as well as consequent reflection on experience.

As a practical theologian, the author recognizes meaning-making as an inherent human activity and suggests that theological reflections within ordinary experience occur constantly and consistently in the course of everyday living. This is just as evident in both Williams's acts, through creating and performing the lyrics to "When I Was a Boy," as it is in the acts of thousands of listeners who sing along with her and integrate the meaning of the words in their own lives. As a practical theological endeavor, this writing reflects a concern for the ways in which ordinary theologians make meaning and discern the presence of the Sacred in their own daily lives. Practical theological approaches, because of their acknowledgement of the transformative nature of God's activity in the world for the common good, must attend to the concerns and meaning constructs of ordinary people in the course of their lives *as they are lived*. Consequently, the current practical theological approach to spiritual formation constructed in this work attends to both the inclusive and complex nature of ordinary experience. It further suggests that frameworks for practical theological spiritual formation should be multifaceted, and situated in language and practices that speak to daily living. The goals and approach of the particular framework proposed here are presented in the next section.

Goals and Preview

This work responds broadly to a concern for pastoral situations in which problematic linear, compartmentalized theological and spiritual formation frameworks limit discernment of the Sacred within ordinary knowing and relationality. A framework of Five Ordinary Movements is introduced in response to the need for layered approaches to practical theological spiritual formation with an emphasis on holistic knowing and interpersonal practices. This investigation further assesses the Five Ordinary Movements framework in light of its ability to prompt discernment of the Sacred in ordinary experience. The need for layered approaches and interpersonal practices in practical theological spiritual formation arises out of the complexity of ordinary experience. Through review and critique of linear, compartmentalized approaches in theology and spirituality, this work suggests that attentiveness to the category of ordinary experience helps to address epistemic and relational gaps found within linear, compartmentalized approaches (e.g., overemphasis of cognition or only of the personal or communal aspects of being in relationship). The complexity of ordinary experience is established by defining it and, in so doing, naming the holistic nature of knowing and the concentric nature of relationships. Through the lens of intercultural encounter, the argument is made to establish intentional spaces in which interpersonal interactions can occur as part of practical theological spiritual formation. Emphasis on the interpersonal layer suggests a need to attend simultaneously to both the personal and the relational aspects of ordinary experience. In particular, intercultural theology and ministry provide examples of holistic approaches to spiritual formation which specifically address the epistemic gaps related to knowing and the relational gaps related to practice.

Having established the complexity of ordinary experience, with the intercultural approach as an example of how to respond to such complexity through layered approaches to formation models, this work suggests movement as a layered metaphorical theological category, and proposes a specific framework of Five Ordinary Movements with five corollary interpersonal practices as an approach to practical theological spiritual formation. The effectiveness of the Five Ordinary Movements framework is investigated through case study both in the context of a retreat in daily life and also in the classroom setting. The multifaceted methodological and formational potential of the movement framework is reviewed and further explored through the methodological implications for practical theology and spirituality. The remainder of this current section previews the steps in this work in more detail as they are addressed in each chapter.

In chapter 1, experience is addressed as a challenging theological category because of its scope and complexity. Drawing upon treatments of experience in theology and spirituality, two elements of experience provide a conceptual framework for defining ordinary experience. These two elements include the personal and the relational, and the complexity of each element is recognized by naming the effect of the passing of time in particular spaces, which contributes to the layered nature of each element as holistic and concentric, respectively. This chapter also critiques and outlines linear, compartmentalized treatments of ordinary experience in theology and spirituality for their limiting and exclusivist scope. By contrast, ordinary experience is presented as non-specialized, non-elitist, and non-separatist. The last section further addresses the complexity of ordinary experience through a review of the Sacred and cultural realms as part of ordinary experience. In a context where popular culture challenges theology and

spirituality to relate to ordinary experience, attention to ordinary experience here is imperative.

Chapter 2 draws upon the layered nature of ordinary experience and suggests that all theological reflection is contextual by pointing to the category of *location*. This chapter suggests that a turn toward location in theology signals the importance of attention to the layers of ordinary experience. The lens of intercultural theology further suggests a need for the creation and maintenance of intentional spaces where persons with varied voices can gather and interact with one another in significant and prolonged ways. The intercultural practices of Eric Law are presented as an example of a layered approach to practical theological spiritual formation, in which both holistic knowing and interpersonal practices are attended to.

Chapter 3 deepens the contextual commitment of theology through review of particular theological treatments of experience. A number of voices and common themes are brought forward from within various theological camps, including practical theology, spirituality, feminist theologies, and US Latino/a theologies. These theological camps, though diverse and particular, each demonstrate in varied ways and with different emphases the transformative value of reflection on life experience. The theological import of attention to daily life comes forward through a review of prominent themes within these contemporary theological treatments of experience as seen through the lens of the ordinary.

Chapter 4 introduces the particular framework of Five Ordinary Movements as a response to the needs established by the intercultural and contemporary theological conversations—one that addresses discernment of the Sacred within the layered and

complex nature of ordinary experience. The specific movements are Ups and Downs, Back and Forth, Cycling of Spirals, Tension of a Web, and Vibration of Concentric Circles.[2] Not to be construed as an exhaustive list, these movements are presented as a representation of common movements that are easily recognizable and broadly sensed in the course of daily living. Each of the movements is paired with a corollary interpersonal practice, which emphasizes the interpersonal layer of relationality.

Chapter 5 returns again to the camps of practical theology and spirituality, this time with a pastoral concern that approaches to practical theological spiritual formation address the complex and layered nature of ordinary experience by attending to holistic ways of knowing and interpersonal practices. Movement is first reviewed as a category in other disciplines through conversation partners in foundational movement analysis and in faith development theory. In these conversations, movement is considered as a category that informs both knowing and relationality. Movement is also addressed as a category for practical theological spiritual formation in light of four contributions to the fields of practical theology and spirituality, all of which implicate the Five Ordinary Movements: metaphor, model/method, action, and practice/*praxis*.

Chapter 6 presents two case-study experiences of the Five Ordinary Movements. The first setting is a retreat focused on the theme of finding God in daily life and in relationships through movement. The second setting is in the classroom. The goals for the case-study investigation are first presented and are then followed by a description of the retreat experience and class setting. Findings from the case-study investigation are

---

[2] Refer to the appendix for images representing each of the Five Ordinary Movements.

presented with an emphasis on how the retreat experience of the Five Ordinary Movements in daily life impacted the conceptual, relational, and active components of the participants' daily life experience. Both the retreat and classroom experiences are assessed in light of their ability to facilitate finding God in ordinary experience through both holistic knowing and interpersonal practices.

The final chapter reviews the work and concludes by addressing potential implications of the movement framework within practical theology and spirituality, especially in the areas of practice and methodology. Contemplative approaches are suggested as a response, and future investigations are projected.

Key Terms

Practical Theological Spiritual Formation

This term suggests that insights from practical theology and spirituality, as complementary, better situate each camp to address the multifaceted needs of people as they seek to draw meaning from and transform their daily life experiences through relationship to the Sacred.[3]

Ordinary Experience

---

[3] Claire E. Wolfteich, "Animating Questions: Spirituality and Practical Theology," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 13, no. 1 (2009). In this article, Wolfteich expresses similar convictions about the benefits of conversation between practical theology and spirituality.

This term draws upon theological treatments of experience and emphasizes two organizing principles: the realms of the personal and of the relational.[4] An additional nuance of these two organizing principles is that both the personal and relational realms are affected and consequently layered by the passing of time.

For example, in the case of the personal realm, primary experience describes the immediate event, inclusive of the sensual aspects felt in the moment close to the event; whereas deepening experience describes the ongoing nature of the event, including continued perception of and reflection on the event, as well as consequent change and transformation that may occur related to the initial event.[5]

Also as an example, in the case of the relational realm, a number of relational locations make up this realm, including the individual and expanding in ever-widening circles toward the Ultimate Being, God. The effect of time in this realm suggests that from within any relational location, persons/groups in other locations affect each other. As time passes, particular groups within specific societies shape individual persons.[6]

Holistic Knowing

This term is related to the understanding of ordinary experience presented above, and recognizes the specific faculties of knowing that are experienced by particular persons, including the corporeal, volitional, affective, intuitive, mental, relational, and

---

[4] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*: *A Universal Affirmation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 29-37. Moltmann is one example of someone in theology who addresses both of these aspects.

[5] Ibid., 18-19. Moltmann uses the specific language of "primary experience" and refers to its immediacy through perception of the felt senses.

[6] Ibid., 39.

spiritual elements of each particular human being. It is particularly important to note that one way of knowing for some individuals is through relationship. It can be deduced from this that these individuals are inherently relational.

Concentric Relationality

This term similarly relates to the understanding of ordinary experience presented here, and recognizes the layers of relationships that compose creation in ever-widening strata, inclusive of relationship to self, to family, to communities, to society, to creation, and to God. The concentric notion of relationality is a shift from the stratified description of human experience found in some anthropological descriptions.[7]

Interpersonal Practices

This term suggests that one layer of practice, beyond personal practices (i.e., devotional prayer) and communal practices (i.e., weekly worship), is often under-represented; this layer can be named interpersonal. The interpersonal layer attends to the creation of spaces where different people come together to interact. Because the creation of such spaces requires intention about relationships, the aspects of skill and relational merge together to describe the kind of activity that occurs in the middle layer of interpersonal practice.[8]

---

[7] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*: *Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 37.

[8] The creation of such spaces is frequently called for from those who commit to the intercultural lens in their understanding and practice of theology. A number of these specific voices will be discussed in chapter 3.

Chapter Two: A Conversation about Ordinary Experience

The Challenge of Defining Experience

Having both introduced the concern that prompts the response that is the subject of this work and also previewed how this concern and response will be developed, and also having clarified key terms that are used throughout this work, attention is now given to the first prominent category of ordinary experience.[1] Throughout the remainder of this chapter, the complexity of ordinary experience is first addressed. Further nuances point to ordinary experience as non-specialized, non-elitist, and non-separatist. The critique offered here will demonstrate that specialized approaches exclude ordinary voices and multiple ways of knowing; that elitist approaches also exclude ordinary voices and multiple ways of doing; and finally that separatist approaches exclude relationship, with particular detriment to the relationship between the Sacred and the profane. The last section of this chapter returns to the notion of layering, and situates the role of meaning-making within the scope of the conversation between the Sacred and cultural realms. The whole of this chapter seeks to establish the complex and layered nature of ordinary experience.

---

[1] Ordinary experience is not suggested as another type of experience (e.g., distinct from extraordinary experience). In fact, extraordinary experience, with an emphasis on the prefix, suggests simply "more of" the ordinary rather than something distinct from it. However, it is helpful to recognize here that the naming of ordinary experience serves primarily as a hermeneutical tool for naming both who does theology and what counts as theological material.

Defining experience can be easy and also difficult. Treatments of experience can be simplistic and also complex.[2] Addressing the category of experience in theology and spirituality is similarly a challenging endeavor.[3] Elizabeth Liebert notes that "conversations in the Christian Spirituality guild usually assume that the meaning [of experience] is self-evident. In fact, it is a complex issue."[4] In part, this is because experience includes many strata and different dimensions.[5] Relevant questions point to the methodological complexity of the category of experience: Is experience personal or is it also communal and social? Whose experience should be considered? How does experience fit in with tradition and revelation? What timeframes constitute an experience—an instant or over a period of time? Is experience in only the first moment

---

[2] Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*: *Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991). Consider Browning's simple layering of human experience into the common realms of the personal, the institutional, and the cultural and religious (61) compared with his more complex methodological treatment of five dimensions (visional, obligational, tendency-need, environmental-social, and rule-role), each of which he associates with an entire camp within theology (105-06).

[3] Serene Jones, "Women's Experience Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Feminist, Womanist and Mujerista Theologies in North America," in *Horizons in Feminist Theology*: *Identity, Tradition, and Norms*, ed. Rebecca S. Chopp and Sheila Greeve Davaney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997). Within woman-centered theologies in North America, Jones describes five different approaches to experience: Phenomenological, Process and Psychoanalytical, Literary and Textual, Cultural-Anthropological, and Post-Structuralist.

[4] Elizabeth Liebert, "The Role of Practice in the Study of Christian Spirituality," in *Minding the Spirit*: *The Study of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Elizabeth Dreyer and Mark S. Burrows (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 85.

[5] Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 18.

that an event occurs? Does experience also include the subsequent telling about the event and reflection upon it? Liebert suggests a "yes" response to this last question.[6]

One quality of experience that exemplifies its complexity is that it is situated within chronological time. Moltmann addresses this quality using the category of dimensions of experience. In addressing the dimensions of experience, Moltmann parcels out "primary experience" as chronologically close to the actual moments in the timing of events. This refers to the quality of immediacy. Primary experience is the source of experience, and is paramount when compared to later reflection on it.[7] The immediacy is primary, but later reflection is also part of the process of experience. The distinction between "experience" and "perception" is blurred.[8] A second aspect of the immediacy of experience is its felt sense. Moltmann also stresses that experience is perceived much more through the senses (including bodily and unconscious psychic senses) than through rational consciousness.[9] However, he also suggests that not everything which is sensed is considered as experience. Experience is primarily about lived immediacy, but also includes the process of moving beyond the moment. Primary experience is deepened by ongoing reflection on experience. "Experience" and "reflection on experience" are not separate from one another, but rather illustrate continuity in process.

---

[6] Liebert, "The Role of Practice," 85.

[7] Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 18-19.

[8] Ibid., 20.

[9] Ibid.

Another quality of experience that exemplifies its complexity is that it is situated in relational reality. The immediacy of experience and the deepening process suggests an emphasis on experience as perceived by particular persons. For example, Moltmann describes the personal dynamics of experience through the terms *outward reference* and *inward reference*. An outward reference is the person's perception of the happening; the inward reference is the person's perception of the change that occurs within the self as related to the external happening.[10] While the event is external, the outward/inward framework revolves around a particular person's perceptions. Carolyn Gratton provides another particular-person framework in which the distinction between the immediacy and the deepening of experience is manifested in the multi-layered functions of the mind: there is a functional layer that plans, organizes and makes decisions; a pre-focal layer that consists of one's inner dialogue just below the surface of immediacy; an infra-focal layer that is not immediately available and consists of the accumulation of past experience; and, finally, a trans-focal layer characterized by a basic human capacity for receiving that which is transcendent.[11] Implicit in Gratton's particular-person framework is the human capacity for relationship. Experience is personal, but is also relational.

Mary Frohlich addresses the person as relational through her discussion of interiority.[12] Frohlich suggests that interiority is a particular mark of personhood. As "presence to oneself," interiority is what makes a person capable of recognizing a

---

[10] Ibid., 23.

[11] Carolyn Gratton, *The Art of Spiritual Guidance: A Contemporary Approach to Growing in the Spirit* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 56-57.

[12] Mary Frohlich, "Spiritual Discipline, Discipline of Spirituality: Revisiting Questions of Definition and Method," *Spiritus* 1, no. 1 (2001): 73.

happening as experience.[13] Yet, interiority as a mark of personhood, in which a person is considered a person because of the capacity to be in relationship, is also representative of the "human capacity for communion."[14] Moltmann also points to the way in which experience is perceived relationally. He suggests that through experience a person holistically comprehends the totality of the human being through soul and body, conscious and unconscious, individual personhood and also sociality, as well as through society and social institutions. He further extends these strata of relationship to include the entirety of creation, which is inclusive of humans, but also of the earth and other created beings.[15] Liebert similarly emphasizes the relational character of experience noting, "experience develops within a web of relationships."[16] She recognizes that these webs are named differently, and her own list includes nature, the self, others, structures, and the transcendent.[17] Both Liebert and Moltmann name layered strata of relationships in experience that extend beyond the personal realm.

Though Moltmann recognizes the primacy of the particular person in the immediacy of experience, he also points to the way in which experience shifts from the personal to the social. Some experience is socially mediated. By recognizing that "concepts and experience influence one another mutually," Moltmann emphasizes that every particular person is situated within a dynamic holding container of others'

---

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 37.

[16] Liebert, "The Role of Practice," 85.

[17] Ibid.

experiences that have already been and continue to happen throughout time.[18] "Every experience of life thrusts toward its expression in the people affected, whether it be expression through their Gestalt, their attitude to life, or through their thoughts, words, and deeds, images, symbols and rituals."[19] As a critique of the treatment of experience within the scientific method, Moltmann points out that experience is objectified when the historically contingent aspects of experience are not considered alongside experience in the visibly present and viably repeatable present.[20] Moltmann favors doing away with the subject-object pattern of experiential knowing in place of the social pattern that is characterized by inter-subjectivity and points to the relational character of each particular person.[21]

This particular tension, between an objective treatment of experience in the present and layered treatment of experience through varied relationships over time, marks a distinct approach to experience through the lens of theology. In his contemporary theological treatment of experience, Moltmann assumes that "the dimensions of the experience of God are in, within, and beneath the experience of life."[22] The religious dimension of experience is not a special enclave cut off from everyday secular life.[23] While Moltmann recognizes that humans never "have" or master or grasp their elemental

---

[18] Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 18.

[19] Ibid., 19.

[20] Ibid., 29.

[21] Ibid., 33.

[22] Ibid., 18.

[23] Ibid., 27.

experiences, he does believe that they can be given expression.[24] "To experience God in all things presupposes that there is a transcendence which is immanent in things and which can be inductively discovered."[25] Similarly, in Liebert's articulation of a pastoral approach to theology she notes that it "attempts to relate the meanings and requirements of faith to concrete human problems and situations, using human experience to come to a more profound understanding of God."[26] She points to the dynamism of dialectical relations between experience, reflection, and action. This approach emphasizes process over content. [27] Liebert also describes the tension between pastoral and linear, compartmentalized theology, the latter of which classically tends to emphasize content over process and concept over experience.[28] In the following sections, this latter approach is further reviewed in light of contemporary shifts. However, a brief summary regarding the challenge of defining experience is first offered as a move toward a description of "ordinary experience."

Up to this point, the review of treatments of experience in theology and spirituality, especially through the lenses offered by Moltmann and Liebert, suggest that while complex, experience can be approached as dynamism between the two realms of the personal and the relational, each of which carries its own subsets of layering due to the passing of time. For example, within the personal realm, perception of experience

[24] Ibid., 22.

[25] Ibid., 35.

[26] Liebert, "The Role of Practice," 80.

[27] Ibid., 81-83.

[28] Ibid., 84.

happens through the many dimensions in which human knowing occurs—immediately through the sensual faculties; deeply through the affective and conceptual faculties; and relationally, over time, as the concepts and insights based on immediate experience are expressed and acted upon both within the self and with others. This reflects the holistic quality of experience in the particular person. Within the relational realm, the possible subsets of relationships are also layered (i.e., the self, family, community, society, the world, the created universe, and the immanent-transcendent or Divine). A particular person is the basic unit of primary experience, as described by Moltmann. However, the particular person is always situated within both the deepening of his or her own holistic faculties of knowing and perceiving, and also within varied sets of relationships which help to broaden the particular deepening of experience as perceived by a particular person.

Ordinary experience similarly addresses the dynamism between the personal and relational realms. For example, ordinary experience addresses human knowing as holistic (i.e., as inclusive of the corporeal, volitional, affective, intuitive, mental, relational, and spiritual elements of each particular human being). Ordinary experience also recognizes human relationships as multifaceted (i.e., comprised of ever-widening strata of relationship to self, to family, to communities, to society, to creation and to God).

However, to emphasize ordinary experience apart from the broader category of experience is to reveal a particular hermeneutical lens through which experience is addressed. Ordinary experience points to the regular workings of everyday living. From the *Merriam-Webster.com* online dictionary, ordinary connotes "normal or usual: not

unusual, different, or special."[29] Interestingly, perhaps because the ordinary is so permeated by the normal, its definition comes through use of the negative: not unusual, not different, or not special. Of particular importance, the use of negative grammar to define the ordinary also points to the "who" of ordinary experience. Ordinary experience does not emphasize the experience of someone who is unusual, different, or special. Ordinary experience may not connote everyone's experience, but it could potentially be anyone's experience because it is not set apart from the usual. Ordinary experience is not exclusive; rather it is inclusive. This quality of inclusion points to the necessity of the adjective ordinary as an intentional focus within the broader category of experience.

In sum, emphasis on ordinary experience as inclusive implies a few theological assumptions. First, an emphasis on ordinary experience suggests that anyone can do theology. Anyone can seek to deepen the meaning and understanding of their primary experiences which occur in daily life through the lens of relationship to the Sacred. Second, an emphasis on ordinary experience implies that anyone's experience can be a source of theological reflection. The experiences of special groups of people (be they highly trained or specially designated) do not connote a higher category of importance. Third, an emphasis on ordinary experience means that any experience can be a source for theological reflection.[30] Experiences that are extraordinary, intensely spiritual, or teeming with institutional language about God are not a separate category of experiences

---

[29] *Merriam-Webster.com*, s.v. "ordinary," accessed June 12, 2014, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ordinary.

[30] The author recognizes that an ongoing conversation throughout the history of theology about the relationship between the individual to the community and about discerning truth among many competing voices is a prominent conversation related to the role of revelation and tradition. That conversation, however, is not the emphasis of the current work.

to be treated only through a strictly theological lens; conversely, regular occurrences in every day life can also be reflected upon as sources of meaning and as indicators of Sacred Presence.

Again, the particular lens of ordinary experience suggests that anyone can do theology; anyone's experience counts as a source for theological reflection; and any experience can serve as fodder for theological reflection. As Moltmann pointed out, this does not mean that everyone's experiences will be theologically treated everywhere all the time; however, the lens of ordinary experience suggests that they could be.

The Neglect of Ordinary Experience in Theology

The lens of ordinary experience emphasizes inclusion. The methodological assumptions within this statement are nuanced. Following, a brief outline of the shift in classic and linear, compartmentalized treatments of experience in theology to some contemporary treatments of experience in practical theology and spirituality will demonstrate the neglect of the ordinary in many theological treatments of experience. By further way of negative definition, ordinary experience will be considered within this review, first, as non-specialized; second, as non-elitist; and third, as non-separatist.

Ordinary Experience as Non-specialized

A number of contemporary theologians warn of the problems associated with the specialization of theology.[31] Among these concerns is that certain theological voices are lost or minimized when the voice of specialization dominates. A number of questions

---

[31] Bernard McGinn, "The Letter and the Spirit: Spirituality as an Academic Discipline," in *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Elizabeth A. Dreyer and Mark S. Burrows (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005), xiii.

reflect these concerns: Who speaks for whom? Who has the right to speak in public and on behalf of others? Who decides which ideas and experiences are right or wrong? In what venues might diverse voices get expressed?

Elizabeth Dreyer points out that scholars are not the only voices in the conversation. Indeed the lens of spirituality suggests that the practitioner's voice should be as prominent as the scholar's.[32] Sandra Schneiders's treatment of the relationship between theology and spirituality, especially as they are treated in the academy, further illustrates this point. She lays out three predominant perspectives about the relationship between the spirituality and theology: first, there are "those who think that theology is the subject matter of spirituality"; second, are "those who think that spirituality is part of the subject matter of theology"; and third, are "those who think that theology is thinking about the faith, whereas spirituality is living the faith in which thinking about it is one aspect."[33] She further elaborates that the first perspective suggests that spirituality is simply an applied discipline that puts prior theological thoughts into action. The second perspective encloses spirituality completely within the broader discipline of theology and consequently negates non-theological factors in experience, such as social location factors. Of the third perspective she notes, when "spirituality is understood as the experienced, multifaceted living of faith, and theology as critical reflection on faith,

---

[32] Ibid., 2.

[33] Sandra M. Schneiders, "The Study of Christian Spirituality: Contours and Dynamics of a Discipline," in *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Elizabeth A. Dreyer and Mark S. Burrows (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005), 11.

theology and spirituality as disciplines are equal partners in the academy."[34] Schneiders elevates this third perspective, which situates the academic interests of spirituality in relationship to the academic discipline of theology while maintaining the dialectic between lived experience and academic reflection on it.

From the lens of practical theology, Bonnie Miller-McLemore agrees, noting that theology is "more than an academic endeavor," and positively suggests "returning theology to the people."[35] Implicit in these statements is the need for the varied theological voices to be in conversation with one another rather than to exclude each other. A theological "commons" allows for more frequent meeting between ordinary and specialized practitioners to share both their experience and their reflection upon it.[36] The lens of ordinary experience suggests that neither the specialized nor the ordinary voices should be excluded. Schneiders points to the need for adequate language in such meeting spaces.[37] Intentional language enables multiple voices to converse together. In this way, conversations might be simultaneously relevant and meaningful in the life of faith, and

---

[34] Ibid.

[35] Bonnie Miller-McLemore, "Five Mis-Understandings of Practical Theology," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 16, no. 1 (2012): 26.

[36] Ada María Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 4. Isasi-Díaz addresses three publics in theology (women, churches, and academy) and stresses that the use of language in the academy should be done in a way that does not override the experience of grassroots Latinas.

[37] Sandra M. Schneiders, "A Hermeneutical Approach to the Study of Christian Spirituality," in *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Elizabeth A. Dreyer and Mark S. Burrows (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005), 53. Schneiders addresses adequate language as nontechnical.

also linear, compartmentalized, and critical within the scope of specialized activities such as teaching and scholarship.

The linear, compartmentalized treatment of experience in theology draws a distinction between "first-order" and "second-order" theologies. Contemporary theologians address this tendency.[38] The same model is also followed in spirituality.[39] Generally, this classification of first and second orders is introduced as necessary in order to provide for analytic distinction between the object of study itself and reflection on that object.[40] While such clarity may be helpful for establishing methodological validity according to academic standards, the "split" between first-order and second-order analysis tends to evolve into a system in which ordinary theologians participate in the existential realm of living in their experiences as first-order "faith" and professional theologians assume exclusive second-order responsibility for reflecting on and systematizing such experiences into thematic schema.[41] Most often, such frameworks become so specialized that they prove no longer relevant to the concerns of the first-order person of faith, as is illustrated by Claire Wolfteich's observation of ministry students

---

[38] Clodovis Boff, *Theology and Praxis: Epistemological Foundations*, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987), xxviii-xxix. Boff offers an example of the need for this distinction through his process of introducing "secular" realities into conversation with more typical "religious" realities in order to formulate a theology of the political, the former of which he notes are more recent conversation partners in theology.

[39] McGinn, "The Letter and the Spirit," 29.

[40] Whereas in Boff's model, first-order theology refers to classic theological themes and second-order theology refers to themes with secular realities, McGinn's use of the model within the framework of spirituality emphasizes first-order spirituality as "experience" and second-order spirituality as the study of that experience or practice.

[41] Boff, *Theology and Praxis*, 199.

who often experience cultural shock when they enter academic settings. She asserts that "reflections on the practices of teaching and scholarship reveal a sad gap between the academic pursuit of truth and the needs of contemporary spiritual seekers, inside and outside of the churches."[42] From a related perspective, Elaine Graham names the need for "specialized pastors" as a response to the contemporary growth in secular and lay expertise on spiritual and theological matters.[43] This observation suggests that specialization in and of itself is not troubling; rather the problem arises when specialized voices dominate the conversation or exclude other conversation partners all together.

Kathyrn Tanner addresses the specialization of theological conversations at length.[44] In her treatment of the turn toward culture in theology, Tanner investigates theological activity as "Christian social practice."[45] She argues that since practice is always informed by theory and since theory always is supported by practices, the classic tendency to distinguish between the theoretical reflection of first-order theology and the material object of second-order theologies is unhelpful.[46] Tanner recognizes that theology is done in different ways.[47] For example, she distinguishes between specialized

---

[42] Claire E. Wolfteich, "Graceful Work: Practical Theological Study of Spirituality," *Horizons* 27, no. 1 (2000), 7-8.

[43] Elaine L. Graham, *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2002), 62-63.

[44] Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*, Guides to Theological Inquiry, ed. Kathryn Tanner and Paul Lakeland (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997).

[45] Ibid., 72.

[46] Ibid.

theological activity and theology done within cultural terms.[48] Tanner critiques specialized theology as general and abstract so that it can satisfy the academic requirements of clarity and consistency. This critique is wielded in contrast to the needs of everyday life.[49] She points out that "the beliefs and values that circulate in the everyday social practices of a Christian way of life are unlikely to exhibit definite meanings and theological consistency such as in academic theological work."[50] Tanner names a few key distinctions between specialized and everyday theologies. Everyday theology is haphazard, episodic, and often focused on the production of meaning in the immediate situation; whereas specialized theology is cumulative and often focused on the production of texts. Specialized theology draws from a theoretical logic and everyday theology draws from a cultural logic.[51] Tanner does note a similarity in that both ways of approaching theology are forms of social action; however, she insists that if academic theology is to be relevant, it must meet popular theology and people where they are.[52]

Tanner's framework of theology as a social practice within the cultural realm challenges linear, compartmentalized emphases on treatments of experience that tend to relegate experience into separate areas of immediacy (the experience) and deepening

---

[47] Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology*, 73-74. Isasi-Díaz, similar to Tanner, acknowledges different ways of doing theology and utilizes the language of "professional" and "organic" intellectuals.

[48] Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, 70-71.

[49] Ibid., 71.

[50] Ibid., 74.

[51] Ibid., 80-82.

[52] Ibid., 82-85.

(later reflection on experience). At the heart of Tanner's perspective about the role of theology as a discipline is an approach that seeks to integrate varied ways of knowing in broadened, inclusive theological conversations. Just as holistic knowing (corporeal, volitional, affective, conceptual, relational, spiritual) is person-specific (subjective) and multilayered, Tanner's perspective is inclusive, warning against the social exclusion in specialized theology of the varied types of knowing that are necessary for everyday theology. When multiple ways of knowing are recognized and included in theological conversations, the treatment of ordinary experience can be addressed as an ongoing process with multiple layers, rather than as a compartmentalized product that works most efficiently only when certain types of knowledge content are inserted.

Ordinary Experience as Non-elitist

Both practical theology and spirituality have shifted emphasis from elitist paradigms in favor of more inclusive models, as will be seen below. The classic models in each discipline tend to overemphasize the experience of privileged individuals. For example, practical theology has shifted away from a clerical paradigm that tends to emphasize the activities of the pastor.[53] Similarly, spirituality has shifted away from its emphasis on the "life of perfection" paradigm, which tends to focus on persons committed to religious communities or movements.[54] These distinct forms of elitism

---

[53] Claire E. Wolfteich, "Devotion and the Struggle for Justice in the Farm Worker Movement: A Practical Theological Approach to Research and Teaching in Spirituality," *Spiritus* 5, no. 2 (2005): 161. Wolfteich cites practical theology's shift from a primary emphasis on the activities of pastors to the broader inclusion of diverse contexts and spheres of life.

[54] Sandra M. Schneiders, "Spirituality in the Academy," in *Modern Christian Spirituality: Methodological and Historical Essays*, AAR Studies in Religion, ed. Bradley C. Hanson (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 18. Schneiders notes, in a historical

point to the question of "who" in experience: whose experience counts for theological reflection? Who gets to do the reflecting theologically? Who do theologians speak for when they engage in theological reflection?

Within practical theology, the elitist emphasis on the pastor has become more nuanced in recent decades.[55] Leading up to this period, Graham points out that most of the practical theological literature in the 19th and 20th centuries focused on the preparation of the pastor for ordained ministry.[56] Modern practical theology shifts from a mode of preparation to an emphasis on the specialized tasks of the pastor as an "applied" model.[57] Graham points out that this emphasis on the pastor's activities "disavows the expertise of lay people, especially women."[58] Immanuel Lartey agrees that the pastor-focused model "narrows the pastoral activity too sharply," and feminists and postmodernists critique the model as inadequate because it misses the communal aspect.[59] Graham points out that this shift from the individual pastor's activities to the broader

---

review of usage of the term *spirituality*, that in pre-conciliar times spirituality was mostly a Roman Catholic term used to denote the commitment of religious persons in their hopes of attaining a life of perfection through devotion, which was distinct from the life of the ordinary believer.

[55] Gerrit Immink, *Faith: A Practical Theological Reconstruction* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2005), 5-7. Immink suggests shifts from ecclesial, clerical and public perspectives.

[56] Elaine Graham, "Practical Theology as Transforming Practice," in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, ed. James Woodward, Stephen Pattison, and John Patton (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 61.

[57] Ibid., 57.

[58] Graham, *Transforming Practice*, 48.

[59] Emmanuel Yartekwei Lartey, *Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World* (Peterborough: Epworth, 2006), 26-27.

community's activities does occur and is exemplified in Don Browning's work.[60] In more recent conversations, Miller-McLemore compares the "academic paradigm" as just as troubling as the "clerical paradigm" in practical theology for reasons similar to those named in the previous section of this work. Whereas the academic paradigm excludes because of an overemphasis on specialized knowledge, the clerical paradigm can be exclusive where it overemphsizes a particular person or set of people.[61]

In spirituality, Dreyer suggests that much of the dualism that exists in the Christian theological tradition must be understood within the context of the monastic communities in which many ancient texts were created.[62] Dreyer explicitly describes elitism in the tradition as resulting both from the limited range of persons that were held up as models of holiness as well as from the limited number of people in positions of decision-making.[63] In regard to the shift from elite models in spirituality to more inclusive ones, Schneiders notes that the term spirituality "no longer refers exclusively or even primarily to prayer and spiritual exercises, much less to an elite state or superior practice of Christianity."[64] She further notes that the term has consequently broadened to include not only the entire life of faith, but also the scope of a person's whole life.[65]

---

[60] Graham, *Transforming Practice*, 89.

[61] Miller-McLemore, "Five Mis-understandings," 14.

[62] Elizabeth Dreyer, *Earth Crammed with Heaven: A Spirituality of Everyday Life* (New York: Paulist Press, 1994), 40.

[63] Ibid., 42.

[64] Schneiders, "Spirituality in the Academy," 18.

[65] Ibid.

Kathleen Cahalan also addresses this recent historical shift in the understanding of "spiritual practice" as something reserved for only elite practitioners to something that all Christians engage in. However, Cahalan points out a different contemporary bias, in which spiritual practices are considered to belong to the realm of retreating and getting away from or taking time out of daily life. Such a bias reflects a misperception that the spiritual life is somehow separate from ordinary life.[66] This concern about the separation of ordinary and sacred life is addressed in the following section.[67]

Ordinary Experience as Non-separatist

This last treatment of ordinary experience as non-separatist addresses the relationship between the Sacred and the ordinary aspects of reality, which are also sometimes referred to as the natural and supernatural realms. Gerben Heitink suggests that "the central problem that practical theology must face is the hermeneutical question about the way in which the divine reality and the human reality can be connected at the experiential level."[68] Schneiders addresses this tension in her description of spirituality

---

[66] Kathleen A. Cahalan, *Introducing the Practice of Ministry* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010), 113-14.

[67] Tone Stangeland Kaufman, "A Plea for Ethnographic Methods and a Spirituality of Everyday Life in the Study of Christian Spirituality: A Norwegian Case of Clergy Spirituality," *Spiritus* 14, no. 1 (2014). Kaufman argues in this article that the case for an emphasis on the everyday should also be made for practicing clergy. He suggests that an emphasis on location of practice, "as located at the margins of daily life" or "embedded in everyday life" expands the conversation on practice so that it might include daily practices such as caring for others or saying table grace (97).

[68] Gerben Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains*: *Manual for Practical Theology*, trans. Reinder Bruinsma, *Studies in Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 193.

as having to do with both the human spirit and the Spirit of God. She suggests that equal attention must be given to both sides of the relational process.[69]

Meredith McGuire suggests that divisions between the Sacred and the profane within the Christian theological tradition are historically constructed.[70] Boff similarly suggests that no pure natural order, apart from the current and ongoing reality, has ever existed, and that the supernatural must be understood as the natural itself.[71] Mary Hines argues that fundamental dichotomies (e.g., between the Sacred and the secular and between nature and grace) create a sense of separation that contributes to distorted and limited relationships between the church and the world and between clergy and laity. In particular, Hines points to limitations in the church's inner ministries and exclusion of the voice of the laity as indicators of this problem.[72] Dualist and separatist notions of reality negate the assertion within the lens of ordinary experience that any experience can be deepened through meaning-making processes and theological reflection about God's involvement in regular events within anyone's life.

Understandably, the common tendency to separate the Sacred from the ordinary aspects of reality relates to the challenge of naming and knowing God. Paul Tillich

---

[69] Schneiders, "Study of Christian Spirituality," 51.

[70] Meredith B. McGuire, "Why Bodies Matter: A Sociological Reflection on Spirituality and Materiality," in *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Elizabeth Dreyer and Mark S. Burrows (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 121.

[71] Boff, *Theology and Praxis*, 95-96.

[72] Mary E. Hines, "Community for Liberation," in *Freeing Theology*: *The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*, ed. Catherine Mowry LaCugna (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 166.

suggests that there are two elements to God: first is ultimacy and second is concreteness.[73] Rudolf Otto names three elements to describe the Holy: *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*.[74] Elizabeth Johnson provides a helpful unpacking of these three elements: "mystery at once awesome, and attractive."[75] *Mysterium* indicates that the Holy is hidden beyond comprehension. *Tremendum* suggests that the Holy is awesome beyond control. *Fascinans* refers to the attractiveness of the graciousness of the Holy.[76] God is both beyond the grasp of human understanding and activity and, at the same time, is immensely attractive to human beings. Such language about the nature of God and human longing suggests the need for a framework of relational abundance rather than one of limitations and exclusions, which tend to characterize dualistic and separatist frameworks.

As noted in the earlier section on the specialization of experience in theological conversations, there is a general tendency to separate areas of experience into first and second order categories for the sake of clarity. This tendency is exemplified within practical theological empiricist methodology, especially as interpreted by J. A. van der Ven. He suggests the necessity of "a clear distinction—not a separation" between faith

---

[73] Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, Harper Torchbooks, TB42 (New York: Harper, 1958), 53.

[74] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*: *An Inquiry into the Non-rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, 2nd ed., trans. John W. Harvey, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

[75] Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Quest for the Living God*: *Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 8.

[76] Ibid., 8-9.

and theology.[77] This argument suggests that God is not directly accessible through the practice of theology; rather "God is the direct object of faith, and faith is the direct object of theology."[78] Heitink similarly asserts that the direct object of theology can never be God, but is always the experience of God.[79] While this split does lift up the general category of experience as important in theological conversations, it unfortunately continues in the long-standing tradition of limiting relational epistemic perspectives.

To split faith and theology, which might be appropriate in empirical methods because of the necessity of objectivity in the scientific method, is inadequate as a fully practical theological method for spiritual formation that speaks to the ordinary theologian's perspective. When "God" is relegated by specialists to another inaccessible realm, the reality of ordinary theologians is artificially separated for the sake of academic clarity. In real life, God is known most readily through God's activity, not through God's essence.[80] Especially for ordinary theologians, discourse about God generally assumes a relationship to God.[81] Experience of God, understood through a relational lens, is to

---

[77] Johannes A. van der Ven, *Practical Theology*: *An Empirical Approach*, trans. Barbara Schultz (Kampen, The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1993), 103.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Heitink, *Practical Theology*, 110.

[80] Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject: Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), ix-x. Fulkerson critiques the project of "proving or defending the existence of God" ontologically as both uninteresting and irrelevant, especially in lieu of the people within the communities she studies, who simply presume that God exists and acts in history.

[81] Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 377-411. In the last chapter of her work, LaCugna emphasizes the practical implications of her lengthy argument that Trinitarian theology is ultimately relational and, as such, is a practical doctrine.

really know God. Colloquially, this is the difference between knowing about God and knowing God in relationship. Heitink states it this way, noting that "theology thus comprises not only knowledge of God, but also of knowing God."[82] Through the lens of ordinary experience, the direct object of ordinary theology is God when God is understood as being-in-relationship and is knowable through God's activity in the course of creation. This perspective, however, is only more recently affirmed in academic treatments of God.

Heitink points out the difference between the classic scholastic emphasis on accounting for God's being and rationally proving the existence of God, in contrast to the more contemporary and post-Schleiermachian emphasis on affectivity and "the human experience of God."[83] This academic argument for *knowing* God also claims that knowing is not only a rational, but also an affective endeavor. This shift in the understanding of knowing, from primarily rational to inclusive of affect, moves toward the holistic knowing that is part of ordinary experience. However, epistemic assumptions that inform the lens of ordinary experience also emphasize relationality as a way of knowing, much as Catherine Mowry LaCugna's work suggests that relationship is at the core of the ontological assumptions in her understanding of a Trinitarian framework in which God acts dynamically for and in relationship to creation.[84] Relational knowing is

---

[82] Heitink, *Practical Theology*.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Cahalan, *Introducing the Practice of Ministry*, 154. Cahalan summarizes LaCugna's perspective by noting that if the essence of the Trinity is understood as relationship-in-communion, then the split between the economics of God (who God is in relationship) and the immanence of God (who God is) is overcome.

affirmed through observance of another's actions.[85] Emphasis on knowing God through the observable and experiential actions attributed to God helps to shift theological reflection about God from an emphasis on God's unknowable essence as *myterium tremendum* to an emphasis on the relational implications of *et fascinans*. While it is true that God is beyond human comprehension and that God is gracious, at the same time it is also true that humans really do experience God-as-relationship, both in their longings for God and in their observance of God's actions.

Theological and spiritual models that focus primarily on narrow specialization, elite professionalism, and dualistic ontological and epistemic categories are inadequate in light of the hermeneutic lens of ordinary experience. Ordinary experience, as non-specialized, non-elitist, and non-separatist insists that human knowing is holistic and that human relationality consists of many concentric circles within one realm of reality, inclusive of the Sacred. A further nuance to this conversation about ordinary experience suggests that the separation of that which is Sacred into the personal realm and that which is cultural into the public realm is similarly an inadequate representation of ordinary experience. David Tracy expresses this nuance in the conclusion of a chapter of his work that addresses "three publics" of theology. In this treatment, Tracy strongly suggests that all theologians are encouraged to engage all three of the publics, including society, the academy, and the church.[86] The emphasis on the hermeneutical lens of ordinary

---

[85] LaCugna, *God for Us*. LaCugna emphasizes God's activities as a way of really knowing God.

[86] David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*: *Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 31.

experience in this chapter suggests a similar conclusion; however the lens of ordinary experience offers a further nuance by suggesting not only that professional theologians should be engaged in theology from within each of these three places, but also that more spaces need to be cultivated in which the professional and the ordinary theologian engage one another and are able to offer one another both the gifts and the challenges that mark their distinct perspectives as shaped by their social location. As Tracy suggests, the relational interaction among these complex realms is inevitable, and it is important that theology be present in the conversations.[87] Theological and anthropological treatments of the sacred and cultural realms reveal that ordinary experience is markedly layered and composed of various interacting concentric circles of relationality, which will be more fully addressed in chapter 3. Attention is now given to the relationship between the realm of culture and of the Sacred.

Tension between Sacred and Cultural Experience

The relationship between the experiential realms of the Sacred and of culture is complex. As two realms that both address a shared core of meaning-making, their inter-relatedness is important. The following reflections about this relationship serve to further exemplify the complexity of ordinary experience as layered.

Ordinary experience crosses over into each realm, and consequently, analysis of either realm often requires addressing the other. For example, cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz is widely recognized within the study of religion for his contribution to an

[87] Ibid., 29.

anthropological definition of religion.[88] He is credited within theological discourse for the notion of "thick descriptions" of experience and events as analytical tools.[89] Philosopher and theologian Paul Tillich similarly addresses this tension in his description of religion as an aspect of the human spirit that addresses the depth dimension of human experience.[90] Both Geertz and Tillich suggest a complex of interconnected layers in their descriptions. As noted earlier, Jurgen Moltmann also addresses complexity in the religious dimension of experience as "something present in, with, and beneath all . . . experiences of things, events, and people," in contrast to "a special enclave cut off from everyday secular life."[91] At the center of the complex relationship between the Sacred and cultural realms are claims upon meaning-making as part of human experience. The lens of ordinary experience suggests that such meaning-making is layered, for example, within the particular person in various holistic ways of knowing, and for the particular-person-in-relationship, across numerous strata of interactions with people and creation.

Meaning is addressed as personal and relational in both the Sacred and cultural realms. Geertz claims that "culture is public because meaning is."[92] One of his descriptions of cultural analysis involves "sorting out the structures of signification and determining their social ground and import."[93] Theologian Clemens Sedmak notes that

---

[88] Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 90-91.

[89] Ibid., 6.

[90] Paul Tillich and Robert C. Kimball, *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 5-7.

[91] Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 27.

[92] Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 12.

"cultures are expressions of our attempts to come to terms with life. Cultures express the human need for security and meaning and the human fear of chaos," which are issues that are also addressed by theology.[94] Tillich addresses religion's "ultimate concern as the meaning-giving substance of culture" and culture as "the totality of forms in which the basic concern of religion expresses itself."[95] US Hispanic theologian Virgilio Elizondo addresses the question of meaning in religion and culture by noting that the "task of the pastoral theologian is to bring out the human meaning of the divine message and the divine meaning of the human situation."[96] Often investigators prioritize one or the other realm as a starting point for analysis, which can lead to the illusion that meaning only takes place in one or the other of the realms. Geertz avoids this tendency by noting the "stratigraphic" nature of cultural analysis, which factors in the biological, psychological, social, and cultural layers which, when "peeled off," reveal the totality of the human being.[97] This anthropological stance resonates with the layered holistic and relational epistemic and ontological assumptions that are part of the framework of ordinary experience.

A number of theologians also insist on layered analytical approaches to discourse about the Sacred through the lens of practice. For example, Elaine Graham proposes

---

[93] Ibid., 9.

[94] Clemens Sedmak, *Doing Local Theology: A Guide for Artisans of a New Humanity*, Faith and Cultures Series (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 74.

[95] Tillich and Kimball, *Theology of Culture*, 42.

[96] Virgilio P. Elizondo, *Galilean Journey: The Mexican-American Promise*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 48.

[97] Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 37.

religion as a form of “purposed practice” that entails the following: first, a cultural system of symbolic meaning; second, communal sites such as sociological and theological institutions; and third, personal belief systems.[98] Tanner, in describing the relationship between Christian cultures and broader societies names a similar three-tiered analytical framework involving the personal, communal, and cultural: first, she points to the personal by defining particular Christian identities in social terms; second, she draws in the communal through the particular person’s relationship to cultural boundaries; and third, she factors in the cultural by looking at the intrinsic continuities in Christian belief and action over time.”[99] Rebecca Chopp invokes the term “social-symbolic order” to address the layered nature of Sacred and cultural realms not only at any given time, but also over periods of time throughout history.[100] Robert Schreiter names a new shift in theology as contextual theology.[101] Consequently, he suggests, theology is now more sensitive to three areas: first, context; second; procedure; and third, history.[102] Three-tiered frameworks support non-separatist assumptions about ordinary experience, which as noted earlier, tend to divide reality and relationships into dichotomies. In some cases, the three tiers refer to the strata of relationship as part of experience (e.g., personal, communal, and cultural). In other cases, the tiers refer to relationships and knowing over

---

[98] Graham, *Transforming Practice*, 111.

[99] Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, 96.

[100] Rebecca S. Chopp, *The Power to Speak: Feminism, Language, God* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 14.

[101] Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), 5.

[102] Ibid., 3.

time through experiential processes (e.g., past, present, and future practices or beliefs). Conversations about the role of particular theologians in relation to their social contexts, as well as the place of theology in relation to culture, also exemplify the layered nature the Sacred and cultural realms.[103]

There is a need for dialogue about theology and its intersection with culture.[104] Tanner notes that in modern and postmodern understandings, theology is a part of culture or a form of cultural activity that is subsumed amid broader arenas of cultural activity.[105] Theology is a "subset of a wider sphere of cultural struggle that is not specifically theological."[106] Even so, particular theologians make the claim that theology has a public voice in the broader cultural realm.[107] Since theology is discourse about reality, it is public.[108] Wolfteich includes reflection about the role of religion in the public sphere as one of three tasks of practical theology.[109] Some theologians also argue that theology must address the context of real life or it runs the risk of becoming isolated.[110] This

---

[103] Tracy, *Analogical Imagination*, 6-31. Tracy names three publics for theology as first, society; second, the academy; and third, the church.

[104] Sedmak, *Doing Local Theology*, 79.

[105] Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, 63.

[106] Tanner, "Social Theory Concerning the 'New Social Movements' and the Practice of Feminist Theology," in *Horizons in Feminist Theology*: *Identity, Tradition, and Norms*, ed. Rebecca S. Chopp and Sheila Greeve Davaney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 185.

[107] Boff, *Theology and Praxis*, 159-74.

[108] Lartey, *Pastoral Theology*, 102.

[109] Wolfteich, "Graceful Work," 8-9.

concern about the latter risk is especially apparent in intercultural theology. María Pilar Aquino suggests that intercultural approaches to theology clarify the social function of religious discourses.[111] Intercultural theology addresses life as it is lived in the immediate, and relates such reflection to broader systems of influence. Aquino elucidates a cycle that addresses various layers but that starts with, and returns to, immediate lived experience:

> the proposal to develop a feminist intercultural theology is concerned with making explicit the relation that exists between the real conditions in which people live, the function of cultures in inculcating values and aspirations, and the role of religious discourses in maintaining or changing the values and aspirations that originate in the conditions in which the people live.[112]

Aquino's description reiterates the challenge that the cultural perspective brings to the conversation about meaning in dialogue with theology, which is that meaning must be addressed within the course of life as it is actually lived.[113] Included in this perspective

---

[110] Linell Elizabeth Cady, "Identity, Feminist Theory, and Theology," in *Horizons in Feminist Theology*: *Identity, Tradition, and Norms*, ed. Rebecca S. Chopp and Sheila Greeve Davaney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 30.

[111] Maria Pilar Aquino, "Feminist Intercultural Theology: Toward a Shared Future of Justice," in *Feminist Intercultural Theology*: *Latina Explorations for a Just World*, Studies in Latino/a Catholicism, ed. María Pilar Aquino and María José Rosado Nuñez (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 10.

[112] Ibid., 22.

[113] Tanner, "Social Theory," 182-91. In this section, Tanner addresses the social issues of oppression that are built into the normal processes of daily life for women

are the layers of urgent meaning that arise from immediate experience, as well as the layers of deepened meaning that arise when ordinary theologians engage in reflection about their daily lives.[114] Inclusion of these many layers suggests interaction between the private and public nature of theology.

As public, theology is brought forward into the town square. Located here, its relevance and urgency is expressed in a common place that is open to all. As an element of private experience that is brought to the town square, public theology takes its place amid the myriad of interactive concerns that press on people who work toward building communities within society. The publicness of theology demands influence, force, and power in order to effectively contribute to the maintenance of the delicate web of society and communities. As public, theology moves beyond the individual piety of the believer and situates itself as collective actor in the dynamics of cultural systems. As public, theology draws the private and domestic realm of experience into conversation with other realms.[115]

This chapter seeks to establish the complex nature of ordinary experience. First, the challenge of defining experience is addressed. From within that conversation, two factors for conceptualizing ordinary experience as layered emerge, including the personal

---

through stereotypes and assumptions. She concludes that feminist theology must genuinely address the needs of the people as the articulation of values and beliefs is created.

[114] Kathryn Tanner, "Theological Reflection and Christian Practices," in *Practicing Theology*: *Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*, ed. Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 228.

[115] Roberto S. Goizueta, *Caminemos con Jesús: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 112-13. Goizueta names feminist Mujerista and Latina perspectives as sources that draw attention to the need to not separate the private and public realms.

and relational realms. The inclusive nature of ordinary experience is established through a review of the neglect of ordinary experience in theology and spirituality. Last, attentiveness to the tensions that arise when both the voice of the Sacred and the voice of culture are in conversation together further illustrates the complex nature of experience. In relation to the broader goals of this work, this chapter sets the stage, through the lens of the complex nature of ordinary experience, for subsequent claims that emphasize the need for layered approaches to practical theological spiritual formation. The review of ordinary experience as non-specialized, non-elitist, and non-separatist argues in favor of multivalent approaches, which are less likely to exclude particular ways of knowing or groups of people. So far, ordinary experience is characterized as both complex and inclusive. In the next chapter, the layered and inclusive nature of ordinary experience is deepened through engagement with the category of *location* as part of the broader turn toward culture within theological conversations.

Chapter Three: Ordinary Experience as Contextual and Relational in Intercultural Theology and Ministry

This chapter turns toward a focus on the particular lens of intercultural theology and ministry. Related to the broader goals of this work, this turn seeks to discover the insights that the intercultural perspective offers in regard to practice. One specific category that the intercultural lens contributes toward this conversation about ordinary experience is *location,* which emphasizes interconnectedness between points that are situated in varied spaces. Through attentiveness to layers, this category emphasizes the relational aspects found in the two prongs of ordinary experience that were developed in chapter 1 of this work (i.e., the personal and the relational realms).

Overall, as will be developed in the remainder of this chapter, the intercultural lens suggests the importance of intentional space-making for the purpose of fostering authentic and mutual interactions among persons and groups. Intentional space-making, as a practice, reveals an important intersection between cultural and spiritual formation. One aspect of practice that contributes to intentional space-making emphasizes the interpersonal layer of practice. Throughout the remainder of this chapter, the broader category of *culture* is first reviewed for both its complexity as well as its contribution to theology as inherently contextual. The category of *location* further hones in on the contextual nature of theological reflection by emphasizing experience as both layered and relational. Next, the specific goals and invitations that come from intercultural theology are reviewed with the goal of drawing out the contributions of this approach to highlight the need for intentional space-making. Finally, a specific example of a practitioner who demonstrates attentiveness to the interpersonal layer of practice is presented through the work of Eric Law.

Culture

In this section, the broader category of culture is established as complex, just as is the category of experience—both terms are difficult to define because of their scope. Again, the method of naming layers within the realm of culture helps to address this complexity. An emphasis on location in conversations about culture hones in on the relatedness of different points within the different layers of culture, which are named below as situatedness, context, and makeup. A further nuance suggests the need for attentiveness to interpersonal dynamics when the personal and relational dynamics are attended to simultaneously. Within conversations about the role of culture, these dynamics are often named as, Power/Privilege, Difference/Alterity, and Hybridity/*Mestizaje*, which are addressed later in this chapter.

The Challenge of Defining Culture

Different definitions of culture reflect the challenge of capturing its meaning. An example demonstrates the multifaceted nature of the concept of culture: it has been defined as "learned values, beliefs, perceptions, assumptions, patterns and practices—both conscious and unconscious—that enable [people] to perceive, interpret, evaluate, and respond to life and the world."[1] In some cases, authors offer a simplified explanation, such as culture "organizes and regulates what the group thinks, feels, and does."[2] However, such short definitions are usually located near their complex

---

[1] Eric H. F. Law, *The Bush Was Blazing but Not Consumed*: *Developing a Multicultural Community through Dialogue Liturgy* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1996), x-xi.

counterparts, in this case, describing culture "as an integrated system of ideas, feelings, and values and their associated patterns of behavior and products (i.e. learned behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, and ideals) shared by a group of people (i.e. a particular society or population)."[3] Other authors offer contemporary explanations of culture in contrast to older usages as a way to define the concept.[4] For example, David Cheetham emphasizes an understanding of culture "as a way of life rather than 'high culture' associated with knowledge of literature and the arts."[5] For example, the older usage defined a small set of activity performed by a small group of people. Contemporary meaning expands and complexifies the definition, for example, "culture as a way of life refers to a composite and shared social reality which gives expression to beliefs and values, attitudes and practices."[6] Despite the varied emphases, each of these examples share elements, including attitudes, beliefs, and practices. Culture understood in this way reflects contemporary understandings of culture as a total way of life. This perspective resonates with the hermeneutic lens of ordinary experience developed in this work because of its emphasis on integration rather than compartmentalization. This contemporary notion of

---

[2] Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, S. Steve Kang, and Gary A. Parrett, *A Many Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamics for Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 18.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, rev. ed., Faith and Cultures Series (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 11. Bevans highlights empirical conceptions of culture in contrast to classicist notions.

[5] David Cheetham, "Intercultual Theology and Interreligous Studies," in *Intercultural Theology: Approaches and Themes*, ed. Mark J. Cartledge and David Cheetham (London: SCM, 2011), 2.

[6] Ibid.

the concept of culture is influenced by anthropology, which will be developed later. Historically, other approaches have dominated.

A number of authors who address culture in their work set up their understanding of culture by reviewing the history of its use in language, case-study investigation, and popular understanding.[7] Kathryn Tanner offers an exhaustive investigation of the use of culture in varying periods and contexts.[8] She recognizes older, classic notions of culture which tended to be evaluative, exclusivist, and individualistic such as "high" notions that emphasize cultured persons formed by cultured societies.[9] Cultural evolutionism is an example of such an approach taken by earlier investigators who understood that societies passed through developmental stages, progressing from primitive to civilized expressions of human life.[10] Tanner notes that modern scientific approaches to investigation marked the beginnings of a shift from classic notions of culture toward anthropological notions of culture. This shift was marked by functionalism and empiricism, each of which contributed to the breakdown of earlier approaches as their methods invalidated many of the claims made by them.[11] The anthropological sense of culture as "group-

---

[7] Gerald A. Arbuckle, *Culture, Inculturation, and Theologians: A Postmodern Critique* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010), 5. Arbuckle lays out classic, modern, and postmodern periods with distinct usages of the notion of culture. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 45-49. Schreiter notes functionalist, ecological/materialist, structuralist, and semiotic usages of culture; his own preference is for the latter.

[8] Tanner, *Theories of Culture*.

[9] Ibid., 4-6.

[10] Ibid., 17.

[11] Ibid., 21.

differentiating, holistic, non-evaluative, and context-relative" began to replace high notions of culture.[12] Tanner elaborates the basic elements of a modern, anthropological approach to culture, which is commonly used in contemporary religious discourse:

> First, culture is a human universal—everyone is part of culture; second, culture is universal, yet diverse; third, cultures vary with social groups; fourth, culture is conceived of as an entire way of life for a particular social group; fifth, cultures are group-specific and associated with social consensus; sixth, culture constitutes human nature; seventh, cultures are conventions, human constructions; eighth, cultures are contingent—they could have been otherwise; and ninth, culture suggests social determinism—society shapes its members.[13]

In contrast, postmodern approaches emphasize interactive processes and negotiation, indeterminacy, fragmentation, conflict, and porosity as key elements of culture.[14] These preferences reflect discomfort with finality, in favor of dynamism. By way of critique, postmodern perspectives critique the following finalistic qualities of modern anthropological notions of culture:

> First, they are inattentive to historical processes; second, they view cultures as internally consistent wholes; third,

---

[12] Ibid., 24.

[13] Ibid., 25-29.

[14] Ibid., 38.

> they suggest that consensus among members is common in cultures; fourth they use culture as a principle of social order; fifth, they suggest the primacy of cultural stability; and, sixth they view cultures as sharply-bounded, self-contained units.[15]

Tanner notes that while postmodern perspectives offer a critique of modern anthropological treatments of culture, such critique is done with an eye toward revision rather than total rejection. For example, the following alternatives are proposed:

> First, that cultures can be considered as wholes, but they are wholes which are contradictory and fissured; second, that there may be consensus-building in cultures, but this is minimal and can be both negative and positive; third, that cultures are differentiating, but differences do not create clear boundaries in the reality of people's lives; rather differences cross-over boundaries; and fourth, that cultures can be self-critical, but they are so both internally and externally.[16]

The modern anthropological perspective tends to situate a particular person or groups of persons within other surrounding and influential strata of relationships. Similarly, the lens of ordinary experience recognizes relationality as layered. The

---

[15] Ibid., 40-53.

[16] Ibid., 56-58.

postmodern revisions of the modern anthropological perspective offered by Tanner also resonate with the lens of ordinary experience because of their emphasis on naming culture as it is actually lived (porous, fragmented, dynamic), rather than as a convenient categorization that helps to clarify academic motives and analyses.

Contemporary definitions or descriptions of culture in theological conversations contain both modern and postmodern elements, such as those noted at the beginning of this section. In particular, many authors who emphasize interculturality explicitly draw from the postmodern revisions of culture.[17] Another definition of culture exemplifies this by describing cultures "as not fixed, but processes that change through human intervention and that are continually affecting the whole social context in its different local, regional, and global levels."[18]

Defining culture is a complex endeavor because the lived reality described by definitions of culture is complex. In contemporary use, both the modern and postmodern approaches describe culture, generally, as a way of life. Much as the framework of ordinary experience, culture incorporates personal and relational elements, which include the varied strata of the personal, communal, social, historical, and religious. This perspective acknowledges the multifaceted understanding of culture in contemporary usage, which is dynamic and complex. Reflections on relationality through the lens of

---

[17] Cheetham, "Intercultual Theology and Interreligous Studies," 2. Cartledge and Cheetham expand upon their definition of culture (cited earlier) by explaining that cultures are not static, that they borrow and receive from one another, and that they are not to be considered as neat units.

[18] Aquino, "Toward a Shared Future of Justice," 14.

culture as a way of life have informed a broadening tendency in theological conversations, especially in the area of practice.[19]

The following section points to three layers of social location that are now more broadly recognized in theological conversations as conceptual tools for categorizing human experience according to cultural lenses. Though the layers are presented here as separate for clarity of expression, in the reality of daily life, each is woven into the other layers. For example, situatedness points both to broader historical movements and also to political systems. Context points to the particularity of both communal and social-political structures. Cultural makeup addresses the particular person, but recognizes the influence of the other relational strata in the identity formation of each person. The lens of culture emphasizes the factor of location as integral to both the immediacy and the deepening of awareness in ordinary experience. The following presentation of three aspects of location helps to flesh out the dimensions of experience laid out by Moltmann and Liebert as well as the three publics presented by Tracy in chapter 1; however, this time the interrelated layers are presented through the lens of cultural frameworks. Again, an intersection between cultural and spiritual formation reveals integrated models that defy artificial compartmentalization.

Layers of Location within the Scope of Culture

Situatedness

Situatedness refers to the larger scope of experience. Situatedness is the perspective from the sky looking down at the ground, in which general placements and sweeping movements are observed. Moltmann describes this layer as collective experience, in

---

[19] Tanner, "Theological Reflection."

which specific experiences acquire fixed forms in external institutions and psychological attitudes.[20] He further observes that collective experience both shapes the individual's experience of the self and also regulates society's collective behaviors and assumptions.[21] Tanner claims the term "political" as a pervasive dimension of social relations that mediates broader forms of meaning and its articulations.[22] She describes "political dynamics" in layers as having to do with the elucidation of meaning, the formation of networks that form an order among cultural elements, and the determination of the way in which social practices are part of the inferential and associative networks interwoven with meanings and the organization of actual elements.[23] Rebecca Chopp describes the dynamics of this layer, also drawing from the term *politics*, as the "ongoing formation of habits and shared practices in which communities nurture the ability to live together, to embrace specificity and difference, to work and play for mutual enrichment."[24] The sociopolitical realm is the layer in which social change for justice is addressed systemically. As a snapshot view, the sociopolitical layer reflects the interrelated systems that govern connectedness between communities at any given point in time.

Another term that reflects the broad view of situatedness is *historicity*. Elaine Graham notes that "location, positioning, and historicity define the language by which we

---

[20] Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 26.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Tanner, "Social Theory," 180-81.

[23] Ibid., 186.

[24] Chopp, *Power to Speak,* 127.

can understand our experiences."[25] Moltmann suggests that a historical experience of God is "that which happens to people in the medium of history through historical events and which is perceived in terms of time."[26] Stephen Bevans bases his continuum of six models of contextual theology on each model's treatment of and regard for the past or present.[27] Historicity shapes the situatedness of human experience as the place where communal narratives and myths are carried. As Orlando Espín notes, the human side of human-divine encounter is only possible through cultural, social, and historical means.[28] Whereas situatedness is concerned with broader, general movements in human experiences, the next layer of context shares the social element of situatedness, but moves toward the particular in concrete locations.

Context

Robert Schreiter compares contextual models of theology to others, including translation and adaptation models. The key defining characteristic of contextual models he notes is that local theology "begins with the needs of a people in a concrete place, and from there moves to the traditions of the faith."[29] Whereas the political and historical perspectives within the layer of situatedness begin with big picture elements such as tradition and governing institutions, the flavor of the contextual level emphasizes real,

---

[25] Graham, *Transforming Practice*, 159.

[26] Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 39.

[27] Bevans, *Models*, 32.

[28] Orlando Espín, *The Faith of the People*: *Theological Reflections on Popular Catholicism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 93.

[29] Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 13.

concrete relationships. Moltmann suggests that "our experience of ourselves is always woven into a network of social relationships on which it is dependent."[30] There is a mutual conditioning between the experience of the self and the experience of others.[31] Orlando Espín notes that contextualizing dimensions include the political, economic, social, gender, and other factors which must be addressed when peoples of differing groups interact among one another.[32]

Moltmann also suggests that the collective patterns which exist at the contextual level only come into consciousness through particular experiences, such as is the case for those who are the victims of societal practices.[33] Lartey also picks up on the theme of particularity in social contexts as he describes contextual analysis as "a way of discerning and seeking to hear what God may be saying out of the different exigencies of the human condition as experienced in different contexts."[34] He further describes this process noting that "contextual analysis includes examination of social, cultural, economic, political, and religious factors at work in given geographic locations."[35]

For example, the layer of context is where the face of conflict is experienced by diverse groups of people. Speaking from the perspective of the margins, Espín describes

---

[30] Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 23.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Orlando O. Espín, *Grace and Humanness*: *Theological Reflections because of Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 23.

[33] Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 26.

[34] Lartey, *Pastoral Theology*, 42.

[35] Ibid., 43.

how "every culture bears witness to an internal history of conflict and struggle for the determination and control of its values, meanings, logic, and over all contour."[36] Negatively, these dynamics can take on the flavor of ethnocentrism, which "is the belief that [one's] cultural values and beliefs, both conscious and unconscious, are the best and that [they] possess the superior culture."[37] Espín addresses the dangers of ethnocentrism as he describes the dynamics of socialization that occur as a result of "social place."[38] In regards to the socialization of the experience of the divine, he notes that "when an individual or group 'pours' the experience of the divine into meaningful symbols, images, memories . . . explanations, and guidelines for living, that can be shared by others in society, there the experience becomes socialized."[39] He argues that experience of the divine can be limited or enriched by the social place of the peoples experiencing it within the larger culture and related to other social groups.[40] Sedmak addresses this reality in his proposal of three tasks for little theologies: first, to point to the positive richness and goodness of local contexts; second, to challenge local context by inviting people to see and go beyond its limits; and third, to inspire and encourage by opening the eyes and ears to what was previously unseen and unheard.[41] If the layer of situatedness broadly paints

---

[36] Espín, *Grace and Humanness*, 24.

[37] Law, *Bush Was Blazing*, 43.

[38] Espín, *Faith of the People*, 94-95.

[39] Ibid., 95.

[40] Ibid., 96-99.

[41] Sedmak, *Doing Local Theology*, 125-26.

a picture of the elements that are at work, then the layer of context points to the impact that those elements make on persons located in particular social communities.

Cultural Makeup

Though the layer of cultural makeup addresses individual persons, it does so under the assumption that particular persons are inevitably woven into and shaped by communal and social forces. "Individuals are increasingly constituted by an array of practices, traditions, and collectives that are continually negotiated in the ongoing project of self-hood."[42] The notion of identity speaks to these tensive dynamics. For example, Philip Sheldrake recognizes "the public" as part of identity.[43] Schreiter comments that cultural analysis for theology, among other things, must address the forces that shape personal identity.[44] Graham describes the work of identity as relational, contextual, and performative.[45] Leticia Guardioloa-Saenz expands on these terms, noting that "identity" in cultural studies is constituted by power relations; is not unified but rather ruptured, fragmented, discontinued, and fragmentary; and, finally, is constantly in flux.[46] Personal

---

[42] Cady, "Identity, Feminist Theory, and Theology," 32.

[43] Philip F. Sheldrake, "Christian Spirituality as a Way of Living Publicly: A Dialectic of the Mystical and Prophetic," in *Minding the Spirit*: *The Study of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Elizabeth Dreyer and Mark S. Burrows (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 289.

[44] Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 42-44.

[45] Graham, *Transforming Practice*, 159.

[46] Leticia A. Guardiola-Saenz, "Reading from Ourselves: Identity and Hermeneutics among Mexican-American Feminists," in *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology*: *Religion and Justice*, ed. María Pilar Aquino, Daisy L. Machado, and Jeanette Rodriguez (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 86.

identity is a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon experienced by a particular person who is situated within other relational strata.

Unfortunately, notions of identity are often reduced to only one cultural factor, such as ethnicity.[47] Eric Law argues that cultural identity is about more than race and ethnicity, though they are certainly major components of culture.[48] Law proposes a broad array of factors that make up one's cultural identity, which includes a broader range of factors than other similar descriptions.[49] Law's list considers gender, age, work, physical ability, family structure, sexual orientation, economic status, religion, marital status, education, and community.[50] From the perspective of spirituality, Conn describes the dynamics of cultural makeup through the lens of experience, noting that "spirituality as experience includes all the complexity and richness of each person's historical and cultural location as well as the particularities of gender, race, class, and psychological development and the unique operation of divine grace within the human personality."[51]

---

[47] Arbuckle, *Culture, Inculturation, and Theologians*, 108.

[48] Law, *Bush Was Blazing*, xi.

[49] Conde-Frazier, Kang, and Parrett, *Many Colored Kingdom*, 17. These authors include the major categories of class, gender, race and ethnicity in their diagram on culture. Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 73. Kwok includes a list closer to that of Eric Law's, though she adds colonialism in her description of what she terms *situated knowledge*.

[50] Law, *Bush Was Blazing*, xi.

[51] Joann Wolski Conn, "Toward Spiritual Maturity," in *Freeing Theology*: *The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*, ed. Catherine Mowry LaCugna (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 237.

Each factor of cultural makeup potentially impacts a particular person in distinct ways in their interactions with others and with God.

This approach to cultural identity as a composite of cultural-makeup factors resonates deeply with the lens of ordinary experience because of its emphasis on the particular person, who is always in relation to many others at varied levels. This constant relationality to others suggests the need for development of an approach that addresses the interactions between persons and groups as the relational fodder for attending to ordinary experience. Whereas Tracy's presentation of the three publics for the theologian, which were discussed in the first chapter, emphasizes the ways in which theological knowing is influenced by place, the three layers of social location currently presented emphasize relationship as a prominent component of place. Together, these theological and cultural perspectives both reveal varied layers of interaction that compose a complex reality. The invitation for both cultural and spiritual formation is to emphasize the "inter" spaces as intentional points within a place from which encounters between persons can be cultivated.

The following section unpacks three common themes that emerge from the lens of intercultural theology, which informs interpersonal dynamics. In particular, the themes of power/privilege, difference/alterity, and hybridity/*mestizaje* point to the need for layers of analysis that speak to the dynamics between a particular person and the interactions in relationships from different relational strata in which each person might be influenced.

Interpersonal Dynamics within the Scope of Culture

Power/Privilege

Power and the relational dynamics associated with power and privilege point to the complexity of lived experience. Arbuckle dedicates a significant section of his work defining and describing power and its relational dynamics.[52] He points to cultural studies as a field that addresses power from the perspective of the margins within cultures.[53] Arbuckle describes different types of power that exist within different relational structures, including positional power, coercive power, reward-based power, personal power, unilateral power, and reciprocal power.[54] Distinct power dynamics result from differing relational structures. Arbuckle points toward annihilation, assimilation, pluralism, and coercive dynamics that negatively result from unhealthy power relationships.[55] He suggests the sharing of power as an alternative and insists that adequate spaces must be created in order for such mutual power dynamics to exist.[56]

From a post-colonial perspective Kwok Pui-lan names a number of modes of dialogical cultural interaction: parody, mimicry, hybridity, syncretism, double inscription, translation, and transculturation.[57] She describes the contact zone as the space in which interactions occur between dominant and subordinate groups who experience

---

[52] Arbuckle, *Culture, Inculturation, and Theologians*, 11.

[53] Ibid., 13.

[54] Ibid., 38.

[55] Ibid., 111.

[56] Ibid., 114.

[57] Kwok, *Postcolonial Imagination*, 41.

asymmetrical power relationships.[58] Theological questions about power are consistently asked by theologians who represent marginalized groups.[59] However, theologians who might be considered part of the dominant group also address the complexity of experience in the contact zones. Fulkerson describes a relational distortion wrought by the perspective of privilege, noting the tendency toward “saming” as “the impulse to define contrast between self and other from one’s own point of privilege.”[60] She warns against the false notion that persons of privilege are adequately situated to represent those who are different than themselves in theological discourse and points instead to a process of mediating difference.[61] For the person of privilege, any representation that occurs is limited to a desire to speak for the well-being of the outsider, but never on behalf of the other. From the perspective of the margins, Isasi-Díaz warns against false notions of solidarity, noting that it is not the equivalent of agreeing with, supporting, liking, or being inspired by others.[62] She insists that authentic solidarity must include union, responsibility, and acts.[63] She notes that a theoretical solidarity will lay out the common interests among different groups, but that the *praxis* of solidarity will address strategies

---

[58] Ibid., 43.

[59] Espín, *Faith of the People*, 96. Espín uses the language of “dominant” and “subaltern” groups and describes the relational dynamics of legitimization in American Catholicism.

[60] Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 382.

[61] Ibid., 384-85.

[62] Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology*, 89.

[63] Ibid.

for effecting change.[64] Her insistence that solidarity involves more than conceptual cognition is similar to Espín's notion of *conviviencia*.[65] Isasi-Díaz addresses this concern in her treatment of difference.[66]

Difference/Alterity

Differences among groups and people must be recognized and dealt with; however, it is not enough to simply acknowledge that the existence of differences is problematic. Difference must be understood in its relational context, which is a perspective that emphasizes interactions, and goes beyond mere acceptance of the reality of differences.[67] Isasi-Díaz warns against tendencies to categorize "others" as being so absolutely different as to arrive at mutual exclusion, in which the gulf of difference prevents the possibility of interaction.[68] Differences point to specificity within relationality.[69] Similarly, Tanner notes that contemporary understandings of differences no longer consider difference as an innate reality of human experience, but rather that differences "in forms of human life . . . reflect nothing more than the distinct histories of bounded groups of people."[70] Pointing to embodiment, Elaine Graham also speaks of

---

[64] Ibid., 93.

[65] Espín, *Grace and Humanness*, 16-17.

[66] Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology*, 118.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid., 80.

[69] Ibid., 81.

[70] Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, 4.

differences as concrete, noting that differences among groups result in real social structures that are based on power distribution.[71]

Graham treats difference through the term *alterity*, which she describes as "one way of regarding human identity, meaning, and community as both singular and interdependent, and as reflecting the necessity and contingency of 'Otherness.' Alterity expresses the paradox at the heart of human experience."[72] Graham notes that transformative theology must exhibit a bias toward alterity, diversity, and inclusivity, and must seek out patterns of knowing and acting that support these biases.[73] Similarly, Chopp describes feminist theology "as an activity that enables the privileging of multiplicity and difference."[74] Multiplicity, however, defies linear, compartmentalized notions of theological reflection, especially those that emphasize clarity and definition. Espín proposes the notion of "inter-comprehension" as an alternative to linear, compartmentalized truth models. As an in-definition, inter-comprehension allows mutual alterity to speak without the need for clear definitions.[75] Comfort with in-definition, as a gentle holding-aside of finality, helps to prevent the mutual exclusion of diverse conversation partners, which both Espín and Isasi-Díaz warn against. Such an approach to sustaining nuanced conversation about difference, as intercultural, addresses the complexity in experience that exists because of diversity. María Cristina Ventura

---

[71] Graham, *Transforming Practice*, 103.

[72] Ibid., 168.

[73] Ibid., 8-9.

[74] Chopp, *Power to Speak,* 12.

[75] Espín, *Grace and Humanness*, 18.

Campusano describes interculturality as "an experience of constantly journeying toward the 'in-between,' a space where no stagnation or accommodation is permitted, but where continuous movement of our thoughts and action, in relationship with other people and cultures, is fomented."[76] In-between places are key locations in which the complexity of experience is revealed through inter-actions. *Nepantla* is the Nahuatl word that means "in the middle,"[77] which is the next theme toward which the attention of this work is directed.

Hybridity/Mestizaje

Hybridity and *mestizaje* are both terms that refer to border spaces as well as border peoples who identify with more than one group. Kwok notes that hybridity in post-colonial discourse deals specifically with colonial authority and the power of representation.[78] Hybridity exposes the myths of cultural purity, discourse by monologue, unitary enunciation, and the collapse of difference by destabilizing binary opposites.[79]

---

[76] Maria Cristina Ventura Campusano, "Between Oppression and Resistance: From the Capture of the Imaginary to the Journey of the Intercultural," in *Feminist Intercultural Theology*: *Latina Explorations for a Just World*, Studies in Latino/a Catholicism, ed. María Pilar Aquino and María José Rosado Nuñez (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 179.

[77] Nancy Elizabeth Bedford, "Making Spaces: Latin American and Latina Feminist Theologies on the Cusp of Interculturality," in *Feminist Intercultural Theology*: *Latina Explorations for a Just World*, Studies in Latino/a Catholicism, ed. María Pilar Aquino and María José Rosado Nuñez (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 54.

[78] Kwok, *Postcolonial Imagination*, 170.

[79] Ibid., 171.

In US Latino/a theology, the Spanish word *mestizaje*, which means mixed or hybrid, is commonly used.[80] A mestizo person is in-between, is both-and,[81] defying oppositional categories. Biological mestizaje is the "generation of a new people from two disparate parent peoples."[82] Cultural mestizaje develops alongside biological mestizaje.[83] Elizondo elaborates on the relational dynamics between a mestizo group and its parent cultures, noting that the mestizo is both an insider and an outsider who does not fit neatly into either parent group.[84] This reality can be both beneficial and detrimental because the mestizo experience allows for a distance from the parent groups, which allows the mestizo to see things that neither parent group can see. At the same time, the mestizo experience is one of constantly navigating between distinct worlds and never quite fully belonging in any one place. Elizondo suggests that the task of mestizaje is to see the good in both cultural traditions and to try to shape a new cultural identity by taking the good from each parent culture and leaving behind the harmful.[85] Mestizaje asserts that in ordinary experience, there are no easy dichotomies. The existence of differences does not imply wrongness, but rather suggests that richness is found not in stagnant oppositions, but in dynamic movements that pave paths of new possibilities.[86]

---

[80] Elizondo, *Galilean Journey*, 5.

[81] Goizueta, *Caminemos con Jesus*, 17.

[82] Elizondo, *Galilean Journey*, 16.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid., 18.

[85] Ibid., 27.

The three cultural themes of power/privilege, difference/alterity, and hybridity/*mestizaje* found in theological conversations describe relational dynamics among and between different groups of people and particular persons. Drawing upon cultural-makeup factors described in the prior section, these themes suggest the tensive dynamics that characterize interactions among diverse peoples with distinct cultural makeups. For example, power can address the makeup factors related to socio-economic class, gender, or race, depending on who is involved in the conversation and who is perceived to or who actually holds power. Even within a group of people who share a common cultural-makeup factor, such as gender in a group of women, the theme of difference recognizes that there are a range of other factors that also impact relational dynamics. This tension is visible in the theological conversations that occur between first-wave and second-wave feminists, who often share the cultural-makeup factor of gender as a unifying factor, but who also sometimes experience race and class as divisive factors of difference, at least until the space is made for conversations about the varied experiences. Finally, the theme of hybridity/*mestizaje* also points to complex differences that are experienced within particular groups or among persons.

Each of the three cultural themes presented in this section confirm the broader claim asserted in this work that ordinary experience is complex, in both the personal and relational realms, and that approaches to meaning-making and relational practices must be multivalent in order to adequately address such complexity. The cultural category of location draws attention to the importance of space and the interconnected points that are located in different places. The interpersonal dynamics brought forth in the cultural

---

[86] Goizueta, *Caminemos con Jesus*, 119.

conversations further suggest the need for intention about space-making and practice in interpersonal interactions that promote authenticity and mutuality. Intercultural theology explicitly addresses these concerns. Attentiveness to intentional space-making that encourages encounter is revealed as a formative aspect of both the cultural and spiritual frameworks.

Intercultural Theology

While the previous review of the complexity of culture—as involving three layers of location and three cultural themes that are broadly named in theological conversations—points to the complexity of relationality in ordinary experience, the nuanced lens of intercultural perspectives further deepens the conversation about the complexity of relationships in ordinary experience and suggests a need for spaces in which interactions can be intentionally attended to. This section aims to continue the broader conversation about the complexity of ordinary experience, and deepen the reflection by drawing attention to the *inter* aspects of relationality within the scope of the personal and relational realms of ordinary experience. The turn toward culture helps to recognize the contextual nature of all theological conversation and reflection. The lens of intercultural theology makes specific contributions toward space-making, in which varied ways of knowing and being can be welcomed and can interact, and also toward the necessity of skilled practices that help to foster healthy interpersonal interactions. This section will broadly introduce intercultural theology by looking at its historical development and aims.

Background

"Inter meaning between or among or across refers to the awareness of and engagement with different expressions of theology as they exist between different cultures."[87] Interculturality is not a new theme, but rather is "a new rationality that expands the ethical-political horizon of theology.[88] Intercultural theology represents a shift from classical models of theology that produce "grand systemeticians" toward "a greater emphasis on the individual responsibilities of Christians and theologians to engage faithfully with their particular contexts."[89]

A feminist slant on intercultural theology describes feminist intercultural theology as "theological activity that aims at weaving together and clarifying the intersections among religion, cultures, feminism, and power within the context of neoliberal globalization."[90] From a pastoral theological perspective, Lartey also frames intercultural theology as an emerging paradigm shift in pastoral theology that is related to globalization.[91] He asserts that the emerging shift goes beyond the parameters of the communal-contextual paradigm and raises cultural factors such as race, gender, class,

---

[87] Werner Ustorf, "The Cultural Origins of 'Intercultural' Theology," in *Intercultural Theology: Approaches and Themes*, ed. Mark J. Cartledge and David Cheetham (London: SCM Press, 2011), 2.

[88] Aquino, "Toward a Shared Future of Justice," 13.

[89] Cheetham, "Intercultual Theology and Interreligous Studies," 60.

[90] Geraldina Cespedes, "Sources and Processes of the Production of Wisdom: An Approach from Intercultural Feminist Criticism," in *Feminist Intercultural Theology*: *Latina Explorations for a Just World*, Studies in Latino/a Catholicism, ed. María Pilar Aquino, Rosado Nuñez, and María José (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 45.

[91] Lartey, *Pastoral Theology*, 122-24. Prior paradigms included the classical-clerical, clinical-pastoral, and communal-contextual.

sexuality, and economics to the level of global justice concerns.[92] "Totalizing structures and systems are critiqued and challenged in recognition of the complexity, plurality, fragmentation, and pluriformity of our postmodern and post-colonial times."[93] The intercultural paradigm places the local in conversation with the global, and necessarily draws a wide range of voices into the theological conversation.

Werner Ustorf places the cultural origins of intercultural theology in Europe during the 1970s.[94] He credits three Europeans who developed intercultural theology from their anti-colonial interests as being the first to publicly address interculturality in theology. Hans Jochen Margull, a Lutheran Missiologist from Hamburg; Walter J. Hollenweger, a Reformed and Pentecostal theologian from Birmingham; and Richard Friedli, a Roman Catholic missiologist-turned-social-scientist from Fribourg, are credited with the work.[95] They were responsible for starting in 1975 the journal *Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity*, in which Ustorf notes the first public use of the term *intercultural* in theology.[96] Ustorf claims that the conversation was mostly European until the mid-1990s when American Robert Schreiter began to publish in intercultural studies as a missiologist. Its use in theology is now widespread.[97]

---

[92] Ibid., 124.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Ustorf, "Cultural Origins," 11.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid., 13-15.

Goals

Walter J. Hollenweger was influential early on for providing methodological frameworks for the emerging conversation. He named five guiding principles for intercultural theology:

> first, that as a scholarly discipline, intercultural theology operates within a particular cultural framework, without absolutizing it; second, that intercultural theology will select its methods appropriately, noting especially that Western academic theology is not privileged over other approaches; third, that intercultural theology has a duty to look for alternative forms of doing theology (such as non-Western and narrative forms); fourth, that intercultural theology must be tested in social practice and measured by its capacity for bridge-building between diverse groups; and last, that intercultural theology must not be confused with 'pop-theology' that escapes from self-critical reflection.[98]

Later, in the mid-80s, he added seven presuppositions:

> first, that all theologies are contextually conditioned; second, that there is nothing wrong with theology being contextually conditioned; third, that others are able to

---

[98] Ibid., 18-19.

> reveal the conditioned, parochial, or ideologically captivity of dominant theologies; fourth, that even if theologians could once ignore such voices, they are no longer able to do so; fifth, that the point of contact between dominant traditions and the new theologies of the Third World is scripture; sixth, that only in creative tension with the widest possible perspective can theologies develop which are appropriate to their particular situations; and lastly, that since within the church the ultimate loyalty is not to nation, class, or culture, the universal church is uniquely suited to provide the context in which the task of creative theologizing can take place.[99]

Lartey more briefly summarizes an intercultural approach as that which first acknowledges contextuality; second, seeks multiple perspectives; and last, encourages authentic participation.[100] Hollenweger's work demonstrates how the cultural categories named in the previous section can be attended to in theological conversations. His principles and presuppositions explicitly address the interpersonal dynamics that occur among persons with diverse theologies. Similarly, Lartey's third point named above nicely summarizes the intercultural emphasis on interactions.

---

[99] Mark J. Cartledge, "Pentecostal Theological Method and Intercultural Theology," in *Intercultural Theology: Approaches and Themes*, ed. Mark J. Cartledge and David Cheetham (London: SCM, 2011).

[100] Lartey, *Pastoral Theology*, 11.

Latino/a theologians tend to draw from the work of intercultural philosopher Raul Fornet-Betancourt as a source for naming the foundations of an approach to intercultural theology.[101] Four of his epistemological presuppositions include the following:

> First, the need to eradicate the conceptual hegemony of any culture that seeks to oblige all that is strange to conform to its norms. Second, that relativization of knowledge breaks down the exclusive domain of rationality and enters into the existential dimension of the other. In order for mutual exchange to occur, the conversation cannot be limited to the conceptual level, but must open itself up to understanding the other in his/her life and his/her corporality. Third, that attempts must be made to practice a respective understanding that minimizes the habits of subsumption and reduction that ethnocentrism tends to create in the exercise of intelligence; finally, that there must be a cultivation of the terrain of the 'inter' where every hasty definition is an error, just as every precipitous declaration of harmony may be an underhanded expression of domination.[102]

---

[101] Espín, *Grace and Humanness*, 15; Aquino, "Toward a Shared Future of Justice," 15.

[102] Olga Consuelo Velez Caro, "Toward a Feminist Intercultural Theology," in *Feminist Intercultural Theology*: *Latina Explorations for a Just World*, Studies in

Olga Consuelo Verez Caro offers her articulation of what intercultural dialogue involves:

> first, it means entering into unexplored territory and being open to the new; second, it means overcoming judgmental schemas; third, it assumes human finiteness; fourth, it renounces reductionist hermeneutic postures and does not claim any one single conceptual model; and finally, it asserts that no one culture dominates, but rather that all are interconnected.[103]

Aquino summarizes interculturality into a number of areas, including its existential take,[104] its impact as a force for social change,[105] its credibility as a framework for thought and action,[106] and its place as a disciplinary model.[107] The language that she uses to define each of these contributions repeats similar themes that are common to the many contributors in the intercultural conversation, including an emphasis on mutual

---

Latino/a Catholicism, ed. María Pilar Aquino and María José Rosado Nuñez (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 251-52.

[103] Ibid., 253.

[104] Aquino, "Toward a Shared Future of Justice," 15. "As an experience that emerges from daily life because that is where human interaction occurs and that is what people use to explain their existence."

[105] Ibid. As "a movement composed of practitioners who are present at different levels of existing social institutions that seeks to strengthen the relations among different cultures so that they can develop jointly as equal subjects."

[106] Ibid., 16. "An alternative political-cultural project that aims at transforming the relations of domination and subordination that are rooted in today's cultures and societies."

[107] Ibid. "A methodology that allows us to study, describe, and analyze dynamics of interaction among different cultures . . . theory and method of interpreting and understanding across cultural boundaries . . . an interaction of diverse methods."

interaction and a broadening of conceptual reflection to include holistic modalities of knowing that are better suited for addressing life as it is actually lived.

A consistent point of agreement about an intercultural approach to theology centers on how theology is done. Intercultural theology is a methodological rather than an ideological commitment.[108] A key insight into this methodology is an emphasis on interactions. "Intercultural theology is necessarily attentive to different expressions of Christianity as culturally mediated, and seeks to facilitate interactions between them."[109] Kwok describes an intercultural approach as a place of interaction and juxtaposition. There is tension and resistance when two or more cultures are brought together.[110] Orlando Espín draws upon the Spanish word convivir, which means "to live-with," as he claims that conviviencia is a necessary precondition for interculturality. It "implies that those who conviven are actually present with and to one another for a sufficiently prolonged period of time, and further, that their presence with and to one another engages them with and in one another's daily lives in ways that each considers sufficiently meaningful and sufficiently mutually respectful."[111] Consequently, "intercultural dialogue requires the creation of conditions and spaces wherein all cultures may speak

---

[108] Mark J. Cartledge and David Cheetham, eds., *Intercultural Theology: Approaches and Themes* (London: SCM, 2011), 3.

[109] Ibid., 2.

[110] Kwok, *Postcolonial Imagination*, 21.

[111] Espín, *Grace and Humanness*, 16-17.

with their own voice."[112] Aquino names four conditions for such theological dialogue in intercultural terms:

> first, that hermeneutical questions must be historicized and dominant models of knowledge must be critiqued so that conditions are created which allow all voices to enter equally into the conversation; second, that theologians must revitalize their own thinking and be open to emancipatory models of knowledge developed by subordinate cultures; third, that theologians must renounce dogmatic attitudes and unilateral positions; and last, it must be recognized that cultures up to the present have produced values and ways of life that perpetrate a politics of inequalities.[113]

It follows that in order to support mutual interactions, there is a need for safe spaces in which dialogue can take place in such a way that all who are involved are able to fully participate. It is even more pressing to name the qualities of such environments, such as Aquino offers.

Another aspect of space-making that is often overlooked in academic conversations, but which is emphasized by the intercultural perspective, is the development of interpersonal skills that are necessary to actually engage in dialogue that fully promotes the dignity and well-being of not only those directly involved in the conversation, but those who are referred to within the conversation.

---

[112] Caro, "Toward a Feminist," 252.

[113] Aquino, "Toward a Shared Future of Justice," 16-18.

A few theologians explicitly name skillsets for actualizing such conditions. Graham suggests empathy, solidarity, openness, and the fostering of encounters.[114] Lartey points toward learning to live in the tensions of life and to live with difference and ambiguity.[115] Whitehead and Whitehead name six traits as part of the skillset of "assertion," including self-awareness, self-disclosure, clarity, self-worth, ability to tolerate ambiguity, and ability to manage conflict.[116] Goizueta suggests mutual understanding and mutual empathy.[117] Often, when these skillsets are named, there is an unfortunate disconnect as to how the development of such skills should be addressed. One source that does consistently emphasize the development of interpersonal skills can be found in intercultural ministries, which is further explored in the following section.

Intercultural Ministry

Local churches often experience the same challenges related to intercultural skill development as have been articulated in the academic community. Because of this shared concern and the interpersonal skill development gap that situates the concern, this chapter turns toward the practical response that many churches have chosen as a result of this skill conundrum—intercultural leadership training. Training for skill development in

---

[114] Graham, *Transforming Practice*, 10.

[115] Lartey, *Pastoral Theology*, 126.

[116] James D. Whitehead and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*: *Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry*, rev. ed. (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1995), 80. Whitehead and Whitehead also address skillful behavior as a nexus between psychological strength and Christian virtue, noting that immaturity is often marked by a lack of skills for interaction (43-44).

[117] Goizueta, *Caminemos con Jesus*, 153.

intercultural ministry often occurs through workshops and exercises that are designed and grounded in solid theoretical models. Such is the case of Eric Law, who is a well-known consultant and trainer in intercultural ministry.[118] Law has committed to intercultural ministry training through workshops that promote skill development to equip leaders "for competent leadership in a diverse, changing world."[119] This section reviews Law's linear, compartmentalized approach in light of the challenges and contributions that shape the concerns of space-making and skill development in formative models.

As part of the trainings, Law prepares participants through a variety of activities that address both the varied modes of holistic knowing that have been established as part of ordinary experience as well as the concentric relationships that compose relationality in ordinary experience. Law's training curriculum includes activities such as conceptual presentation of relevant theoretical models, personal reflection about one's own relationships, analytical reflection about one's community and culture, the establishment of shared guidelines about interactions among participants, and shared ritual and meals. In these trainings, participants are together for extended periods of time, and sometimes

---

[118] Law has published numerous books related to intercultural ministry: Eric H. F. Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*: *A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1993); *Bush Was Blazing*; *Inclusion*: *Making Room for Grace* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000); *Sacred Acts, Holy Change*: *Faithful Diversity and Practical Transformation* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2002); *The Word at the Crossings*: *Living the Good News in a Multicontextual Community* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004); *Finding Intimacy in a World of Fear* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2007); *Holy Currencies*: *Six Blessings for Sustainable Missional Ministries* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2013).

[119] This text is part of the mission statement for Kaleidoscope Institute, which is a nonprofit organization founded and directed by Eric Law. More information can be found at http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/.

even for ongoing gatherings over a course of time. In this section, Law is described and brought forth as an example of a practitioner who attends at the interpersonal level.

Eric Law's Approach to Intercultural Ministry

The Kaleidoscope Institute was founded and is directed by Eric Law:

> The Kaleidoscope Institute is Eric's effort to put this system of theories, models, theology, and skill sets all in one place, so that individuals and groups that want to gain a deeper understanding and practice of this ministry resource may come and learn and share their experiences.[120]

Law works primarily with people from religious institutions who are committed to developing intercultural ministries in their congregations and dioceses. The Institutes that he has developed usually range from three to five days and have evolved into a series of trainings called Gracious Leadership Courses: One, Two, and Three.[121]

The intercultural ministry training done through Kaleidoscope is a helpful example of intercultural theological concerns within a lens of ordinary experience. For example, the Kaliedoscope Institute model addresses layers of holistic knowing through the use of a systems approach that integrates theoretical, metaphorical, experiential, and interpersonal practices. The Kaleidoscope model also emphasizes interpersonal practices that situate particular persons within their intercultural contexts, and equips practitioners with skills that are based in conceptual frameworks, but that also point to the complexity of relational realities. The emphasis on interpersonal skill development in intercultural

---

[120] Kaleidoscope Institute, Background Information, Eric Law, http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/background.html, January, 2008.

[121] Lucky Lynch, personal communication, February 7, 2014.

approaches is a helpful model from which to draw for the development of a practical theological spiritual formation model and method.

For example, related to the notion of deepening ordinary experience in the larger context of this work, Law's training modules explicitly address personal knowing as holistic. Throughout the three courses, participants engage in a number of activities, including presentation of written materials, personal reflection, and small-group exercises. The small-group exercises, in particular, are designed to engage theoretical analysis of concepts in light of personal experience related to those concepts, and then are further analyzed through the lens of concentric relationships. For example, after participants are exposed to the concept of cultural makeup, they are invited to consider through personal reflection which three of the various cultural-makeup factors were most prevalent at any given point in their lives. After a short period of reflection, participants are then encouraged to share their three factors with others in a group-milling-about-the-room activity. After people have shared with others, the large group is gathered again for facilitated reflection. During this reflection, the facilitator draws out insights about how groups may be perceived as similar, different, and/or both, depending upon which sets of cultural-makeup factors are present. Such reflective exercises encourage participants not only to understand their cultural identities as broader than the categories of race and ethnicity, but also to see the ways in which the many interstices of cultural makeup impact one another in ongoing and dynamic ways. Such practices are designed to equip people with higher levels of intercultural competency with an emphasis both on

deepening one's own personal intercultural awareness and experience, and also recognizing the impact that relational location makes on one's interactions with others.[122]

Also related to the broader scope of this present work addressing ordinary experience is Law's attentiveness to the impact of the passing of time and the potentially deepening affect that it has on particular persons and social groups. Crucial to this understanding is Law's assumption that intercultural competency is developmental in nature (i.e., it takes time). This next section will look more closely at this assumption as it relates to the theoretical developmental work of Milton Bennett, with an emphasis on how Law uses the theoretical foundations and further deepens knowledge through an emphasis on skill development.

Interpersonal Practices

Early in his ministry, Law began to draw upon the theoretical foundations of Milton Bennett's work in intercultural development theory. Milton Bennett created a developmental model for intercultural sensitivity.[123] The model is based on the

---

[122] Another powerful intercultural learning experience facilitated by Law and Kaleidoscope Associates is known as *Cycle of Gospel Living.* In this learning module, participants are invited to read a number of Gospel passages in search of the answer to two questions, *What does Jesus invite those with power to do? What does Jesus invite those without power to do?* Prior to reading these selections, participants will have learned about a sociocultural tool called *Power Distance*, which is based on the following work: Geert H. Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences*: *Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001). Having learned about how power is perceived and used across cultures, participants are invited to engage another tool, *Power Analysis*, in order to assess who is perceived to have more in a given situation. They first apply this knowledge to the scriptural reflection activity, and afterwards are further invited to inventory their own situatedness related to perceptions of power based on their own cultural-makeup factors and within a framework of personal, communal, and institutional settings.

organizational category of difference.[124] In the model, "each stage represents a way of experiencing difference," and the entire model is a continuum, which distinguishes between either ethnocentrism or ethnorelativism, which, as noted earlier, describes the tendency to regard one's own culture as superior (centric) or a tendency toward comfort with differences across cultures (relativistic).[125] The first three stages reflect ethnocentric perspectives and the last three stages represent ethnorelative perspectives.[126] In order, from ethnocentric toward ethnorelative, the stages are, Denial, Defense, Minimization, Acceptance, Adaptation, and Integration.[127]

Bennett describes each stage and offers practical strategies for recognizing and responding to each stage with the goal of helping to prompt people and groups toward the next stage beyond the one that they are in. Since the inception of this work, Bennett has continued to offer training to groups and individuals with the intention of training leaders to recognize the stages in both groups and individual persons so that they can offer strategies for creating environments that are more culturally sensitive. The Intercultural Development Inventory is the basic tool for this training.[128] In recent years, Eric Law has

---

[123] Milton J. Bennett, "Towards Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity," in *Cross-Cultural Orientation*: *New Conceptualizations and Applications*, ed. R. Michael Paige and Council on International Educational Exchange. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986); "A Developmental Approach to Training for Intercultural Sensitivity," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 10 (1986): 179-96.

[124] Bennett, "A Developmental Approach," 181.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Bennett, "Towards Ethnorelativism," 32.

[127] Ibid.

worked with Bennett and others to train associates within the Kaleidoscope Institute in using this tool in service to the ministerial leaders and community members who are interested in intercultural ministry. Even prior to that, however, Law has drawn from Bennett's theory in trainings for intercultural ministry for many years.

Law also uses Bennett's model directly as a tool during his intercultural ministry trainings. After learning about the model through a presentation, participants are prompted to consider both their own personal location in the development model as well as the location of the majority of members from their home communities. With this in mind, participants then review written materials that contain lists of different practices that might facilitate growth at different stages. After reviewing a general list of practices, participants are invited as leaders to consider what types of activities might be appropriate within the specifically religious environments to which they belong, and in consideration of where the majority of members of their communities might be located on Bennett's continuum. Following is a brief introduction to each of Bennett's stages, including some of his suggestions. Also included in this review are the types of suggestions that training participants might offer for intercultural practices that would be appropriate for their own communities.[129]

First, in Denial, Bennett notes that people do not even perceive differences. If they do make reference to difference, they will employ broad categories to do so.

---

[128] Mitchell R. Hammer, Milton J. Bennett, and Intercultural Communication Institute, *The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Manual* (Portland: Intercultural Communication Institute, 1998).

[129] Lucky Lynch, personal communication, February 7, 2014. Lynch serves as the Executive Manager of Operations for Kaleidoscope Institute. She has worked as an Associate doing trainings since nearly its inception. She offers suggestions about the types of responses that come up in the trainings for each of the following stages.

Bennett notes that this stance represents an actual lack of knowledge and describes the reality of people who have actually been isolated from cultural diversity. Bennett suggests hosting "cultural awareness" events as a strategy for facilitating the recognition of difference.[130] This stage is where the majority of local church communities tend to be located in the continuum, at least in regard to the types of events that they offer to their members. Training participants generally refer to church bazaars which include food, music, and dance as an intercultural activity that might help their members to come to recognize differences among cultures.

Second, in Defense, Bennett describes two possible stances. One response is that of denigration of, or hostility toward, others who are different. The second response is that of superiority, or establishing a sense that one's own culture serves as the standard by which all other cultures are measured. Bennett suggests that at this stage, the necessary strategy is to develop cultural self-esteem and to emphasize the possibility of a common good.[131] Here, training participants tend to emphasize the role of intra-group activities, in which persons from shared backgrounds are able to gather together for conversations about culture in small groups. In the case of persons from dominant cultural backgrounds, these conversations tend to focus on educating majority members that in fact they do have a cultural background. In the case of persons from minority cultural backgrounds, these conversations tend to focus on solidarity through sharing stories about how being a member of a minority group may have impacted each person.

---

[130] Bennett, "A Developmental Approach," 187.

[131] Ibid., 188-89.

Third, in Minimization, there are also two tendencies, which are to universalize differences, either in the physical realm or in the moral realm. In this stage, acceptance of differences is superficial or insignificant. A person might accept differences related to different ways of eating, dressing, and behaving, but may not recognize that those differences deeply impact interactions. There is a tendency in this stage to emphasize sameness-in-difference. Bennett notes that when a person moves beyond this stage, which is the last of the ethnocentric stages, a major paradigm shift takes place. A person becomes capable of letting go of absolutes and able to acknowledge relativity. Bennett suggests that strategies at this point must be undertaken with caution because of the risk in pushing a person too quickly from this paradigmatic stage, which might cause them to return to an earlier stage. He suggests interactions in small groups, reports of personal experience, and illustrations of substantial cultural differences as strategies for moving beyond this stage.[132] Training participants tend to cite short mission trips as helpful intercultural activities for persons and communities in this stage. Often, a person is open enough to difference at this stage to recognize the reality of poverty and is easily animated by the possibility of being able to serve others who are less fortunate.

In the fourth stage, Acceptance, Bennett notes that a person has made the shift toward an ethno-relative stance. At this stage, persons tend to be eager to learn about differences and are able to tolerate ambiguity. Strategies for growth from this stage include teaching persons how to recognize variations in verbal and physical behavior without a non-evaluative perspective. Bennett suggests that if one dwells too long in this stage, it is more likely that digression will occur, and consequently he encourages a quick

---

[132] Ibid., 190.

movement toward the next stage.[133] Training participants reflecting on this stage cite small-group conversations post mission trip as important for this stage. Often, a person who has been willing to serve others recognizes that in fact he or she was enriched by those whom he or she intended to serve. Continued small-group conversation and promotion of participants to leadership roles for the next group are helpful ways to support persons in this stage of intercultural development.

In the fifth stage, Adaptation, a person develops the ability to intentionally shift his or her frame of reference when looking out at others. This skill is recognized as empathy. Bennett notes that people in this stage are able to form relevant inquisitive questions into assessing the behavior and communications of others, and tend to also be eager to actually try out their new learnings through interaction. Bennett suggests deeper exposure to others at this point, through activities such as small groups, interviews, and even real-life situations such as home-stays with people from other cultures.[134] Training participants tend to suggest local mission experiences for persons in this group, which more easily develop into an ongoing exposure than short-term mission trips. In some cases, church communities eventually determine to intentionally invite another sub-culture groups into their communities, which requires the skill development at this stage if such endeavors are to occur healthily. Outside of the church setting, it seems that proponents for the development of space-making activities as part of theological

---

[133] Ibid., 191.

[134] Ibid., 192-93.

conversation, such as Aquino, are inviting theologians to engage one another at this stage of development.[135]

In the last stage, Integration, Bennett describes a group of people for whom cross-cultural interactions are so prevalent that they actually lack a sense of having one identity. People in this stage perceive their sense of self as a dynamic process in constant motion. Bennett suggests that persons in this stage often struggle to develop an ethic or a value system that will ground their actions and choices. He suggests that people in this stage are highly suited for cultural mediations. Often, persons in this group grew up in families where their parents came from two different cultures, or they have lived for significant periods of time in different countries during their formative years.[136] Training participants tend to cite the young people in their communities as examples of persons who live in the daily reality of this category. They suggest drawing upon these young people for leadership both to provide resources for the community and also to support the young leaders in their own personal journeys.

This in-depth review of Law's work in conversation with Bennett's work illustrates a complex set of related issues regarding holistic knowing, time passage, and engaging interpersonal practices. For example, one of the advantages of Law's work is that it is based within a system of different theoretical and conceptual models, ranging from academic studies in culture to theological reflections on scripture. Participants are introduced to conceptual frameworks, but are always also invited to deepen their

---

[135] Aquino, "Toward a Shared Future of Justice," 16-18.

[136] Ibid., 193-94.

knowledge through further personal reflection, small-group discussion, and large-group analysis and reflection. As noted in the text drawn from the Kaleidoscope Institute website, one challenge for this layered work with an emphasis on skill development is precisely the passing of time. Law recognizes the developmental and interpersonal nature of intercultural sensitivity. Part of such recognition is that not all persons are located at the same point on the spectrum or move at the same pace in their skill development. On the personal level, another reality is that the development of skills and relationships take time, and nonprofit organizations such as the local churches that Law and Kaleidoscope Associates work with, are often unable to afford ongoing payments to a specialist who can come into the local community for a sufficient period of time. Currently, the Kaliedoscope Institute is working to address this concern by developing a portable curriculum that can be facilitated by local persons who are committed to this type of work and who can share it with others within the setting of their local communities.[137]

This skill conundrum is a broader concern that is seen in fields such as practical theology and spirituality. As transformative disciplines—each committed to the conversation about how conceptual knowledge and practical knowledge work together toward the reign of God—both of these disciplines potentially benefit from conversation with Law's work, which emphasizes both the importance of and attentiveness to a layer of interpersonal practices situated in between what is the personally conceptual and communally transformational. Attentiveness to and development within such multilayered formational frameworks necessarily requires time, not only for holistic and

[137] Lucky Lynch, personal communication, February 7, 2014.

conceptual knowledge systems to be presented, and not only for broader social analysis and reflection to occur, but also for relational knowing to develop within the context of interactions between persons. Law's work suggests that the time and cost factors for bringing groups together are challenges to such space-making activities. A similar challenge marked the investigation of the Five Ordinary Movements in the context of the retreat setting, which is addressed in a later chapter.

A shift in the next chapter toward specific voices within distinct theological camps deepens the contextual emphasis of this current chapter and builds upon the call for attentiveness to specific themes based on the particular personal and relational interstices that shape specific groups and their theological reflections. Diverse emphases and experiences are gathered from among the different voices. At the same time, a common commitment toward the transformative nature of theological reflection on experience also emerges from these voices.

Chapter Four: Contemporary Theological Treatments of Ordinary Experience

This current chapter seeks to discover how a number of theological voices address the complexity of ordinary experience in their work, with an aim toward drawing out disparate voices and weaving together a number of perspectives and themes from each of four theological camps: Practical Theology, Spirituality, Feminist Theologies, and US Hispanic Theologies.[1] Recognizable patterns emerge as areas of emphasis within each camp. For example, in practical theology, the complexity of ordinary experience is often addressed in different ways through an emphasis on the relationship between practice and theory. This emphasis encourages the conversation to move from either-or tendencies to consideration of alternative and dynamic possibilities. In spirituality, a tendency emerges to classify by threes, including classification of layers of experience, steps in method, and general approaches to the subject matter. Here again, by drawing into their analytical structures a third component, authors in spirituality are also able to avoid the limiting constraints of dualistic frameworks.

In the voices represented here by feminist theology, the tendency to intentionally emphasize women's experience suggests that the expression of a deep particularity may

---

[1] The author recognizes that this collective approach is distinct from a linear approach, which might emphasize more the definition and categorization of the foundational approaches of each voice, including their philosophical assumptions and methodological approaches. This does not indicate a lack of awareness about these foundational differences. The author further recognizes that voices with quite diverse and even contradictory starting points end up in conversation with one another here. While this collective approach is less conducive to linear organization, it is more in line with the goals of this work, which is to begin to make spaces for intentional conversations and interactions that might not otherwise occur without intention. The author opts for the collective approach in light of the benefit that is gained in lifting up the theme of ordinary experience, which is not explicitly addressed as a distinct category in theological works, but is implicitly included in many authors' works and is presented here within an organizational structure of camps.

speak broadly for common interests in diverse settings. The particular interests strongly represented within feminist theologies accentuate the need for attentiveness to the injustices in the world so that the structures that support them might be shifted and the realities of those who live them might be freed. Within this camp is a strong emphasis on relationality.

Finally, the voices represented under the banner of Latino/a theologies also tend to explicitly emphasize the role of relationality. Furthermore, perhaps more directly than any representation from the other camps, attention to the ordinary, or *lo cotidiano*, suggests a call for the development of approaches to practical theological spiritual formation that are attentive to life as it is lived by the people.

In terms of the broader scope of this work, the goal of collecting these voices in this chapter is to draw attention to the transformative nature of approaches to practical theological spiritual formation that emphasize ordinary experience.

Voices in Practical Theology

A significant school within practical theology is that of practical theological empiricism. This perspective is concerned with the concreteness and immediacy of experience. A key thinker who represents empiricism in practical theology is Johannes van der Ven. He develops a five-phase method of theological empiricism that parallels the scientific method.[2] Van der Ven recognizes the "hermeneutic-communicative" foundation of practical theology.[3] However, he argues that theological empiricism is also

[2] van der Ven, *Practical Theology*, 157.

[3] Ibid., 41.

essential to practical theological method: "The empirical approach is concerned with describing and explaining hermeneutic-communicative *praxis* as it occurs in reality."[4] Indeed, "the empirical-analytical method may be viewed as a linear, compartmentalized development of the experiential processes which every person is undergoing at every waking moment (and perhaps even while asleep) and which are implicit in the interactions of the human being['s] environment."[5]

The empirical perspective focuses on experience as is, and helps to avoid the abstractions and disconnections that are possible with strictly theoretical or philosophical methods. As a model that emphasizes human experience as an appropriate locus for theological reflection, the voices within empirical practical theology have much to offer. However, empirical practical theology also has limitations for addressing experience. Empirical methods tend to emphasize the role of the professional theologian because of the amount of training and commitment that the professional theologian must contribute toward the study of specific phenomena at the concrete level. Good empirical work requires large amounts of time and energy spent on specific phenomena. Empirical case-study investigation certainly informs professional and academic theological reflection, but it is inadequate as a feasible model that might strengthen the relationship between the ordinary and professional theologian because of the inherent tendency to overemphasize specialized knowledge of concrete experience over the layered meaning-making processes that occur in the course of ordinary lived experience.

---

[4] Ibid., 77.

[5] Ibid., 112.

Gerben Heitink expands upon and includes the empirical model in his integration of a hermeneutic, empirical, and regulative moment within practical theological methodology.[6] According to Heitink, these "three circles correspond to the distinctive goals of the discipline: the interpretation of human action in the light of the Christian traditions (the hermeneutical perspective), the analysis of human action with regard to its factuality and potentiality (the empirical perspective) and the development of action models and action strategies for the various domains of action (the strategic perspective)."[7] Heitink offers an example of this method by demonstrating the way in which the problem of prayer in culture can be addressed through a process involving people who find it difficult to pray and practical theologians and case-study investigators who study the problem and then offer their discovered knowledge back in service to leaders of congregations, who then provide religious education or liturgy based on the received knowledge for the people who first found it difficult to pray. Heitink's model illustrates the many strata of relationships that must be considered in order to address problems within human experience. Unfortunately, however, the model reinforces a division of labor that depends upon specialized voices to address problems within the realm of everyday experience. Another approach within practical theology that helps to correct overemphasis on specialized knowledge is theological reflection.

Theological reflection models tend to be based in ministry settings and reveal a concern on the part of ministers for engaging everyday experience in conversation with the shared tradition of a faith community. Thomas Groome's well-known work offers a

---

[6] Heitink, *Practical Theology*, 165.

[7] Ibid.

model of "Shared *Praxis*."[8] Groome describes a small-group process which consists of six moments or movements.[9] Groome's model is supported by a heavily philosophical and hermeneutic foundation, and is also grounded in a liberating critical-social perspective. For example, Groome has coined the phrase "epistemic ontology" to suggest a central conviction that human knowing and human being should be united.[10] This concept supports both the holistic knowing and the relational emphases in ordinary experience.[11] Groome further qualifies his method by pointing out that it also incorporates serious dialogue between the gospel and culture, which reflects the earlier mentioned concern about the relationship between the Sacred and culture in ordinary experience.[12]

Groome clearly identifies a number of the advantages of his model, including an emphasis on an understanding of *praxis* that clearly links cultural and Sacred experiences in the context of daily life, and which also relates that daily life *praxis* to the transformative and normative *praxis* of divine activity, as accessed through understanding of the Christian tradition. Similar to Heitink's, Groome's model reveals

---

[8] Thomas H. Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry*: *The Way of Shared Praxis* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991).

[9] Ibid., 146-48. A Focusing Activity:, Movement 1, Naming/Expressing "Present Praxis"; Movement 2, Critical Reflection on Present Action; Movement 3, Making Accessible Christian Story and Vision; Movement 4, Dialectical Hermeneutic to Appropriate Christian Story/Vision to Participants' Stories and Visions; Movement 5, Decision/Response for Lived Christian Faith.

[10] Ibid., 8.

[11] Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 135. Groome describes the layered relational dynamics of his shared praxis model.

[12] Ibid., 148.

the interplay of different sources that inform practical theological spiritual formation—from the personal to the cultural. This model relies on the role of trained "educators" for facilitation of the small-group process, as is evidenced by the instructional notes in appendix to part II, which offer an overview of the process designed especially for the needs of the educator.[13] Groome's model is much more accessible than the highly specialized activities that are necessary for other models, such as the empirical or divisions models. One potential danger of Groome's model is a dynamic in which a skilled educator presides over the content part of the process while other less-skilled theologians are invited to share their experience and understanding but are nonetheless still dependent upon a professional educator to mediate content. Assuming that power dynamics are explicitly attended to, Groome's model potentially serves as a helpful model for exemplifying the practice of intentional space-making in which professional and non-professional theologians engage with and benefit from interaction with one another.

Evelyn Eaton Whitehead and James D. Whitehead provide another perspective within theological reflection through their model and method of Christian ministry.[14] Whitehead and Whitehead assert that Christian tradition, personal experience, and cultural resources are three sources of information required for contemporary times.[15] This model construes experience and culture as multidimensional both over time and also at any given time. They suggest three steps for a process of theological reflection,: first,

---

[13] Ibid., 283-93.

[14] Whitehead and Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*.

[15] Ibid., ix.

attending; second, assertion; and third, pastoral response.[16] One of the primary attributes of this model is that it emphasizes relational skill development within the scope of everyday living.[17] In defining their audience, Whitehead and Whitehead also elaborate on distinctions between professional academic theologians and ministers. They draw upon scope, length of reflection, and conversation partners as three categories to help name the differences between academic and ministerial realities.[18] They further propose that Christians today need a method that is portable, performable, and communal.[19] Two potential pitfalls of the Whitehead model include first that it is addressed to ministers and not necessarily to people in the midst of daily life. Similar to the earlier critique of Groome's work, this potential downfall can be avoided through attentiveness to the power dynamics that exist between paid ministers and non-paid seekers. A second potential downfall is that their presentation of the three sources of interpretation (tradition, experience, culture) can lead to a compartmentalized view of the relationship between the three. The interrelatedness and overlap of these three dimensions addressed in their model should be explicitly named in any presentation or when working from their model in order to avoid the misrepresentation of compartmentalization.

Don Browning's work, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, is foundational in the development of contemporary understanding of practical theology, especially as an

---

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid., 69.

[18] Ibid., xii.

[19] Ibid., 3.

expression of the development of the "theory-laden nature of practice."[20] Throughout his work, Browning grapples with experience as a theological source by insisting on the practice-theory-practice model as preferable to the theory-to-practice model, using the former to critique other models.[21] In regard to experience, Browning's model admirably asserts that theology cannot be a strictly theoretical matter; it must include practices, which are part of everyday life. However, Browning struggles with the order-and-origin conundrum between practice and theory, which is potentially remedied by an understanding of theological reflection within the course of ordinary experience as a process of ongoing deepening, as opposed to one that occurs in separate stages.

Browning also divides practical theology into "four sub-movements of descriptive theology[;] historical theology[;] linear, compartmentalized theology[;] and strategic practical theology," part of a claim that emphasizes that all theology, as fundamental, is practical.[22] Browning asserts that to rearrange the classic divisions of theology as such helps to emphasize the practice-theory-practice structure of all theology.[23] Consequently, the "gulf" between academic theology and practical activity associated with pastoral ministries is eliminated.[24] According to Browning, the activities of theology, whether academic or pastoral, consist of describing, historicizing, systematizing, and strategizing.

---

[20] Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, 7.

[21] Ibid., 66. Browning critiques Juan Segundo, Joseph Hough, John Cobb, Charles Wood, and Johann Metz, each for eventually falling into the theory-to-practice model.

[22] Ibid., 9.

[23] Ibid., 66.

[24] Ibid.

Pete Ward critiques Browning's method for its limiting modern scope that tends to set up the relationship between general human experience and theology as opposites.[25] As the crown of theology, strategic practical theology includes the traditional clerical paradigm activities once associated with practical theology, such as "liturgics, homiletics, education, care, and social action ministries."[26] Browning helpfully points out that "the structure of theology and the structure of these concrete practices are the same, which he cites as evident in his four movements.[27] However, he fails to relate the structures of activity to the daily life experience of people that occurs outside of the church.[28] Browning does express concern for the reality outside of the church, but his model limits interactions with secular society to the professional activities of the church or academy.[29]

The "divisions" model ultimately remains elitist in scope because of the emphasis on either the activities of academic theology or the emphasis on the religious activities of churches, primarily through lay and clerical leaders. Furthermore, Browning's language when referring to interaction between the movements betrays their actual compartmental nature.[30] The "divisions" model, even when considered as a revision of the remnants of

---

[25] Pete Ward, *Participation and Mediation: A Practical Theology for the Liquid Church* (London: SCM, 2008), 47.

[26] Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, 57.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ward, *Participation and Mediation*, 42. Ward draws upon Nicholas Healy's observation that some theologians such as David Tracy assume that "Church and secular culture can be described independently and then discussed in relation to each other," which Healy argues is impossible because the Church and its context are interconnected.

[29] Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, 57.

the encyclopedic divisions, inadequately treats ordinary experience not only because of its tendency to compartmentalize theological activity as opposite of the activity in daily life experience, but also because of its tendency to overemphasize the activity of specialized theologians who might concentrate at length on any one movement or task. Since Browning's foundational work in practical theology was accomplished, other practical theologians have addressed many of the critiques of his initial work.

Richard Osmer, for example, offers another perspective as a practical theologian who divides practical theological methodology into four tasks rather than four divisions. Osmer correlates the Descriptive-Empirical task to Priestly Listening, the Interpretive Task to Sagely Wisdom, the Normative Task to Prophetic Discernment, and the Pragmatic Task to Servant Leadership.[31] Distinct from Browning's approach, Osmer uses particular examples from daily life to illustrate the dynamism of the four tasks for interpreting situations. [32] He also draws upon the image of a web of life to point to a number of layers within ordinary experience precisely as relational: first, the interconnectedness of individuals in communities; second, the interconnections of various forms of ministry; and third, the location of congregations within natural and social

---

[30] Browning uses language, such as "placed once again within" (ibid., 97) or "come back into contact with" (55) or "first begun . . . now resumed" (55), to refer to the cumulative nature of the divisions process, which builds up toward the strategic practical moment. Such language indicates not only the separation of the activity of the movements, but also the probability of different practitioners completing each specialized area of activity.

[31] Richard Robert Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2008), vii.

[32] Ibid., 2-3. Osmer offers one example as he shares his experience as a new pastor in a community in which a new swing set bought by parents in the community was removed by the church treasurer secretly in the night.

systems beyond the church.[33] In developing the four tasks, Osmer weaves specific relevant theories related to daily life issues, introductory summaries of methods and methodology for practical theologians, biblical references to key themes, and concepts that are relevant for a spirituality of ministry and leadership. While Osmer's model makes considerable advances toward decompartmentalizing the traditional divisions, his four tasks serve primarily as a formative tool either for teaching academic practical theology or for preparing ministers for the activity they will encounter as professionals. The advantage of Osmer's work is his attentiveness to events that occur in daily life as the sources for theological reflection.

Edward Farley also inquires into the nature of practical theology related to ordinary experience through the lens of "interpreting situations."[34] He appeals to educating both laity and clergy as interpreters of situations.[35] Such an appeal recognizes the specialized activity of pastoral leadership, but keeps such specialized activity in relationship to other activity, which corrects "parochial and isolated approaches to these activities."[36] Farley names seven theses which support such an approach to practical theology.[37] However, he does not provide a particular model for enacting his proposed theses within the course of everyday living.

---

[33] Ibid., 17.

[34] Edward Farley, "Interpreting Situations: An Inquiry into the Nature of Practical Theology," in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, ed. James Woodward and Stephen Pattison (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), 119.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., 123.

Alastair Campbell addresses the nature of practical theology related to ordinary experience through his proposal of five points of scope for a “re-definition” of practical theology: first, practical theology as concerned with the study of specific social structures and individual initiatives which may be found either inside or outside of the life of the church; second, that the functions of the ordained ministry can no longer be the normative informants for division of theological material; third, that the relationship to other theological disciplines must be linear (not deductive or inductive); fourth, that practical theology is necessarily fragmentary and poorly systematized because of its “situation-based” method; and fifth, that the “findings” of practical theology will mostly take the form of concrete proposals.[38] These points of scope address many of the critiques of Browning’s work. In particular, the emphases on structures inside or outside of the church, negation of the pastor as the norm for theological divisions, and situational and concrete methods make this perspective more conducive to the concerns of ordinary theologians in daily life.

Similarly, Immanuel Lartey moves in the direction of re-visioning classic practical theological models.[39] Lartey defines practical theology at various levels, first by addressing it as branch of theology; second, by describing it as a process; third, by describing it as a “way” that includes doing and being; and fourth by proposing his own

---

[37] Ibid., 124-25.

[38] Alastair Campbell, "The Nature of Practical Theology," in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, ed. James Woodward and Stephen Pattison (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), 84-85.

[39] Immanuel Lartey, "Practical Theology as a Theological Form," in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, ed. James Woodward and Stephen Pattison (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000). This entire article attends to this.

version of a pastoral cycle. Lartey's circle begins with concrete experience and evolves into a dance of analysis that weaves situations and theology into three steps before entering into the last phase of a response. Lartey describes relevance, meaning, appropriate methodology, and a transformative element as part of the aim of practical theology.[40] Lartey also brings intercultural perspectives into practical theology.[41] Lartey's approach is especially helpful for establishing the importance of the relational strata that are part of ordinary experience.

Pete Ward is a practical theologian who crosses over into conversation with cultural studies. He notes that contemporary theological models, which move beyond dualism, use "culture" as a paradigmatic shift.[42] The move towards culture as a key category in practical theology is a positive move because it means that theologians are tending to see "ideas" about God as somehow connected and conditioned by historical and social realities.[43] The cultural perspective enriches analysis of experience by attending to complexity and simultaneity. Ward also explicitly stresses the importance of the ordinary in theology.[44] "Practical theology is 'practical' and 'theology' only when it is shaped by the ordinary practice of the church."[45] In particular, Ward suggests that the

---

[40] Ibid., 133.

[41] Lartey, *Pastoral Theology*.

[42] Ward, *Participation and Mediation*, 47.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Pete Ward, "The Hermeneutical and Epistemological Significance of our Students: A Response to Bonnie Miller-McLemore," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 16, no. 1 (2012): 62.

language that is used, when shaped by the ordinary language found in the church, must in fact be theological and not based, for example, in philosophical frameworks.[46] Doing so supports the notion that the realms of the Sacred and profane do in fact speak to one another. These last points offered by Ward come in response to an article and presentation offered by Bonnie Miller-McLemore who, in taking a step back to assess practical theology today, offered a revised definition of practical theology as

> an activity of believers seeking to sustain a life of reflective faith in the everyday; a method or way of analyzing theology in practice used by religious leaders and by teachers and students across the theological curriculum; a curricular area in theological education focused on ministerial practice and subspecialities; and finally, an academic discipline pursued by a smaller subset of scholars to support and sustain these first three enterprises.[47]

In her follow-up to this definition, Miller-McLemore points out that this definition responds to the complexity of addressing practical theology by pointing to the "spatial locations" where such activity occurs.[48] By doing so, she acknowledges the many relational strata that compose ordinary experience and recognizes the complexity inherent in it.

---

[45] Ibid., 64.

[46] Ibid., 61.

[47] Miller-McLemore, "Five Mis-understandings," 20.

[48] Ibid.

Elaine Graham is a practical theologian who draws both from feminist and postmodern conversations in her work. She describes practical theology as "an interpretive discipline enabling faith communities to give a public and critical account of their performative truth claims."[49] In regard to the layered relational strata of ordinary experience Graham points out that practical theology is moving toward the sociopolitical realm and away from individual fulfillment.[50] Consequently, she proposes that practical theological models should address "the interpretation of purposeful practices through which symbolic and material reality is mediated and re-constituted."[51] This suggestion recognizes knowing and relationality within ordinary experience as ongoing and deepening processes that involve individuals who are situated within particular communities and broader social realities.

For example, Graham cites the complexities of modernity (inclusive of advances in science, the Enlightenment, industrial capitalism, and secular democracy) and an evolving socioeconomic order as prompts that require a new way of thinking.[52] Graham reviews a number of voices that address these postmodern issues early on, from Lyotard's critique of grand narratives, to Derrida's post-structural perspectives on speech and writing, which critique the possibility of ultimate and fixed meanings, to Foucault's analysis of power and knowledge in genealogies.[53] Graham highlights the characteristics

---

[49] Graham, "Practical Theology as Transforming Practice," 113.

[50] Graham, *Transforming Practice*, 50.

[51] Ibid., 111.

[52] Ibid., 15.

of postmodernity, including its layered emphases on contingency, historicity, and alterity, as “the generic conditions for the construction of an anti-foundational regulative practical wisdom by which purposeful communicative practices may be guided and assessed.”[54] Graham contrasts such practical wisdom with pure knowing in science, and emphasizes practical wisdom as a way of knowing that represents multiple perspectives and is more akin to the dialogues that occur in everyday discourse.[55] She affords primacy to the local community of faith, which “acts as the guardian of practical wisdom by which such purposeful action gains its authenticity and credibility, and serves as the medium by which truth-claims are forged and publicly articulated.”[56] Graham uses the category of “practice,” situated in local faith communities, to correct the extremes of over-personalization on one end and non-relationality on the other end. Graham’s postmodern and feminist perspectives dramatically illustrate holistic knowing and layered relationality in ordinary experience.

Claire Wolfteich is another practical theologian who crosses over into conversations with another field, which in her case is spirituality. Wolfteich describes both practical theology and spirituality as “methodologically preoccupied.”[57] She cites six key areas for discussion between spirituality and practical theology, including critical areas for case-study investigation; concern about the relationship between theory and

---

[53] Graham, "Practical Theology as Transforming Practice," 20.

[54] Graham, *Transforming Practice*, 166-67.

[55] Ibid., 167.

[56] Ibid., 203.

[57] Wolfteich, "Animating Questions," 134.

practice; interdisciplinary methodology; concerns about pedagogy and practice; the self-implicating nature of study; and the transformative dimension of both the disciplines.[58] In her articulation of these interstices, Wolfteich draws forth the areas in each discipline that stick close to the ground of immediate and lived experience. Much of Wolfteich's work emphasizes theological reflection "on the ground" in contexts such as farmworkers, families, and working mothers.[59]

Voices in Spirituality

A number of theologians begin their treatment of methodological questions in spirituality by addressing the history of the use of the term *spirituality*.[60] Since Old Testament times, the term has been used in a number of ways ranging from adjectives that describe a person-in-the-Spirit, to judicial references that describe common ecclesial goods in contrast to secular goods, to the more contemporary sense of the term in reference to the inner life of an individual. Most telling is that use of the term has exploded in the last three decades, and such popular use has provoked conversation in academic circles about what is meant by the term *spirituality*. A general definition of the term encompasses the following:

---

[58] Ibid., 123.

[59] Wolfteich, "Devotion and the Struggle for Justice"; Claire E. Wolfteich, "Where Two or Three are Gathered: Christian Families as Domestic Churches," *Journal of Religion* 85, no. 1 (2005); Claire E. Wolfteich, *Navigating New Terrain: Work and Women's Spiritual Lives* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2002).

[60] Conn, "Toward Spiritual Maturity," 236; Conn, "Toward Spiritual Maturity," 236; McGinn, "The Letter and the Spirit," 26-28; Schneiders, "Spirituality in the Academy," 20-21.

> the daily lived aspect of one’s faith commitment in terms of values and behaviors; how one appropriates beliefs about God and the world; the process of conscious integration and transformation of one’s life; the journey of self-transcendence; the depth dimension of all human experience; a dialectic that moves one from the inauthentic to the authentic and from the individual to the communal; the quest for ultimate value and meaning.[61]

This definition of spirituality is offered by two editors of a book on spirituality and reflects their desire to incorporate the varied perspectives of the authors within the book about the meaning of the term. While this definition is somewhat cumbersome, it is also multifaceted. Each facet reflects different emphases on experience. Experience is at the heart of the conversation on spirituality, though a number of issues arise and varied voices express diverse emphases.

Experience is a major methodological category within the academic study of spirituality. Walter Principe’s division of spirituality into three layers is often cited as a starting point for this conversation.[62] The first layer consists of the actual lived experience of the spiritual life in ordinary living. The second layer incorporates communal or charismatic affiliations, which are experienced in families, communities, and particular geographical or cultural groups. The third layer is the experience of

---

[61] Elizabeth Dreyer and Mark S. Burrows, eds., *Minding the Spirit*: *The Study of Christian Spirituality* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), xv.

[62] Wolfteich, "Animating Questions," 126; Dreyer and Burrows, *Minding the Spirit*, xv; McGinn, "The Letter and the Spirit," 29.

formally reflecting on the spiritual life or, in other words, the academic study of the spiritual life.[63] Experience is integral to each of the three layers; however, each layer emphasizes experience differently. Schneiders insists that spirituality must be both about experience as such, and also about the study of that experience as a discipline.[64]

McGinn names three approaches within the academic categorization of experience in spirituality: first, there is a theological approach; second, there is an anthropological approach; and third, there a historical-contextual approach.[65] The first approach addresses spiritual experience in relationship to theological categories. The second approach defines spirituality as an inherent component of the makeup of human beings, with an emphasis that articulates spiritual experience as that which is deep within human beings. The anthropological perspective emphasizes spirituality as a human constant, or universal.[66] The third approach emphasizes the influence of social location on spiritual experience. The varied emphases on specific kinds of experience shift according to the general approach one takes (theological, anthropological, historical-contextual).[67]

---

[63] Walter H. Principe, "Toward Defining Spirituality," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 12, no. 2 (1983): 135-36.

[64] Sandra M. Schneiders, "Spirituality in the Academy," in *Modern Christian Spirituality* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 17.

[65] McGinn, "The Letter and the Spirit," 30-35.

[66] Wolfteich, "Animating Questions," 131.

[67] McGinn, "The Letter and the Spirit," 30-34. McGinn names a number of theologians within his description of each approach.

The theological approach tends to limit reflection on spiritual experience to the Christian tradition; whereas the anthropological approach is mindful of defining spiritual experience broadly enough so as to not exclude other faith traditions. Claire Wolfteich suggests that the benefits of the anthropological approach include its universalizing of spirituality as part of human nature, as well as its attention to both the inner and the ultimate dimensions of human experience. Negatively, she suggests that the anthropological approach can obscure the contextual and communal aspects of human experience.[68] The historical-contextual approach addresses this concern most explicitly through its emphasis on particularity and the intersections of diverse contexts with the lived experience of faith.[69] Notably, layering is a consistent methodological stance within spirituality.

As another layer within these varied approaches, Joann Wolski Conn offers a three-layered definition of spirituality, grounded within an anthropological approach.[70] She defines the first layer as a general human capacity for self-transcendence. The second layer is the religious dimension, which is marked specifically by the human capacity to become actualized by the Holy. The third layer expresses the specificity of particular religious expressions (e.g., Jewish, Christian, faith traditions). Conn offers a three-step method as well, naming her phases of procedure within spirituality as first, descriptive; second, analytical-critical; and third, synthetic and constructive. She further names a number of emphases in methodology for spirituality: first, that the work of

---

[68] Wolfteich, "Animating Questions," 131.

[69] Ibid., 132.

[70] Conn, "Toward Spiritual Maturity," 236-37.

spirituality is descriptive rather than prescriptive or normative; second, that spirituality must be ecumenical, interreligious, and cross-cultural; third, that spirituality emphasizes wholeness in both the sense of a particular person's makeup of affect, physicality, and intellect, as well as in the sense of a person's situatedness in history and politics; fourth, that spirituality is interdisciplinary; fifth, that method in spirituality is participatory and not observational; sixth, that spirituality (especially with a feminist emphasis) is about promoting critical awareness rather than being concerned with objectivity.[71] For her, the goal and aim of spirituality must be both about producing knowledge about religious experience as experience, and also about developing both one's own and others' spirituality. At the concrete level of experience, this last emphasis stresses that spirituality must have something to do with changing one's self and the world.[72] Through the lens of ordinary experience, Conn's approach to spirituality is highly relational and recognizes layers both in immediate experience and also over time. This is generally true of theologians who gravitate toward the anthropological and historical-contextual models. The invitation through the lens of ordinary experience is that all three "layers" should be included.

Sandra Schneiders is a prominent voice in the ongoing conversations about methodology in spirituality. Schneiders emphasizes spirituality as an anthropological constant.[73] Her definition of spirituality is "the experience of conscious involvement in

---

[71] Ibid., 239.

[72] Ibid., 240.

[73] Sandra M. Schneiders, "Theology and Spirituality: Strangers, Rivals, or Partners?," *Horizons* 13, no. 2 (1986): 254.

the project of life integration through self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives."[74] In her elaboration of this definition, Schneiders emphasizes that conscious involvement in a life project is not simply a collection of practices, but rather is ongoing. Similarly, an emphasis on life integration indicates a relational approach in which both the social and the individual elements of experience are considered. She also addresses the "project of interpretation . . . as interdisciplinary because of the complex and multifaceted character of spiritual experience as such."[75] Schneiders's definition of spirituality suggests that theological categories must address complex and dynamic realities.

Methodologically, Schneiders advocates for a hermeneutic model in the study of spirituality.[76] She labels the three steps of her hermeneutic process as follows: first, a description of the phenomenon/a under investigation; second, critical analysis; and third, constructive interpretation.[77] Wolfteich frames Schneiders's first step in practical theological terms, describing it as the formulation of a "thick description" of experience.[78] Such an emphasis recognizes the immediacy of experience. That is to say that even the way one tells the story about what happened is already part of the reflective process that remains integrally connected to the immediate experience. Schneiders also emphasizes the appropriative and transformative nature of the last step, citing

---

[74] "Study of Christian Spirituality," 5-6.

[75] "A Hermeneutical Approach," 56.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Wolfteich, "Animating Questions," 136.

"enlightenment of the current situation" as an objective of the study of spirituality.[79] She is not satisfied with a simple recognition of experience as it is lived in the immediate, but rather pushes for prophetic reflection on experience, which allows for a deepening of the immediate. She describes her methodology as descriptive-critical rather than as prescriptive-normative.[80] While Schneiders makes this distinction to emphasize the prophetic role of theological reflection, her emphasis on the third stage as critical might suggest that nothing significant happens in the process of deepening reflection until this stage occurs. An alternative category, such as descriptive-deepening could potentially soften this distinction. Such an emphasis draws attention to the complex and ongoing nature of experience as layered and relational.

Similar to Elaine Graham, Schneiders seriously reflects on postmodernism as a contemporary influence. She notes that the postmodern conversation is marked by anti-foundationalism, rejection of master narratives, attention to difference and the "other," and fragmentation.[81] While Schneiders critiques postmodern perspectives as "foundationless, relativistic, alienated," and incompatible with religion, especially Christianity, she recognizes it as a contemporary influence.[82] However, she is cautious about postmodern treatments of experience. Schneiders proposes a "constructive postmodernism" as an alternative to the nihilistic, non-relational, and meaning-denying

---

[79] Schneiders, "A Hermeneutical Approach," 57.

[80] "Spirituality in the Academy," 32.

[81] "Religion and Spirituality: Strangers, Rivals, or Partners?," in *The Santa Clara Lectures*, ed. Santa Clara University and Bannan Institute for Jesuit Education (The Santa Clara Lectures, 2000), 11.

[82] Ibid., 11-12.

approach of what she calls “destructive postmodernism.[83] Through this proposal, Schneiders further cements a commitment to experience as relational within the perspective of spirituality.

Mary Frohlich recognizes the hermeneutical slant in spirituality, citing Schneiders as a key example, as well as the appropriative perspective in method taken by Michael Downey. However, Frohlich critiques these two perspectives by asking what it is that makes a particularly “spiritual” lens in spirituality different from other lenses in theology. Frohlich suggests “interiority” as the distinct mark of personhood as a starting point for method in spirituality.[84] She insists that “lived spirituality is and must remain the point of engagement for any study of spirituality.”[85] She revisits linear, compartmentalized conversations about the material and formal object in the study of spirituality, and suggests that the material object of spirituality, the actual, concrete thing that is studied, is “constructed expressions of human meaning” and that the formal object of study in spirituality, the particular aspect under which it is studied, is “the human spirit fully in act, which she further elaborates as, “human persons being, living, acting according to their fullest intrinsic potential—this ultimately, in the fullness of interpersonal, communal, and mystical relationship.”[86] Frohlich’s description explicitly recognizes the relational character of ordinary experience.

---

[83] "Study of Christian Spirituality," 20-21.

[84] Frohlich, "Spiritual Discipline," 73.

[85] Ibid., 68.

[86] Ibid., 71.

Voices in Feminist Theology

Feminist theologies represent a relatively new emphasis in theological conversation. The work of feminist perspectives in other disciplines has supported the rapid development of feminist theological perspectives, which favors current feminist theological conversation that has matured. Second-wave feminists often review the work of their foremothers as part of the development of their own present theological endeavors.[87] Also, and perhaps more than in the spirituality conversation, the influence of voices that speak to the role of race and class status has been strongly felt and is widely recognized in current feminist conversations.

Experience is also a prominent category in feminist discourse. Many feminist voices continue to emphasize the definitions, scope, and tasks of feminist theology precisely because of its particular emphasis on women's experience. Much of the conversation in first-wave feminist theology emphasized women's experience as an alternative to the dominant theology based on men's experience. Continued nuances in the conversation seek to define feminist perspectives as a corrective to an exclusive focus on men's experience as normative, while at the same time imagining a future in which

[87] First-wave feminist voices include those of Rosemary Radford-Reuther, Elizabeth Schuessler-Fiorenza, and Elizabeth Johnson, and are reflective of the historical struggle for women to reclaim theological categories and renounce patriarchal misuse of them. Second-wave feminist voices, such as those of Elaine Graham, Rebecca Chopp, and Kathryn Tanner, draw upon the reclaimed theological categories of their predecessors while also often contributing other emphases of social location, which include, but also extend beyond, the category of gender. A number of feminist voices also explicitly address the role of culture in this conversation, such as many of the Latina feminist intercultural theologians, who are addressed in the next section. A similar "wave" pattern occurs in Latino/a theologies, which tend to claim liberation theology as a founding wave and build upon the contextual experiences from the perspectives of other countries and immigration histories.

both men and women will be free to flourish. While continued nuances are an important development of this theological conversation, "all feminist theorists ask, with a few variations, the same questions: How are women accounted for in a given area of study? How is the experience of women integral to a particular field?"[88]

Similar to the conversation in spirituality, experience is addressed at varied levels as feminist theologians define the elements of feminist theology. Anne Carr describes the three basic elements of feminist theology as first, critique; second, historical retrieval; and third, theological reconstruction. [89] Sheila Greeve Davaney notes that feminist basics include attention to women's experience, gender as an analytical tool, emancipation of women, and critical consciousness and experience of women as criteria for theological method.[90] Kathryn Tanner's contribution to this conversation recognizes three feminist tasks: first, a critical reconsideration of past discourse; second, a reworking of themes that highlight marginalized women in history; and third, a refusal to acknowledge past theological constructions as givens.[91] Yet another articulation comes from Joann Wolski Conn in her naming of six tasks for a feminist scholarly agenda within spirituality: first,

---

[88] Susan A. Ross, "God's Embodiment and Women," in *Freeing Theology*: *The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*, ed. Catherine Mowry LaCugna (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 194.

[89] Anne E. Carr, "The New Vision of Feminist Theology," in *Freeing Theology: the Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*, ed. Catherine Mowry LaCugna (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 11.

[90] Sheila Greeve Davaney, "Continuing the Story, but Departing the Text: A Historicist Interpretation of Feminist Norms in Theology," in *Horizons in Feminist Theology: Identity, Tradition, and Norms*, ed. Rebecca S. Chopp and Sheila Greeve Davaney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 198.

[91] Tanner, "Social Theory," 187.

is to point out that women have been ignored throughout history; second, is to recognize that knowledge of women is often diminished, romantic, or hostile; third, is to search for and publicize unknown women in history; fourth, is to perform revisionary readings of texts and tradition; fifth, is to continue to challenge feminist methodology itself by redefining its borders, goals, and consequences; and sixth is to work toward integration of the field.[92]

The basic pattern that emerges in these many articulations of feminist theology centers around a basic argument composed of two movements: first, since women's experiences have been neglected throughout most of theological history, the past must be reconsidered with suspicion; and second, in order for the possibility of a transformed future to evolve, the nature of women's experiences must influence present theological conversations and impact the transformative consequences of such discourse. Feminist theologians insist upon the importance of women's experience in particular, and yet many recognize the limitations that arise when trying to develop discourse about women's experience. For example, Davaney notes four claims made in early feminist articulations of women's experience: first, that women's experience has a common character; second, that women's experience could also be normative; third, that there is a tendency to essentialize the entirety of women's experience within the tradition; and fourth that there is a direct correspondence between feminist norms and the purposes of divine reality.[93] Some of the strongest voices to critique these early tendencies have been women of color, who disagree with the notion that white women's experience represents

---

[92] Conn, "Toward Spiritual Maturity," 241-42.

[93] Davaney, "Continuing the Story," 200-01.

all women's experience, as well as postmodern theologians, who critique notions of normativity, essentialization, and correlational methodologies.

Davaney offers a three-tiered proposal in response to these tensions: first, return to women's experience and notions of self and identity, but with the recognition that such categories are contextual, traditional concrete, and particular; second, develop both theories of tradition in a way that recognizes the internally dynamic and pluralistic nature of traditions and that recognizes multiple traditions and their open boundaries; and third, maintain the concept of subjectivity in discourse, but as a balanced category that is conditioned and that does not lose notions of agency.[94] Second-wave feminist revisions such as this not only continue to emphasize the value of women's experience, as did first-wave feminists, but further contribute to the recognition of how complex theological reflection becomes when it integrates the immediate experience of particular persons into deepened and nuanced reflections about those particular persons as situated within specific communities and surrounding social realities. It is perhaps easier to separate reality into first and second orders, such as linear, compartmentalized theology tends to do. However, to artificially divide experience into convenient analytical categories is recognized by the feminist perspective as the first step toward the slippery slope of conveniently "separating out" entire groups of particular peoples' experiences, such as women or people of color. The lens of ordinary experience similarly suggests that complexity must be dealt with through adequate models for reflection on layers of experience, rather than by separating the layers and trying to reflect on them apart from

---

[94] Ibid., 209.

one another. Such an approach maintains the claim that ordinary experience is by nature holistic and relational.

When experience is a primary category in theological endeavors, it makes for a passionate yet "messy" conversation. This insight leads to another important theme within feminist theological discourse, which is that inclusion of women's experience makes a difference in how theology is done in general and in what its broader purpose is. Some feminists claim that theological discourse looks different when it is done by women and when it is attentive to women's experience. Lisa Sowle Cahill notes three feminist emphases in relation to traditional theological emphases: affectivity in relation to rationality, relationality in light of control, and dialogue instead of certitude.[95] Susan Ross, in articulating a feminist epistemology, contrasts dualism in favor of difference, multiplicity as an alternative to duality, and ambiguity instead of certainty.[96] Such stances support non-specialized, non-elitist, and non-separatist assumptions about ordinary experience through an inclusive view regarding whose experiences and which types of experience are relevant for theological conversations.

Another epistemological perspective emphasizes the consistent concern with what is relational in feminist theologies. Mary McClintock Fulkerson notes the link between knowledge and the social relations out of which knowledge emerges.[97] A major concern in feminist theological discourse is the transformation of unjust realities, especially as

---

[95] Lisa Sowle Cahill, "Feminism and Christian Ethics," in *Freeing Theology*: *the Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*, ed. Catherine Mowry LaCugna (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 216.

[96] Susan A. Ross, *Extravagant Affections*: *A Feminist Sacramental Theology* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 91.

[97] Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 25-26.

experienced by women. "Feminist theology is never merely theoretical, but is also always practical."[98] Feminist perspectives include "discourses from the margins that free women's voices to transform the social-symbolic order."[99] For Rebecca Chopp, feminist theology must be "about emancipatory transformation."[100] Feminist theological perspectives recognize that life as it is lived in the immediate for most people must be transformed if it is to be inclusive of holistic and relational assumptions that call for wholeness and equality. Chopp identifies three leading principles for framing feminist theological pragmatics: first, that the formation of new practices and rhetoric must weave new visions of human flourishing; second, that there must be an emphasis on the "play" between aesthetics and logic; and third, that connectedness to practices, activity and habits, and institutions is essential.[101] Chopp carries these feminist emphases into other areas of her work as well. In addition to feminism, Chopp incorporates liberation and political theological perspectives as subjects of her practical theological explorations. Chopp is one of many significant voices who crosses over into different areas, drawing especially upon the emancipatory and liberating elements that call for a transformed life as it is lived by many in the immediacy of their ordinary lives.

---

[98] Cahill, "Feminism and Christian Ethics," 213.

[99] Chopp, *Power to Speak,* 18.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid., 37.

Voices in US Latino/a Theology

US Latino/a theologies are related to, yet distinct from, liberation theologies.[102] The former tends to refer to Latino/a theologians who reflect on the experiences of people living in United States, whereas liberation theology arose from reflection on the experiences of peoples located in Central and South America.[103] The boundaries between the two theologies are blurry, however, as is evident in the case of Gustavo Gutierrez, who is widely recognized as a pioneer in liberation theology, but who also resides in the United States for significant periods of time and teaches at the University of Notre Dame. Similarly, many US Latino/a theologians who currently live in the United States may have been born in other countries or brought to the United States by their parents, such as Miguel Diaz, who was born in Cuba but who has mostly lived in the United States since his adolescence. Yet another group consists of those who were born and formed in the United States, but still maintain significant family connections to countries of origin. Consequently, such theologians may have interests in and familiarity with theological contributions in both liberation theology and US Latino/a theology. Chronologically, US Latino/a theology increased after US theologians began to recognize that their social location in the "first world" provoked theological reflections distinct from those that were

---

[102] Following the example of many other US Latino/a theologians, the Spanish use of both the masculine "o" and feminine "a" for nouns and adjectives recognizes the concern for inclusive gender language.

[103] Miguel H. Díaz, *On Being Human*: *U.S. Hispanic and Rahnerian Perspectives*, Faith and Cultures Series, ed. Robert J. Schreiter (Marynoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 6-7.

coming out of "third world" reflections.[104] The complexity of US Latino/a experience is further exemplified in its attention to naming. For example, "US Latino/a theology" is also commonly referred to as "US Hispanic theology."[105] Preferred language is often chosen based on the historical, cultural, or personal identity factors that a given theologian wishes to emphasize or include.[106] A number of particular voices and themes are recognized in this present conversation.

Virgilio Elizondo is one such example. Elizondo, a Catholic priest, is recognized as a pioneer in articulating US Latino/a theology from within the experience of the local Mexican-American community in San Antonio, Texas.[107] One of his major theological contributions reflects upon parallels between the *mestizaje* (mixing) of the Mexican-American peoples, who are part of both Mexico and the United States, and the mestizaje of Jesus who is both human (in Galilee at a certain time and place) and Divine.[108] Elizondo's theological concept of mestizaje reflects the ongoing relational complexity within the experiences of many US Latino/as living in the United States. Elizondo has also written on the theme of being vanquished, from which he draws upon Jesus's experience of death and dying, relates it to the suffering of Latino/a persons, and reflects

---

[104] Ibid., 7-8.

[105] Ibid., 9.

[106] Ibid., 8-18. Diaz offers an extensive treatment of the linguistic, historical, cultural, and personal identity factors that are often considered in this conversation.

[107] Ibid., 7.

[108] Elizondo, *Galilean Journey*.

on its impact on Latino/a spirituality.[109] The lens of ordinary experience as a process of deepening is evident in Elizondo's work. Elizondo draws upon specifically theological language from past traditions (e.g., Jesus's suffering). He then relates that reflection to current experiences of suffering common to so many in their immediate daily lives. He further offers nuanced theological reflections (e.g., Jesus's experience of being vanquished), which helps to deepen reflection on those experiences. The lens of ordinary experience suggests that to separate the experience of suffering from the processes of understanding it, making meaning from it, and attempting to transform it, is inadequate.

Orlando Espín is another prominent US Latino/a theologian who has written extensively on popular Catholicism. He emphasizes "popular" as "from the people" as opposed to from the "many."[110] Espín describes the human experience of Jesus as a way for contemporary Latino/as to sense God in their daily lives.[111] He further suggests that assertions about humanness must be revelatory of God through Jesus as the final criterion.[112] Among other themes for theological reflection, Espín proposes that theology seeks to understand Our Lady of Guadalupe from the perspective of the people and suggests that such a reflection might more adequately draw upon pneumatological

---

[109] Virgilio Elizondo, "The God of the Vanquished: Foundations for a Latino Spirituality," in *The Faith of the People*: *Theological Reflections on Popular Catholicism*, ed. Orlando O. Espín (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997). This entire article addresses the theme.

[110] Espín, *Faith of the People*, 3.

[111] Ibid., 12.

[112] Ibid., 16.

categories rather than Marían devotions.[113] Espín suggests that such perspectives come from a particularly distinct Latino/a epistemology. Popular religion is one example of a Latino/a epistemology of suffering.[114] Espín argues that epistemology means to understand or to grant meaning to reality, and suggests that such meaning-making within Latino/a theology occurs within an "epistemological network" that consists of four distinct nodes: first, beliefs; second, ethical expectations; third, communal rites; and fourth, the experience of the people.[115] He specifically ties meaning and immediacy together, noting that in Spanish the term *experiencia* suggests learning that results from "actual, engaged living."[116]

A third well-known US Latino/a theologian is Roberto Goizueta. One of Goizueta's major contributions is the development of the theme of "accompaniment." In this work, he weaves the theme of accompaniment into reflections on pertinent topics for Latino/a theology such as popular Catholicism, aesthetics, the preferential option for the poor, migration, and epistemology.[117] Goizueta also creatively develops the theme of relationality, using a play on the Spanish word *nosotros*, which means "we": "nos-" indicates "us" and "otros" refers to others. Consequently according to Goizueta, for Latino/as, being human is defined above all else as being relational.[118] "For U.S.

---

[113] Ibid., 9.

[114] Ibid., 157-58.

[115] Ibid., 163.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Goizueta, *Caminemos con Jesus*.

[118] Ibid., 72.

Hispanics, the entire cosmos—including the earth below and the heavens above—is an intrinsically relational reality, whereas in an organism, each member is necessarily related to every other member."[119] Goizueta contrasts this perspective to individualist perspectives and notes that "to be an isolated, autonomous individual is, literally to have no humanity, no identity, no self, it is to be no-thing, a no-body."[120] He elaborates that one only recognizes oneself as a self when the self is encountered by another.[121] Goizueta also addresses postmodernism relationally.[122] In this treatment, he warns against a uniqueness of social location so extreme so as to preclude community, dialogue, and understanding with other "locations."[123] In these elaborations, Goizueta clearly addresses the many strata that make up relationality in ordinary experience.

Another prominent voice within US Latino/a theology is that of Ada María Isasi-Díaz who develops *Mujerista* theology, which integrates her perspective as both feminist and Latina. Mujerista is an invented term that draws upon the Spanish word *mujer*, or "woman." Isasi-Díaz distinguishes this approach from feminism as a particularly Latina approach to feminist theology.[124] Isasi-Díaz describes seven elements of Mujerista

---

[119] Ibid., 50.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Ibid.

[122] Ibid., 137.

[123] Espín, *Faith of the People*, xii.

[124] María Pilar Aquino recognizes Mujerista theology in conversation with feminism, but also critiques its distinction, citing its homogeneity as something that weakens the broader feminist movement. María Pilar Aquino, "Latina Feminist Theology: Central Features," in *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology*: *Religion and*

theology: first, it must establish justice, and not just build theory; second, it must be concrete, contextual, and historical; third, it must point to the discontinuity of the past and present; fourth, it must recognize and deal with differences; fifth, it must deal with power at both the personal and the structural level; sixth, it must deal with restitution and redistribution; and last, it must work for socioeconomic and civic-political rights.[125] Isasi-Díaz also supports the notion that the lived reality of immediate experience cannot be artificially separated from later reflections on the injustices found in daily, lived experience, which serve as the foundation for action that seeks to transform such realities.

María Pilar Aquino is another strong voice within US Latino/a theology. She integrates both feminist and intercultural perspectives in her work. For example, Aquino reflects on Latina/Chicana feminism as "a mestiza theory, method, spirituality, and *praxis* that has egalitarian social relations in everyday life as its principle of coherence, and it seeks to intervene in concrete reality for the historical actualization of social justice."[126] This definition points simultaneously to holistic knowing and interconnecting strata of relationships in ordinary experience. Later in her career, Aquino turns specifically toward intercultural theological frameworks. Aquino notes that intercultural frameworks "are aimed at fomenting interaction among cultures for the sake of achieving justice at the global level."[127] She names four current tasks for feminist intercultural theology: first, to develop a consistent and linear, compartmentalized approach to the aspects

---

Justice, ed. María Pilar Aquino, Daisy L. Machado, and Jeanette Rodriguez (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 138-39.

[125] Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology*, 116-22.

[126] Aquino, "Latina Feminist Theology," 136.

[127] Aquino, "Toward a Shared Future of Justice," 25.

involved in the theological foundations of experience; second, to claim the right to theological intellectual constitution; third, to connect theology and spirituality in feminist terms; and fourth, to continue critical theological analysis of the impact of capitalist neo-liberal globalization.[128] As Aquino suggests, intercultural frameworks highlight the importance of being both firmly rooted in the immediacy and context of one's own experience, while also giving attention to others in varied relational strata. Again, here is a voice concerned with transforming the injustice that many people experience in the immediacy of their daily lives. The very aim of feminist intercultural theology for Aquino is found in the constant criterion of, "what harms or helps the very fact of living of the people."[129] The lens of ordinary experience attends to reflection on, and transformation of, life as it is lived.

Though US Latino/a theologians reflect on a wide range of theological topics, a few themes are commonly recognized as distinctly "Latino/a." These include *teología en conjunto* (collaborative theology), *lo cotidiano* (dailiness), and *mestizaje* (mixing). Each of these prominent themes reflects a deep commitment to practices of inclusion. Teología en conjunto refers to a way of doing theology that includes professional theologians getting together to reflect among themselves and a distinct commitment to theological reflection which that place among groups of people, such as ordinary and professional theologians, or in varied places, such as in the churches, the classroom, and

---

[128] Aquino, "Latina Feminist Theology."

[129] Aquino, "Toward a Shared Future of Justice," 24.

local neighborhoods.[130] Teología en conjunto is an inclusive approach because it explicitly considers the daily experiences and beliefs not only of the formal leaders of a community or those who are specially trained, but also from those who fill the pews. "Theology needs to be grounded in a specific context where a particular group of people, a community, can recognize it, relate to it, welcome it, and be challenged by it."[131] Teología en conjunto recognizes the relational character and community orientation of Latino/a perspectives.[132] As such, teología en conjunto also points to the varied relational strata emphasized in the framework of ordinary experience.

Lo cotidiano refers to the realm of daily life. US Latino/a theologians consider the realm of the daily as a primary theological source. "Daily life is a point of departure for Latina women."[133] Ada María Isasi-Díaz writes extensively about lo cotidiano as a theological source. She describes daily life in its ordinariness, inclusive of its struggles.[134] She also notes the transitory nature of lo cotidiano and points out that as a

---

[130] María Pilar Aquino, "Theological Method in U.S. Latino/a Theology: Toward an Intercultural Theology for the Third Millenium," in *From the Heart of our People*: *Latino/a Explorations in Catholic Systematic Theology*, ed. Orlando O. Espín and Miguel H. Díaz (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 18.

[131] Nora O. Lozano-Diaz, "Ignored Virgin or Unaware Women: A Mexican-American Protestant Reflection on the Virgin of Guadalupe," in *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology*: *Religion and Justice*, ed. María Pilar Aquino, Daisy L. Machado, and Jeanette Rodriguez (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 204.

[132] Olga Villa Parra, "Foreward," in *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology*: *Religion and Justice*, ed. María Pilar Aquino, Daisy L. Machado, and Jeanette Rodriguez (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), x.

[133] Jeanette Rodriguez, "Latina Activists: Toward an Inclusive Spirituality of Being in the World," in *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology*: *Religion and Justice*, ed. María Pilar Aquino, Daisy L. Machado, and Jeanette Rodriguez (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 115.

hermeneutical source, it lends itself to incompleteness.[135] Lo cotidiano is also often cited for its relationship to popular religiosity. Because popular religiosity pertains to practices that are maintained in the homes and in the streets by the people, the relationship to lo cotidiano is emphasized as an empowering category that connects daily life to religious practices. Jeannette Rodriquez, for example, names four of the strengths of popular religion: first, it is a source of power, dignity, and acceptance for the poor and marginalized; second, its practices are celebrated by the majority of the people, and not just a few; third, its practices which have survived over a long period of time; and fourth, its practices that are active, dynamic, and lived among the people.[136] Popular religiosity among the people is an expression of the Sacred within the dailiness of living. In yet another example, Carmen Marie Nanko looks through the lens of a preferential option for the poor and suggests that it prevents "the practice of theology from becoming a self-enclosed, self-preoccupied endeavor by binding both its questions and its reflections to the lived reality and the living faith of the churches and communities within which and for the sake of which it takes place."[137]

Of the many voices reviewed thus far, the US Latino/a emphasis on lo cotidiano is the most explicit perspective that uplifts immediate experience in the course of daily life as the primary source for deepening theological reflection. This deep inclusive

---

[134] Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology*, 66.

[135] Ibid., 67.

[136] Jeanette Rodriguez, *Our Lady of Guadalupe*: *Faith and Empowerment Among Mexican-American Women* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 144.

[137] Carmen Marie Nanko, "Justice Crosses the Border: the Preferential Option for the Poor in the United States," in *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology*: *Religion and Justice*, ed. María Pilar Aquino, Daisy L. Machado, and Jeanette Rodriguez (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 199.

commitment, again, through the lens of ordinary experience, suggests that anyone can do theology, that anyone's experience counts as a theological source, and that any experience can be a source of theological reflection.

Mestizaje in US Latino/a theologies is used as a category in a number of ways. Many Latina feminists draw upon Gloria Anzaldua's literary work as they explore the theme.[138] Virgilio Elizondo draws upon the biological reality. In this sense, mestizaje is the generation of a new people from two disparate parent peoples. He refers specifically to the historical Spanish-Catholic conquest of Mexico as one instance of biological mestizaje.[139] A second instance related to another group of people, the Nordic-Protestant conquest of Mexico, is also mentioned in his work.[140] Elizondo elaborates on mestizo dynamics noting that the mestizo product of two parent cultures is an "insider-outsider" who often knows each parent culture quite well, but does not fit neatly into either culture.[141] Navigating such terrains is not easy and necessarily requires interpersonal skills such as adaptability.

Ada María Isasi-Díaz also recognizes the biological reality of mestizaje, especially the mixing that occurs currently in the United States, and adds the term *mulatez* to further recognize the mixing of black and white people.[142] She also notes the

---

[138] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*: *La Frontera*: *The New Mestiza*, 4th ed. (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012).

[139] Elizondo, *Galilean Journey*, 9.

[140] Ibid., 13.

[141] Ibid., 18.

[142] Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology*, 66.

cultural power of mestizo perspectives and elaborates that the experience of mestizaje informs US Latino/a understandings of pluralism.[143] Theologically, the experience of mestizaje operates as a social location structure that pushes toward justice and eliminates racism and prejudice.[144] Within the lens of ordinary experience, the perspective of mestizaje points to a reality that inherently recognizes the interactions of varied relational strata simultaneously.

In addition to these distinct US Latino/a themes, US Latina feminist theologies share strong emphases on liberation, emancipation, and transformation. Aquino notes, for example, that feminist intercultural theology is "an alternative ethical-political project for advancing toward a new world of justice."[145] Its "orientation is toward the transformation of existent realities with the aim of modeling a world where human dignity and rights become possible."[146] Another articulation of this vision for justice comes from the introduction to a reader in Latina feminist theology, which describes "theology as a dynamic and critical language with which [Latinas] express [their] religious vision of a new paradigm of civilization that is free of systemic injustice and violence due to kyriarchal domination."[147] This vision "seeks to affirm new models of social relationships that are capable of fully sustaining human dignity and the integrity of

---

[143] Ibid., 67.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Aquino, "Toward a Shared Future of Justice," 9.

[146] Ibid., 16.

[147] Guardiola-Saenz, "Reading from Ourselves," xiv.

creation."[148] A specifically Latina feminist perspective draws both from the strength of structural analysis in feminist frameworks and from the inclusiveness of Latino/a frameworks, which give special attention to lo cotidiano, or life as it is lived. This approach offers a multivalent framework that is especially apt for theological reflection in ordinary experience, where both holistic knowing and multiple relational strata are emphasized.

Methodologically, Latina feminist theologians consistently call for approaches that transform the reality all lived experiences of injustice. Olga Consuelo Velez Caro insists on a number of strategies toward that end: first, that all voices must be allowed to speak; second, that knowledge must be conceived of as both conceptual and existential; and third, that feminist intercultural theology must transform mentalities to make possible a world that does not exclude based on sex.[149] Nancy Pineda-Madrid writes that a Chicana feminist epistemology also shares similar assumptions in that it (1) examines the relationship between knowing and liberation, which will contribute to fuller understanding of humanization; (2) provides a critical framework for theology; and (3) provides a theoretical foundation for a relevant, compelling, and independent presentation of the Christian faith.[150] Of particular practical importance in her articulation is her

---

[148] Ibid.

[149] Caro, "Toward a Feminist," 256.

[150] Nancy Pineda-Madrid, "Notes Toward a ChicanaFeminist Epistemology (and Why It Is Important for Latina Feminist Theologies)," in *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology*: *Religion and Justice*, ed. María Pilar Aquino, Daisy L. Machado, and Jeanette Rodriguez (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 260-61.

expression of the need for autonomous spaces in which such work can take place. [151] This latter suggestion emphasizes the immediacy of shared experience within cultural groups.

The complexities of daily life experience are addressed broadly among US Latino/a theologians. Latina feminist theologians also consistently emphasize the need for theology that makes a difference in the daily life struggles of their local communities by transforming personal, communal, and sociocultural structures. The tension between the personal and the cultural is aptly addressed through theological lenses that emphasize particular cultural experiences as primary sources of theological reflection. US Latino/a theologians consistently insist that knowing is a holistic and relational endeavor and is inherently bound to the immediacy of ordinary experience—or life as it is lived, reflected upon, and transformed, for the sake of the common good.

In conclusion, the boundary-crossing conversations presented in this chapter speak to the complex and multilayered nature of human experience. While there is much overlap among the voices collected in this chapter, especially regarding the common interests in transformation in ordinary experience, these theological voices are distinct, and gathering a broad range of perspectives is among the goals of this work. Consequently, among the many voices drawn together here, this review points to the importance of layered analysis of relational strata within experience, ranging from the individual to the cultural and communal to the social and political to the ecological and transcendent. It further suggests that knowing is both holistic and relational at the

---

[151] Ibid.

personal level. While distinct patterns emerge within each camp that distinguish them from others, shared, common interests also unify them.

Contemporary practical theological perspectives tend to emphasize the contextual and communal layers of relational strata and have shifted from elitist tendencies, which overemphasize the activities of particular persons. Practical theology contributes a keen commitment to the relationship between theory and practice and potentially helps to broaden notions of theological reflection on experience, within the lens of ordinary experience as a deepening process rather than a set of separate stages. Contemporary perspectives in spirituality have contributed extensive conversations about the role of experience in theological reflection. Similarly, spirituality has undergone an elitist shift from emphasis on individual and devotional practices to inclusive emphases in methodology that consider both anthropological and historical-contextual perspectives. Such frameworks also recognize the varied relational strata that compose ordinary experience. Voices in feminist theologies strongly emphasize the need for theological reflection that makes a difference in the lives of everyday people by transforming the nature of the social and religious structures in which persons are located. US Latino/a perspectives place lo cotidiano at the forefront of theological conversations and insist on the need to recognize how cultural realities contribute to the struggles and joys found in daily life. Both feminist and Latino/a theologians warn against elitist and separatist models of theological reflection that separate knowing and analysis of experience from the actual reality of those living in the immediacy of ordinary experience.

These many contributions suggest the need for models of practical theological spiritual formation that can address the complex and ongoing nature of meaning-making

processes that come forth from the lived reality of ordinary experience. The next chapter introduces a multifaceted framework in response to the needs for intentional space-making and skill development, which is drawn from the intercultural conversation, as well as to the needs for attentiveness to the transformative nature of experience as it is lived in daily life, which is drawn from many of the voices in the contemporary theological conversation presented in this chapter.

Chapter Five: Introducing Five Ordinary Movements

This chapter serves as a transitional one. The first three chapters of this work seek to establish the background in which the pastoral concern guiding this project is situated. So far, this work establishes ordinary experience as inclusive and complex. In chapter 1, two guiding realms of ordinary experience are introduced as the personal and the relational. These realms exist in tandem with one another and provide a framework for understanding and expression of ordinary experience. Each of these realms in itself is layered. The personal realm can be understood through the characterization of personal knowing as holistic and inclusive of the corporeal, volitional, affective, intuitive, mental, relational, and spiritual elements of the human being. The relational realm recognizes location as an organizing principle and suggests that the relational aspect of experience is concentric and inclusive of ever-widening strata, such as relationship to self, to family, to communities, to society, to creation, and to God. Chapter 2 turns toward the broad category of culture, one that is as complex as ordinary experience. The specific focus on intercultural approaches establishes the need for space-making activities within which interpersonal interactions can occur and be sustained in order to promote authentic and mutual relationality among diverse groups and persons. The issue of skill development comes out of this conversation, and the work of intercultural ministry as practiced by Eric Law reflects the challenge that time imposes upon such development. Chapter 3 addresses the complexity of ordinary experience through an emphasis on life as it is lived. Voices within four theological camps speak to this reality. Attentiveness to life as it is actually lived suggests that approaches that are limiting (as linear or dualistic) are not able to adequately address personal knowing as holistic or relationality as concentric, as

is suggested through the lens of ordinary experience. Layered approaches, which attend to multiple ways of knowing and various relational locations simultaneously, are instead necessary. Such approaches attend to both immediacy and deepening in both realms of ordinary experience. With the complex reality of ordinary experience named, and the challenge of skill development in regard to the creation of space-making activities, this work presently introduces a response to these concerns through a particular framework of movement. The author suggests that the category of movement as a boundary-crossing category brings together the concerns voiced in the previous chapters and addresses the developing conversation about ordinary experience as a category in practical theological spiritual formation.

In the following sections, each of the Five Ordinary Movements and its corollary interpersonal practice is introduced, described, and fleshed out through both examples and references to writers in the Christian spiritual tradition. For each of the movements as metaphor, the layers of holistic knowing are brought forth. For each of the interpersonal practices, varied strata of relationship are exemplified. What follows is a non-exhaustive, descriptive representation of possible connections between the framework of each of the movements and examples of representations and connections that might be drawn from within ordinary experiences.

Consequently, there is no right or wrong association, ordering, or framing within the framework. It is important to note that each movement in itself can potentially speak to a myriad of phenomena in daily life; at the same time, the Five Ordinary Movements together as a framework can also speak to any one particular phenomenon, and especially to phenomena in which a number of complex and interrelated elements might be at work

simultaneously. A temptation for those who seek order might be to start with some aspect of ordinary experience and work backward toward trying to name which of the Five Ordinary Movements corresponds to it. While such an endeavor might produce a connection, another and another and another could potentially be added. In this sense, this model works from an assumption of abundance as opposed to scarcity. The intention is that each of the Five Ordinary Movements might serve as reminders of Sacred Presence as implanted right within the course of ordinary experience from which a relational connection can be drawn.

Also noteworthy, the Five Ordinary Movements and the corollary interpersonal practices framework are described with language that is not explicitly theological, religious, or spiritual. The prominence and accessibility of movement in daily life suggests that the metaphorical and relational connections to the explicitly theological, religious, and spiritual aspects of ordinary experience are potentially conversant with and capable of deepening other frameworks that may be explicitly religious or spiritual and that might already be prominent in a person's lexicon. The Five Ordinary Movements framework serves to deepen the discernable Presence of the Sacred within ordinary living.[1]

[1] In Bevans, *Models*, 21, Stephen Bevans addresses *Issues of Basic Theological Orientation* and describes two basic orientations that are especially relevant for contextual theology. He describes each orientation as creation-centered and redemption-centered. He describes creation-centered stances as "sacramental: the world is the place where God reveals Godself; revelation does not happen in set-apart, particularly holy places, in strange unworldly circumstances, or in words that are spoken in a stilted voice; it comes in daily life, in ordinary words, through ordinary people." By contrast, he describes redemption-centered stances as "characterized by the conviction that culture and human experience are either in need of a radical transformation or in need of total replacement." It is likely obvious which of the stances best describes the approach taken in this work. However, a further nuance in conversations about orientation often sets up

Ups and Downs

Ups and Downs as Metaphor in Daily Life

The Ups and Downs movement is characterized by gentle undulations. This movement is common and simple. It is fluid and flexible. Images of this movement include a broad, mountain-like upward slope and a wide, valley-like downward opening. The Ups and Downs is perhaps the easiest to see in daily life experience.

The Ups and Downs can be perceived at many levels. Physical examples of this movement include the rolling of waves and the wafting of wind currents, evidenced through rocking boats or the efforts of birds when floating against walls of wind. The affective layer of the Ups and Downs is recognizable when one feels moments of being on or off, through the alternation of good days and bad days. Volitional expressions of the Ups and Downs are reflected in the desire to transition from an experience of suffering in daily life to an experience of joy, which often accompanies sorrow. Intuitive moments of the Ups and Downs happen when another person recognizes that "something does not seem right," despite the artificial smile painted on a friend's face. Expressions of the Ups and Downs at the mental level occur in the alternation of "ah-hah" and "getting stumped" moments. Relationally, the Ups and Downs can be discovered through both the things that annoy a person and the things that a person loves about their chosen

---

the dichotomy that one's stance sees God as knowable *either* through faith in and of the things of the world (indirectly, or as a second-order theology of faith) *or,* by contrast, through direct revelation from God (the claim of first-order theology). The claim brought forward in this work is that one does not have to choose either-or; in fact, Godself is really known through relationship, which is inclusive of mediated relationality through a sacramental perspective about creation.

committed partner. Spiritually, the Ups and Downs is recognizable in sacramental perspectives, which recognize Sacred Presence in the objects and events of daily life.

Within the Christian spiritual tradition, the little way of St. Thérese of Lisieux might be considered representative of the sacramental perspective of the Ups and Downs.[2] In her autobiography, Thérese recounts numerous instances from her daily life and interactions with others. She regularly draws from ordinary objects as the impetus for deepening reflection about her interior life (e.g., she describes her own religiosity through the practice of "little virtues"; she refers to her own practice of strewing flowers in contrast to fighting battles as others do; and she uses the interplay of the sweetness of vinegar and the sour taste of vinegar to describe the criticisms that she receives from others).[3] Thérese's little way emphasizes events and relationships from ordinary life and draws meaning from both positive and negative events. Thérese's story suggests that God is found precisely in the Ups and Downs that occur in the midst of daily life, and her writing provides one example of this movement from the Christian spiritual tradition.

Openness/receptivity as Interpersonal Practices

The first interpersonal practice of receptivity and openness are a dual stance. The two descriptors serve as opposite faces of the same stance, where receptivity emphasizes the passive side and openness emphasizes the active side. For example, receptivity is characterized by emptiness, whereas openness is characterized by expansiveness.

---

[2] Thérese, *Story of a Soul*: *The Autobiography of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux*, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: ICS, 1996).

[3] Ibid., 159, 96, 244.

Whereas a receptive stance is one that exhibits neutrality and willingness, an open stance is one that is welcoming and available.

Receptivity is that which makes room for comfort, allows for the possibility of knowing, and attends to details. This practice is recognizable in varied relational strata. For example, receptivity in the self occurs when insight is gained from exposure to a new concept. In the realm of family, receptivity occurs when current family members make space for the arrival of a new member to join the family. In the layer of friendships, receptivity happens whenever someone agrees to meet someone new and get to know the other. At the level of relationship in communities, receptivity is evident when groups provide hospitality to strangers or to those in need. More broadly, in a society, receptivity is observable as values change over time and impact cultural practices. At the national level, receptivity can be seen through laws that allow for the movement of goods and people. In creation, receptivity occurs as the seasons change. In relationship to the Sacred, receptivity is experienced when one is touched by a sense of the "who" beneath the "more." Openness is similar to receptivity, but reflects the active nature of this stance.

Openness is that which accepts newness, appreciates difference, and relishes in possibility. Openness, too, is recognizable at varied levels of relational strata. For example, openness is experienced in the self each time a person tries something new. In the family, openness shows its active side when the child or new family member who was waited for is eventually welcomed. In friendships, openness occurs in the process of offering information about oneself and taking in information from another. At the communal level, openness is exhibited when different groups make room for and attend

to differences between members of different groups. In a society, openness is observed when changes are made in political systems in response to shifts in values and perspectives from members of the society. Nationally, openness is reflected in laws that protect the movement of goods and people. In creation, openness occurs when elements of the natural world respond to the changing seasons. In relationship to the Sacred, openness is experienced when one seeks out glimpses of the "more."

Back and Forth

Back and Forth as Metaphor in Daily Life

The Back and Forth movement is also common and fairly easy to recognize. The energy of this movement is harsher than that of the Ups and Downs. An image of this movement might be of an object swinging between two boundaries from one side to another like a pendulum; it is the place of dualisms and opposites. This movement has a dialectic nature.

The Back and Forth can be perceived at many levels. Physically, the experience of night and day represents this movement. Affectively, this movement can be noticed in the emotional switch that a young child makes between one moment of laughter and the next moment of tears and crying. The Back and Forth moment is recognizable through volition in strong acts of competition that reflect a desire to beat another person in a sport. Intuitively, the Back and Forth movement is recognizable in strategic maneuvers in which a person must recognize the possible advancements of an enemy before the acts are completed. Mentally, the Back and Forth movement happens when a person reads a book and takes in information. Relationally, the Back and Forth movement is most

evident in arguments between people. The Back and Forth movement is noticeable in spirituality within meaning frameworks that juxtapose opposites (e.g., life and death, heaven and hell, and good and evil).

Julian of Norwich might be considered a helpful example of the Back and Forth movement from within the Christian spiritual tradition. In her spiritual writing, Julian portrays a number of oppositional concepts. In fact, the core of her highly relational spirituality of seeing is rooted in "the greatest opposition," which for Julian is the tension between the "highest bliss" of clearly seeing God and the "deepest pain," which is not seeing God clearly.[4] In her parable of the Lord and the Servant, Julian draws from another relational opposition to illustrate the effects of seeing. In this parable, Julian describes the Lord as perfect and at peace. The Servant is also peaceful, but is also filled with a deep desire to please the Lord. In the Servant's eagerness to please, he runs off and falls into a ditch, injuring himself. Julian relays through this story that the Servant's sin is rooted in the desire to serve the Lord, and is not a fault of his own. Despite this, the Servant still perceives himself as separated from and unworthy of the Lord.[5] In yet another oppositional parallel, Julian lays out the effect of sin as seen through the human perspective, which lies in contrast to God's perspective of sin.[6] Though Julian draws heavily upon opposing notions and relational stances in her work, she does move toward integration at times: Julian makes a strong connection between prayer as a source for

---

[4] Julian, Edmund Colledge, and James Walsh, *Showings*, *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 32.

[5] Ibid., 267.

[6] Ibid., 244-47.

right-seeing, which draws the prayer into union with God.[7] Through use of both opposition and integration, Julian provides an example of a writer from the Christian spiritual tradition who speaks to multiple movements in one work.

Mutuality as Interpersonal Practice

The interpersonal practice of mutuality is characterized by permeability and autonomy. Mutuality is a practice that seeks further, probes what is already known, and allows for deepened knowing. In the self, mutuality marks caring for the mind, body, spirit. In the family, mutuality is recognizable through respectful conversation (e.g., not engaging in unnecessary yelling). In friendships, mutuality can be seen when each person attempts to understand the other and in the growth that accompanies knowing another and being known by another. In communities, mutuality occurs when neighbors help each other out. At the societal level of relationship, mutuality happens when communities organize together toward a common good. In a nation, mutuality is represented through laws that protect equality among people. In creation, mutuality marks the dance between the earth and sun. In relationship to the Sacred, mutuality occurs when a person is able to see him or herself and others more closely to the way that God sees them.

Cycling of Spirals

Cycling of Spirals as Metaphor in Daily Life

The movement, Cycling of Spirals, is common in life experience, but it is often hard to see. It is recognized over time. This movement involves repetition and subtle

---

[7] Ibid., 252.

advancements. It is characterized by longevity and depth. There is an ongoing ebb and flow to this movement, experienced in periods of rest and activity. The image of the spiral is a complex shape. Spirals are repetitious and yet creative in each new circling. Within each turning of the spiral, there is a line that represents the Back and Forth movement present at each level of the spiral, and yet the Cycling of Spirals stretches beyond the boundaries of the Back and Forth movement by adding a depth dimension.

The Cycling of Spirals is also recognizable at many levels. Physically, the Cycling of Spirals can be seen in traumatic weather events like a tornado or hurricane, but it is also the shape that is used to represent more stable phenomena like DNA strands. Affectively, the Cycling of Spirals might be noticed when strong alternating feelings, such as those of the toddler laughing and then bursting into tears, that over the years turn into more subtle mood swings of happiness and crabbiness in the maturing adolescent. Volitionally, the Cycling of Spirals in expressed in the athlete's commitment to training for an event for months at a time, while repeating daily exercises with the goal of increasing strength and ability. Intuitively, the Cycling of Spirals is noticeable in good friends or married partners who develop the ability to finish the others' sentences because of how well they have come to know one another. Mentally, the Cycling of Spirals is evident in the physician's ability to treat patients through repeated applications of memorized knowledge. Relationally, the Cycling of Spirals is celebrated when couples learn to recognize their natural vices and begin to choose alternative ways of interacting with their loved ones based on their increasing self-knowledge. Spiritually, the Cycling of Spirals is recognized as maturity when a person moves along recognizable stages of growth.

A term often accredited to Hildegard of Bingen, *greening power* might serve as a helpful example from the Christian tradition for fleshing out the Cycling of Spirals. In Latin, Hildegard's use of the term *veriditas* creatively expresses the vivifying power of God in creation. Hildegard uses the term in a number of ways in her writing, but her specific reference to the vivification of the infant in the mother's womb speaks to the Cycling of Spirals. Hildegard describes how "by the secret design of the Supernal Creator" the infant "moves with vital motion," showing through its movement that it has received its spirit and is alive, "just as the earth opens and brings forth the flowers of its use when the dew falls on it."[8] Hildegard continues to explain that once the infant leaves the womb, the vivifying power remains in the human form as the soul and "spreads itself all through the person's members," giving vitality to the whole body "as the tree from its root gives sap and greenness to all the branches."[9] Hildegard goes on to explain that the person has three paths within the soul, the body, and the senses. She then describes in dance-like form how each of the three paths influences and supports the other. For Hildegard, the greening power of God vivifies the person (and all of creation) in a cyclic dance of forms imbued with the *veriditas* of God.

Dynamism as Interpersonal Practice

The interpersonal practice, dynamism, is characterized by ongoing movement. A dynamic stance is one that commits to transformation and renewal. Dynamism is that which progresses, refines, and stirs. Dynamism is perceivable at many levels of

---

[8] Hildegard, Columba Hart, and Jane Bishop, *Scivias*, *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 119.

[9] Ibid., 120.

relational strata. For example, dynamism in the self might be at work when a person acquires new skills that foster growth. In the family, dynamism marks the periods when roles change between generations. In friendships, dynamism occurs when insights from each other's strengths and weaknesses help the other person to grow and develop. In communities, dynamism is experienced when new policies correct old problems. At the level of society, dynamism is at work when different nations learn from past problems experienced by their own or others' difficulties. In creation, dynamism is evident in the relationship between matter and energy and when species and landscapes change over time. In relation to the Sacred, dynamism marks the call to co-create heaven-on-earth in eschatological perspectives.

Tension of a Web

Tension of a Web as Metaphor in Daily Life

The movement, Tension of a Web, is less recognizable in daily life than the other movements, but is felt more intensely. It resembles being pulled simultaneously in many directions, and can feel similar to the chaos experienced in the Back and Forth movement. However, the Tension of a Web is representative of experiences in which multifaceted, layered elements are perceived as working in tandem rather than as opposites. This movement feels chaotic at the surface of the experience (sitting on the web itself), but is potentially experienced as beautiful or life-giving when the whole of the experience is recognized (stepping back and viewing the design of the web). This movement is resilient.

The Tension of a Web is perceivable at many levels. Physical representations of this movement include actual webs, such as those of spiders or found in playground equipment. A felt sense of this movement could be created by walking along a balance-beam or standing in the center of a circle of people who are all yelling toward the middle; one feels immersed in uncertainty and chaos. Affectively, this moment is potentially felt when the frustration of missing the bus seeps into the annoyance of someone tapping their fingers on a window, which triggers crabbiness in the subsequent interactions with a person on the elevator, and a sense of surprise gets mixed in because of the beauty of the sunrise that is visible through the glass windows of the elevator. Volitionally, the Tension of a Web is felt at crossroads periods in a person's life when many possible options present themselves and it is still unclear which option is most desirable. Intuition often cuts through many competing layers of ideas and emotion and emerges from the Tension of a Web as a felt sense of rightness about a person, event, or decision. Mentally, the Tension of a Web is experienced when competing and contrasting ideas are recognized as irreconcilable, and a person develops a sense of paradox. Relationally, the Tension of a Web can be sensed during times of transition, for example when a mother lets go of her young adult child and shifts from the role of caretaker to companion as the child matures into adulthood. Spiritually, the Tension of a Web is recognizable during times of crisis in one's faith, for example when one's belief system starts to change, or one's notions about God impact one's prayer life in God.

John of the Cross offers insight from the Christian spiritual tradition that lends understanding to the Tension of a Web. John's concept of the Dark Night of the Soul describes a perplexing reality. John suggests that as the Christian soul becomes more

capable of union with God, it in fact undergoes a period in which it senses that God is no longer felt. In John's own words, "but then it may be asked: Why does the soul call the divine light that enlightens the soul and purges it of its ignorance a dark night?"[10] John's response suggests two paradoxical responses: first, because Divine Light is so pure, it is experienced as shadow in the soul throughout the process of purification; and second, even though this process is good for the soul, it is painful.[11] The Tension of a Web addresses complex realities as John describes here. While John may assume that such complex realities are experienced by the spiritually mature soul, the Tension of a Web affirms that complexity, chaos, and paradox is an inevitable aspect of ordinary life.

Ambiguity as Interpersonal Practice

The interpersonal practice of ambiguity is characterized by complexity. An ambiguous stance is marked by an ability to hold tension and be comfortable with unknowing. Ambiguity is that which allows for mystery, supports paradox, and reveals the previously unseen. It is the darkness of the storm clouds before the rainbow is revealed. Ambiguity can be perceived at many relational levels. For example, in the self, ambiguity marks times of crisis in relationships and in one's faith. In the family, ambiguity is experienced in times of transition before the meaning of unsettling events becomes clear, or when multiple meanings are present in possible opportunities. In friendships, ambiguity is observed when someone waits patiently before resolving the other's problems in order to allow more to arise from within the other person. At the

[10] Bernard McGinn, *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*, Modern Library Classics (New York: Modern Library, 2006), 386.

[11] Ibid., 386-88.

communal level, ambiguity happens when boundaries of sameness and difference are blurred between groups of people or individuals. In a society, ambiguity marks the circumstances when many competing needs arise in conflict. In creation, ambiguity is present in our inability to know with certainty how the universe came to exist or when a caterpillar officially becomes a butterfly. In relation to the Sacred, ambiguity taps into the mystery of where God ends and humans and creation begin.

Vibration of Concentric Circles

Vibration of Concentric Circles as Metaphor in Daily Life

The movement, Vibration of Concentric Circles, is the hardest movement to see or settle into, perhaps because of its stationary-yet-dynamic nature. It is characterized as dynamic equilibrium, resting while also full of the activity of be-ing. This movement taps into experiences of harmony and union. It expresses the inherent human tendency to remember and rest in the reality of Source. If one were to hold a three-dimensional model of this movement, dynamism-in-equilibrium could be recognized by feeling the vibrations of the stationary structure.

The Vibration of Concentric Circles is also recognizable in many layers. Physically, this movement can be replicated by splashing a rock into a still lake and noting the ripples that flow from the center. Affectively, the Vibration of Concentric Circles is represented by experiences of serene stillness or peace. Volitionally, the Vibration of Concentric Circles is paradoxically experienced when one's own efforts are quieted, and yet one's desires are fulfilled. Intuitively, the Vibration of Concentric Circles speaks to moments of harmony and rightness about the surrounding state of

things. Mentally, the Vibration of Concentric Circles is representative of moments of effortless clarity or gifted insight. Relationally, the Vibration of Concentric Circles might be represented through experiences of understanding among peoples (e.g., across generations in a family or across borders among nations). Spiritually, the Vibration of Concentric Circles is representative of allusions to Oneness that are described in various spiritual and faith traditions.

Teresa of Avila is a writer from the Christian spiritual tradition who speaks to the Vibration of Concentric Circles movement. In one of Teresa's mature works, *The Interior Castle*, she describes the interiority of spiritual experience as a complex castle with seven rooms in it. Her description starts from the outside of the castle and moves toward the middle.[12] In each room, Teresa describes events and relationships from daily life to illustrate her descriptions. This text is addressed to her companion sisters, and in some cases she draws from their shared life and in other cases from her own personal experiences. Teresa also used metaphors from daily life to describe distinctions between each of the rooms. For example, a favorite of hers is water. She describes heavenly water as a spring that is deep within each person, that "swells and expands [one's] whole interior."[13] She also uses the image of water in troughs to distinguish between the kinds of spiritual movements that occur within a person in part because of their own effort and those that occur solely as a gift from God. In the former, a complex system of aquaducts and engineering brings the water; whereas in the latter, the water fills effortlessly and

---

[12] Teresa, *The Interior Castle*, The Classics of Western Spirituality, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriquez (New York: Paulist Press, 1979).

[13] Ibid., 75.

quietly and overflows the trough.[14] These descriptions are part of the fourth layer of rooms in the castle. In the sixth dwelling place, however, the water image intensifies and now becomes a swell of water so great and abundantly given by God that the entire boat of the soul is lifted and soars with delight.[15] The image of water within Teresa's descriptions of the seven rooms provides an example of the way in which multiple movements within the Five Ordinary Movements framework can together describe or deepen an experience from ordinary life. In this case, the overall castle with its complex of seven layers is reminiscent of the Vibration of Concentric Circles. However, the water troughs running with water might speak to the dynamism of the Cycling of Spirals, and the flood of water from the sixth dwelling place might cause one to sense the movement of the Ups and Downs. As noted in the introduction, there is no right or wrong but rather an abundance of connections that serve to broaden and deepen ordinary experience.

Resonance as Interpersonal Practice

The interpersonal practice of resonance is characterized by freedom and wholeness. A stance of resonance is one that realizes fulfillment and completion. Resonance cleanses pollution, clears out clogs, and reduces limitation. Resonance is characterized by surrender. It entails less focus on activity and output, not in the sense of lack of activity, but rather of setting aside effort and allowing the experience of simply be-ing in harmony with what already is. Resonance is perceived in varied relational strata. For example, resonance in the self happens when a person drops a harmful habit. In the family, resonance is experienced when deep, intergenerational wounds are healed.

---

[14] Ibid., 74.

[15] Ibid., 134.

In friendships, resonance marks the moments when one person is able to accept another person just as they are. In communities, resonance happens through the work of different churches and nonprofit organizations coming together for social justice causes. In a society, resonance is observed when inter-faith harmony occurs and when international peace treaties are practiced. In creation, resonance is found in both the complexity of the structure of molecules and cells and also in the expansiveness of a starry night in a rural area. In relation to the Sacred, resonance is when a particular person's will and God's will align and are recognized as such.

Emilie Conrad offers a description of resonance within the context of movement awareness.[16] In her description of one exercise called "Complexifying the Dura Mater," through which practitioners gradually become more attuned to movements within their own bodies, Emilie describes this challenging exercise as "a movement that will curl [one] inward where the top of the head and heart have a resonance. This is a form of prayer, and what is so amazing is that it is biological."[17]

---

[16] Louise M. Pare, "Moving Between the Worlds She Brings Forth all Things from Within Her Body: Intrinsic Movement as Transformative Spiritual Practice and Expression of Women's Spirituality," PhD diss. (California Institute of Integral Studies, 2002), 120-22. As part of her research on intrinsic movement, Pare describes interviews of people who knew Emilie Conrad and tells her story in developing a form of healing dance referred to as "Continuum Movement," which teaches the practitioner to become more and more attuned to the microcosmic movements within the body as a way toward healing.

[17] Ibid., 136.

The Five Ordinary Movements in Communal Prayer Practice

As was alluded to in the prior reflection on Teresa of Avila's interior castle, the movements often are sensed together in one particular phenomenon. This section offers an example through reflection on an ancient monastic Christian practice. The communal Christian prayer, Liturgy of the Hours, provides an example of a prayer practice in which the framework of the Five Ordinary Movements can be brought forward as a layered metaphorical tool for meaning-making. The Liturgy of the Hours (LOH) is often celebrated in religious or committed lay communities in which a shared rhythm of prayer at multiple times in each day marks a shared practice. The LOH combines sung Psalmody (in which the entirety of the Psalms is divided into sections over time and repeated throughout the year), scripture readings from other biblical books, spiritual readings, and sometimes reflections that are offered for the community by an individual.

Each of the Five Ordinary Movements is recognizable in these varied aspects of the LOH. For example, the Psalms are often set to a style of music that is chant-like, which means that phrases are sung through repetition of one note, interspersed by subtle changes in tone for certain parts of the phrases, such as the end or the middle. The gentle shifts between tones provide a felt sense of the Ups and Downs as they are sung by the community members. Usually in communities, the varied stanzas of the Psalms are separated into Choir One and Choir Two, which means that for each stanza the people sitting on opposite sides of the room alternate singing. This is a very literal sense of the Back and Forth movement. However, there is also a metaphorical sense of the Back and Forth as each person engages the content of the Psalm that is being sung and relates it to his or her own life experiences. The Cycling of Spirals is literally experienced as the

entire set of the Psalms is repeated throughout the year. However, an additional nuance is that for those who participate in the LOH over a period of many years, there is an ongoing sense in which certain Psalms may have impacted a person at one stage in their life quite differently than at another stage. The Tension of a Web is felt during those periods in which particularly violent sections of the Psalms might surprise a person of faith, who perhaps formerly thought that only "good" things could be found in the Bible, and might make another person uncomfortable as she recognizes herself in the violent content of the sung words. The Vibration of Concentric Circles might be literally felt in the resonance of harmonious chords in the music, especially on those days when others' coughs and distracting noises seem to disappear and resound with clarity and beauty. The Vibration of Concentric Circles might also be felt in the internal dialogue of a participant who is gifted with a felt sense that his or her choice to join this particular community has been affirmed after many years of doubt or struggle.

This brief chapter introduces, describes, and elaborates upon the Five Ordinary Movements framework. The layered nature of the Five Ordinary Movements framework is illustrated both by examples of the movements as part of holistic ways of knowing and by their concentric relationality. The layered nature of the framework is further drawn out through an example of the Five Ordinary Movements as part of a communal prayer experience. These examples specifically reflect the author's intentions and interpretations of the Five Ordinary Movements framework. More broadly, the Five Ordinary Movements framework serves as a boundary-crossing hermeneutical tool. None of these movements is new in any sense; in fact, they are deeply and widely prominent in ordinary experience. The significance of this particular construction is to

consider and notice them together as well as apart as abundant and creative. Noticing these actual movements in everyday life, but with the intention of seeking the Sacred through the metaphorical possibility of each movement, potentially helps to lessen the perceived gap between the Sacred and the profane that so many ordinary believers carry in their hearts and minds. Movement provides a language that helps to make God's implicit Presence in ordinary life more recognizably explicit. Furthermore, the structure of the corollary interpersonal practices paired with each movement suggests an inherent connection between knowing and being as both relational categories. To consider the interactive dynamics of the interpersonal practices attached to each movement provides an invitation toward intentional space-making. Such are the general contributions of the movement framework. The rest of this work will continue to elaborate their value and dynamics for practical theological spiritual formation.

In the sixth chapter, the Five Ordinary Movements as described here are shared with others and further elaborated upon in both a retreat and in classroom settings. Prior to that, however, in the following chapter the broader category of movement and the particular framework of the Five Ordinary Movements are reviewed in light of prominent themes within practical theology and spirituality. Four specific contributions in the two fields are drawn from the Five Ordinary Movements framework.

Chapter Six: Statement of the Pastoral Situation: Five Ordinary Movements as a Response in Practical Theology and Spirituality

The current chapter reiterates the complexity of ordinary experience as a pastoral concern within which practical theological spiritual formation is situated. In particular, attention toward holistic knowing, concentric relationality, and interpersonal space-making activities are suggested as criteria for establishing a response. As part of the current response, this work returns to key themes in practical theology and spirituality and offers specific contributions that aspire to build upon current conversations on these themes: metaphor, model/method, practice/*praxis*, and action. These contributions are offered from within a framework of Five Ordinary Movements, including five corollary interpersonal practices.

Statement of the Situation

The Complexity of Ordinary Experience

Contemporary efforts toward practical theological spiritual formation must attend to equipping people of faith with the ability to deal with complexity if they are to address lived reality.[1] The complexity of experience suggests the need for models that allow for multilayered understanding.[2] Furthermore, a many-dimensional concept of experience is necessary.[3] Insights from contemporary personality theory suggest that spiritual guidance today will "have to be in harmony with the dynamics flowing from life as a

---

[1] Wolfteich, "Graceful Work," 9-11. Wolfteich alludes to the issue of complexity in this section of her work three times.

[2] "Animating Questions," 138.

[3] Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 34.

whole, and not just one layer of life."[4] Care must be given to equip individuals and communities with resources to respond to complexity in life.[5] Experience must be recognized as socially constructed, culturally framed, and consequently complex because of the fluidity and movement between and among different social and cultural contexts.[6] The reality of interculturality suggests that experience is a constant journey in a space where continuous movement of thought and action, in relationship to other people and cultures, is fomented.[7] This requires a "disciplined practice of uncovering all the levels of experience that are present in the encounter."[8] Unfortunately, many models and methods within the scope of practical theological spiritual formation do not adequately address this reality.

Addressing Holistic Knowing and Concentric Relationality in Ordinary Experience

The lens of ordinary experience recognizes the complexity of experience for particular persons through the holistic nature of knowing. For example, ordinary experience addresses human knowing as inclusive of the corporeal, volitional, affective, intuitive, mental, relational, and spiritual elements of each particular human being. In order for people to make sense of their lives and deepen the immediacy of their lived

---

[4] Gratton, *Art of Spiritual Guidance*, 13. Gratton names specific layers, including socio-historical, vital, functional, transcendent, and the pneumatic.

[5] Graham, *Transforming Practice*, 52.

[6] Lartey, *Pastoral Theology*, 89.

[7] Campusano, "Between Oppression and Resistance," 179.

[8] Elizabeth Liebert, "The Role of Practice," 91.

experiences through ongoing reflection and relationality, these various aspects of human knowing must be recognized and placed into conversation with one another through theological reflection models that are capable of addressing experience and meaning-making as ongoing and layered. Frameworks of theological reflection, which can simultaneously speak to the immediacy of ordinary experience and also remain relevant throughout the process of deepening ordinary experience through reflection on it and transformative action based in it, are needed.

Ordinary experience also recognizes human relationships as multifaceted (i.e., inclusive of ever-widening strata, such as the relationship to self, to family, to communities, to society, to creation, and to God). Part of equipping ordinary believers to respond to the complexity of life as it is lived must include holistic cognitive frameworks that allow particular persons to see both their own relationality and the situated relationality of others in a shared container of concern for the common good. Furthermore, such "seeing" must be accompanied by a relational emphasis on the development of interpersonal relational skills that equip persons to choose actions that will promote the well-being of themselves and others in relationship to one another.

Adequate frameworks for addressing meaning-making and transformative activity, as a deepening of the immediacy of ordinary experience as it is actually lived in daily life, will necessarily draw from ordinary organizational categories. The language of such frameworks must be drawn from within the realm of the ordinary itself. To do otherwise, as in the case of using specialized language for meaning-making constructs, would be to err toward exclusion. As inclusive, ordinary organizational categories should be easily recognizable, broadly accessible, and deeply capable of addressing complexity.

In this work, a series of movements as a layered theological metaphor is proposed as one possibility.

Response: Movement as a Category for Practical Theological Spiritual Formation

Movement is easily recognizable. It can be seen, felt, and thought about. Movement is participatory. The symbol participates in that to which it points.[9] Movement is experienced in ordinary living. People see the movement of external objects around them in the world. People feel movement internally through shifts in moods or the digestion of food. People also recognize movement over time through changes in relational dynamics between individual persons and groups. Changes in the natural landscapes between seasons and throughout centuries also represent experiences of movement. Energy moves throughout the entire universe, and yet is also perceivable in a particular person or creature. Movement is both a part of reality and also a way to describe reality.

Movement is also a highly accessible category. Movement is everywhere, always available and potentially perceived in experience. Movement as a symbol is able to point beyond itself because it speaks naturally to its cognitive counterparts.[10] Movement as a symbol is a means by which people come to understand their experience of reality; it is not a substitute for reality, but a way to reflect on the experience of it.[11] Movement as a

[9] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 47. Tillich notes the participatory nature of symbols as one of six qualities of symbols.

[10] Ibid.

symbol can help to deepen reflection on immediate experience. Symbols open up levels of reality that may otherwise remain closed.[12] Movement is felt physically within the realm of ordinary experience, and yet at the same time as a conceptual category movement also translates into relational and spiritual language. For example, there is a Back and Forth movement in conversations between people. Movements of the Spirit refer to God's activity in the world. Movement descriptors are part of ordinary language about daily life events.

Movement also speaks to complexity. Movement is experienced in layers. The breadth and depth of possible experiences of movement is holistic—physically, emotionally, cognitively, spiritually. Movement often experienced physically can also be expressed metaphorically in relational patterns for meaning-making. For example, the in-and-out movement of breath through the nose and into lungs is often used as the basis for interpersonal practices prayer in which the Spirit of God is parallel to the breath and taken in and breathed out. Perceiving movement in daily life and interpreting meaning from movement in metaphorical expression is a spiritual practice. Movement is both partly the experience of reality and also a way to relate to reality, even in its ultimate expressions. In this way, movement as a symbol can unlock dimensions of the soul that correspond to reality.[13] Just as *experience* and *culture* are foundational categories that point to the complex nature of reality, *movement* is also proposed here as a foundational category. However, the case is made for movement as a boundary-crossing category that

---

[11] Ross, *Extravagent Affections*, 141.

[12] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 47.

[13] Ibid.

weaves together themes and concerns that are found in theological conversations regarding the other foundational categories. Before returning to the theological conversations, however, two interdisciplinary conversation partners are invited in.

Movement as a Category in Related Disciplines

This section explores two distinct academic frameworks: psychosomatic and human development. In particular, the category of movement is drawn out and its relationship to the Five Ordinary Movements framework is suggested. Most importantly, this section serves to confirm movement as a relational category. Each of the fields discussed here address movement in infants and early childhood and draws conclusions about communication and relationality for adults based on early experiences. This approach found in both of these areas is similar to the notion of immediacy and deepening of both knowing and relationality within the framework of ordinary experience. In particular, a shared assumption about movement in these two fields, which addresses movement as a pre-reflective mode of knowing and communication, affirms assertions that are often made in theological conversations about the pre-reflective mode of the realm of the Sacred.

Foundational movement analysis

In *The First Year and the Rest of Your Life: Movement, Development, and Psychotherapeutic Change*, authors Ruella Frank and Frances La Barre weave together a work that is of interest to a range of interdisciplinary fields, including somatics, psychotherapy, communication, and human development.[14] In this work, they weave

---

[14] Ruella Frank and Frances La Barre, *The First Year and the Rest of Your Life*: *Movement, Development, and Psychotherapeutic Change* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

together insights from their related fields in order to propose a new theory called foundational movement analysis.[15] As a conceptual framework within psychotherapy, foundational movement analysis emphasizes that the details of movement that are found in interactions between people is a vital way to grasp the essentials of relationships and to help promote change in those relationships.[16] To support this theory, they draw upon interactions between infants in the first year of life and their primary caretakers.

Communication during infancy is basically nonverbal. Frank and La Barre suggest, "the patterns of nonverbal interactions emerging in infancy continue to serve as the foundation of a person's expressive interactive repertoire throughout life."[17] Movement is the exclusive language of the first year, but it does not disappear after infancy; rather, it remains central to communication throughout life.[18] Based on clinical observation, Frank and La Barre suggest, "movements become part of the baby's efforts to self-regulate and to regulate interpersonal relationships."[19] Consequently, they suggest that fundamental movements are "integral aspects of experience," which act like the building blocks of basic actions that allow for both self-awareness and interpersonal competence.[20] Much like other structural models in human development, they suggest that the relational developmental progression of the fundamental movements builds upon

---

[15] Ibid., xix.

[16] Ibid., 3.

[17] Ibid., 1.

[18] Ibid., 9.

[19] Ibid., 21.

[20] Ibid., 22.

earlier movements, meaning that the basic movements never disappear, but are rather complexified.[21]

Frank and La Barre point to contemporary neuroscience for support of their theory. For example, they draw upon the notion of motor-based empathy from neuroscience, which has found that when movement in a field of action is observed, a cross-section of neurons, gathers the same information in the brain to understand both one's own actions and also the actions of others.[22] Mirror neurons allow for the recognition and understanding of the actions of others because they fire both when a person completes an action himself and also when the action is observed in another. This is referred to as "embodied empathy."[23] Frank and La Barre further draw upon case-study investigation on canonical neurons. Canonical neurons fire when a person grasps, holds, or manipulates an object, such as a cup. However, they also fire just from observing the graspable object, even if it is not handled. Case-study investigators point to this neuron-firing sequence as evidence for pre-reflective perception about possible actions in response to seeing objects. Frank and La Barre point out that such perception is based upon action, or movement.[24] While neuroscience is not either of the authors' area of specialty, they use interdisciplinary insights to support their own work.

For their own theory, Frank and La Barre draw upon two basic lenses from movement theory, including fundamental movements and movement inclinations. The

---

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., 16.

[23] Ibid., 17.

[24] Ibid.

fundamental movements are yield, push, reach, grasp, pull, and release. The movement inclinations describe the quality of the movements (e.g., the intensity of the movement, the flow of the movement, the tension of the movement, and the spatial location of the movement).[25]

Interestingly, this framework parallels the Five Ordinary Movements framework. The metaphorical images of the Five Ordinary Movements are strikingly similar to the fundamental movements suggested by Frank and La Barre. Additionally, their use of the movement inclinations to describe the quality of movements correlates to the interpersonal dynamics addressed by the interpersonal practices and the corresponding Five Ordinary Movements. In both models, a holistic conceptual framework is accompanied by a layered interpersonal framework. In their descriptions of interactions between babies and caretakers, the authors use their movement framework to illustrate basic examples of the type of developmental growth that babies experience in their first year, and then they apply those insights into psychotherapeutic observations and suggestions for helping caretakers to better relate to their infants. A number of interesting parallels can be found in these dynamics when compared to the Five Ordinary Movements.

For example, in the first fundamental movement of yielding, Frank and La Barre suggest that the relationship between the parent and child must be secure enough that the baby can learn to sense the underlying support of the caretakers arms when being held. Through this sense of support, the baby learns to yield to the caretaker's arms, which

---

[25] Ibid., 4.

provides the baby with a sense of his or her own weightedness. From this physical observation, the authors note that "acts of yielding are the basis for experiences of receptivity at every level of functioning for both the baby and the adult" because the baby simultaneously gives itself over, as it receives support from the adult.[26] Related to yielding is their second movement, pushing. Frank and La Barre note that the experience of pushing against another allows the baby to experience his or her density. They suggest that this physical experience provides for the psychological experience of cohesion and integration. Pushing allows for a sense of separation and boundaries. Whereas the yield allows the baby to join with another, the push allows the baby to differentiate from another.[27] In the Five Ordinary Movements framework, there are only five movements, as compared to Frank and La Barre's six fundamental movements. However, the two-sided face of the interpersonal practices of openness and receptivity similarly address the dynamics described by the authors in these first two movements.

The third fundamental movement is reaching. Frank and La Barre point out that in order for this movement to emerge, the longed-for-object (stimulus) must be available (to provide a response).[28] Frank and La Barre relate this movement to the psychological experience of searching for pleasure, comfort, and nourishment. Reaching is about wanting, needing, desiring, and longing. To reach is to take a risk and experience the unknown.[29] The Tension of a Web movement, with its corollary interpersonal practice of

---

[26] Ibid., 25.

[27] Ibid., 26.

[28] Ibid., 28.

[29] Ibid.

ambiguity, correlates with this description of these layers of physical and psychological experiences.

Grasping is the fourth fundamental movement in Frank and La Barre's framework. They suggest that grasping emerges through the completion of reaching. Once the object that was desired is held, a sense of stability emerges. The baby is assured that something "is there" when he or she reaches out toward otherness.[30] The relatedness of the unknown in reaching and the concreteness of grasping that prompts the baby forward toward assurance, reflects the dynamics of growth and change that are described by the Cycling of Spirals and the interpersonal practice of dynamism.

The fifth fundamental movement is pulling. Frank and La Barre describe the pull as an act of drawing what is "other" toward the baby and incorporating it into the self. Pulling allows for the development of differentiation and its qualities of attraction, resistance, and flexibility. Pulling provides for a sense of "me-with-you" that contributes to healthy autonomy.[31] These dynamics correlate to the Back and Forth movement and the interpersonal practice of mutuality.

The last fundamental movement in their framework is release. Frank and La Barre suggest that initially release is only possible passively as a tandem element of yielding.[32] They suggest that later it becomes a more intentional choice, such as in processes of "letting go" and moving into the present.[33] This fundamental movement

---

[30] Ibid., 28-29.

[31] Ibid., 29-30.

[32] Ibid., 30.

correlates with the Vibration of Concentric Circles and the interpersonal practice of resonance.

It is striking that two frameworks from two distinct fields (in this case, theology and psychosomatics) would produce parallel theoretical models and methods that converge in the category of movement. In each case, the six fundamental movements and movement inclinations of Frank and La Barre, and the Five Ordinary Movements and interpersonal practices presented in this work, a metaphorical construct based on actual physical movement is used to inform interpersonal relational dynamics. In both cases, the metaphorical theoretical model allows for a layered approach to the method suggested by the model. In the work of Frank and La Barre, this is evident in (1) the therapeutic process that evolves from first observing the movements, (2) the metaphorical naming of the movement in relation to a psychological construct, and (3) the offering of therapeutic strategies to caretakers who seek to improve their relationships with the infants in their care. Within the framework of the Five Ordinary Movements, while broader in scope, the methodological process is similar: the felt sense of each movement as noticed and experienced in daily life is connected as a construct of meaning-making through which the Presence of God can be discerned and responded to in the course of ordinary events and relationships. An understanding of ordinary experience as holistic in its epistemic assumptions and layered in its relational perspectives provides grounds for conversations across disciplines. Faith development theory is another helpful framework that exemplifies the holistic and layered nature of models and methods that attempt to grapple with the complex nature of ordinary experience.

---

[33] Ibid., 35.

Faith development theory

Though firmly situated within the field of theology, faith development theory is also interdisciplinary. Building upon forerunners of human development within psychology, such as Jean Piaget in cognitive development, Lawrence Kohlberg in moral development, and Erik Erikson in psychosocial development, faith development theorists, such as James Fowler and Sharon Daloz Parks, emphasize a developmental approach to faith.[34] Broadly, within developmental perspectives there are two basic approaches known as the structuralist approach and the lifespan approach, though some investigators name additional approaches.[35] The structuralist approach suggests that human beings move through recognizable, universal stages in developmental schemas, and is representative of the early work done by Piaget and Kohlberg.[36] The lifespan approach emphasizes the interaction between biological life events and social roles over time, and is representative of the work of Erikson.[37] Fowler acknowledges five areas from which he has drawn upon the structuralist approach as it has been developed in the complementary discipline of human development and how it informs his scope in faith

---

[34] Jean Piaget and Bärbel Inhelder, *The Psychology of the Child* (New York: Basic Books, 1969); Lawrence Kohlberg, *Essays on Moral Development* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981); Erik H. Erikson and Joan M. Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed*, extended ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997).

[35] Nicola Slee, *Women's Faith Development*: *Patterns and Processes*, Explorations in Practical, Pastoral, and Empirical Theology (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 17-27. In this section, Slee reviews the following camps in developmental approaches: lifespan, structural stages, relational psychodynamic, and dialectical.

[36] James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith*: *The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 98.

[37] Ibid., 106.

development. Fowler draws mainly from the structuralist approach, and firmly bases his work in that camp by noting a number of the insights that are offered by his predecessors: first, he points to the epistemological contributions of early models in which many ways of knowing are recognized; second, he points to the contribution of a structural representation of knowledge rather than an emphasis on the content aspect of knowledge; third, he notes that the structuralist models suggest integrative approaches to varied modes of knowing; fourth, he highlights the interactive and relational aspect that is developed in structural approaches; and fifth, he notes that structural-stage theories carry weight in establishing normative findings.[38] In regards to the contributions of lifespan approaches, Fowler admits that he relies less heavily on the lifespan approach as a primary method, but that it serves as a backdrop that informs his overall approach to listening to life stories. Fowler suggests that the lifespan approach is helpful in naming functional aspects of experience and for getting at existential issues that are experienced in life.[39]

By now, a definite pattern about the layered nature of ordinary experience emerges. In chapter 1, the work of anthropologist Clifford Geertz, with its emphasis on the stratigraphic nature of cultural analysis, contributes the concept of "thick descriptions" in theology.[40] In chapter 2, intercultural theologians such as Maria Pilar Aquino draw upon philosopher Raul Fornet-Betancourt to establish methodological guidelines that seek to undo many of the power norms and practices found in daily life

---

[38] Ibid., 98-100.

[39] Ibid., 109.

[40] Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 37.

circumstances in order to promote more just theological conversations.[41] In chapter 3, Pete Ward draws the notion of a "circuit" from contemporary cultural studies to inform his theological reflections as nonlinear, which allows for a methodological emphasis on simultaneity.[42] Noted above, Fowler draws upon the epistemic foundations of developmental structuralists to establish an emphasis on holistic knowing and acting in faith development theory. Each of these examples suggests the value of a layered methodological and epistemological stance as an approach toward grappling with complexity. Within faith development perspectives, the category of faith further serves to address the complexities in ordinary life as layered and holistic. These emphases can be seen especially through the work of James Fowler and Sharon Daloz Parks.

Both Fowler and Parks emphasize faith as a layered and relational phenomenon. For example, Parks recognizes four basic relational factors in the faith conversation: the self, others, the world, and God.[43] As part of a longer conversation addressing the topic of faith, Parks distinguishes faith from religion, noting that when faith is limited only to notions of religion, a number of issues arise that narrow the concept of faith: first, faith becomes a single element rather than a multifaceted element of life; second, faith becomes personal or private rather than also public; and third, faith can become imposed upon others as a set of beliefs, which is ultimately a static notion of faith.[44] Parks states

---

[41] Aquino, "Toward a Shared Future of Justice," 15.

[42] Ward, *Participation and Mediation*, 78-80.

[43] Sharon Daloz Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*: *Mentoring Young Adults in their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 5.

[44] Ibid., 15.

that "faith is not simply a set of beliefs that religious people have; it is something that all human beings do" and as such is an inclusive category.[45] Similarly, Fowler also suggests that faith as inclusive is not always religious.[46] "Faith is a person's or group's way of moving into the force field of life. It is [a] way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up [life]. Faith is a person's way of seeing him- or herself in relation to others against a background of shared meaning and purpose."[47] Faith is not a separate dimension of life from the rest of life; rather it is the most fundamental category in the human quest for relation to transcendence.[48] Structural theories that address faith help to address the complexity of ordinary experience.[49] Faith theories develop "elaborate and dynamic model[s] of very complex patterns in [life.]"[50] For example, Fowler stresses the relational aspect of faith when he suggests that structural-developmental theories of faith must be theories of both personal knowing and also of acting (i.e., that this perspective about the person is not individualistic but rather

---

[45] Ibid., 18.

[46] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 4.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., 14.

[49] Elizabeth Liebert, *Changing Life Patterns*: *Adult Development in Spiritual Direction*, expanded ed. (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 38-40. Liebert offers thirteen assertions about structural development theories based on her observations of the literature and practices, one of which also explicitly addresses the relationship between structural stage theories and complexity, as she notes that "a stage is simply an abstract convention which denotes the most complex meaning system which a person uses consistently in the ordinary circumstances of life."

[50] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, xiii.

recognizes that persons are formed socially).[51] Fowler describes faith both as a "verb" and also as inherently "relational."[52]

Faith developmental theorists such as Fowler and Parks also tend to offer holistic epistemological perspectives. Both authors acknowledge Tillich as a foundational philosophical source for their understanding of faith. Tillich explicitly notes the cognitive, the emotive, and the volitional aspects of faith.[53] Building upon that foundation, Parks constructs a three-tiered theoretical framework of faith development stages, which emphasizes the cognitive, the affective, and the relational realms of knowing through forms of knowing, forms of dependence, and forms of community.[54] Parks offers a set of stages for each of these forms, and suggests that the three work together to form a "dynamic, multi-dimensional, creative process" of faith.[55] For Parks, faith includes "the activity of seeking and discovering meaning in the most comprehensive dimensions of [life] experience."[56] Meaning-making is at the heart of human experience and is foundational to Park's holistic understanding of knowing in faith. "Meaning-making is the activity of composing a sense of the connections among things: a sense of patterns, order, form, and significance. To be human is to seek coherence and correspondence. To be human is to want to be oriented to one's

---

[51] Ibid., 105.

[52] Ibid., 16.

[53] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 8.

[54] Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, 91.

[55] Ibid., 102.

[56] Ibid., 7.

surroundings. To be human is to desire relationship among the disparate elements of existence."[57] Here, Parks's emphasis on relational knowing is evident and complements her understanding of knowing in faith as also "rational" and "passional," meaning that knowing in faith also incorporates the cognitive and affective dimensions of human knowing.[58] Similarly, Fowler reflects on faith as multidimensional, noting that across spiritual traditions, faith has to do with an alignment of the will, a resting of the heart, and a vision of the transcendent.[59] For Fowler, too, the foundation of meaning-making as integral to faith suggests that beyond faith, there is "no other concept that holds together those various interrelated dimensions of human knowing, valuing, committing, and acting that must be considered together if [one wants] to understand the making and maintaining of human meaning."[60] As evidenced by Fowler and Parks, practical models that address the complexity of ordinary experience, such as those in faith development schema, gravitate toward epistemological perspectives that take into consideration the wholeness of human knowing. As such, faith development models suggest inclusive perspectives about human knowing.[61] Another way in which faith development models promote

---

[57] Ibid., 19.

[58] Ibid., 32.

[59] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*.

[60] Ibid., 92.

[61] Liebert, *Changing Life Patterns*, 40. Here, in Liebert's developmental contribution to the field of spiritual direction, she points out that structural models do not supply the content of faith, but rather they "illumine" the development from less to more inclusion about what is included in believing processes.

inclusion, especially those represented by Parks and Fowler, is by defining faith as a universal constant in human experience.

As universal, the category of faith is similar to the other broad categories brought forth in this work that seek to grapple with the complexity of ordinary experience, such as *culture* and *experience*.[62] Again, both Fowler and Parks build upon the foundational work of Paul Tillich.[63] Parks describes faith in its "broadest, most inclusive form as the activity of meaning-making that all human beings share."[64] Similarly, Fowler suggests faith as a human universal for the following reasons: first, because it shapes both personal and corporate behavior; second, because it relates to core aspects of human experience, such as meaning, trust, and hope; third, because its expressions are always particular and finite while also universal; and fourth, because it is a dynamic phenomenon that undergoes transformation throughout the entire human life span.[65] Faith, as a category that grapples with the complex reality of human experience is similar to other broad categories, such as experience, culture, and spirituality.

Significant to the scope of this work is that Parks in particular draws frequently upon the notion of faith "as the motion of life."[66] She cites references across faith

---

[62] Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, 16. Notably, Parks addresses "spirituality" and faith. Unfortunately, however, her description of spirituality is unusually short by comparison to the other categories included in this work. The few comments that she does offer suggest compatibility and overlap between the two terms.

[63] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 146. Tillich describes faith as an "essential possibility," which therefore makes "its existence necessary and universal."

[64] Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, xi.

[65] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 16-17.

traditions that refer the activity of the Spirit as air, breath, and wind, all of which suggest faith as ongoing, multifaceted, dynamic, and transformative.[67] She describes persons of "strong faith" as those who "dwell in a consciousness of an intricate, intimate pattern of life that is continuously in motion and yet holds at the level of ultimacy."[68] Persons of faith draw upon their faith to respond to the struggles and challenges found in daily life. Parks further draws upon the notion of motion in Robert Kegan's work.[69] Kegan suggests motion as a "meaning-constitutive activity."[70] He proposes that the developing sense of the self in relation to others is dependent upon the back-and-forth motion of perception of self in relationship to others, and notes that "this is a rhythm central to the underlying motion of personality."[71] Similar to the work of Frank and La Barre, Kegan unpacks the significance of the sensory period of human infancy, both in biological and psychological terms. Drawing upon Piaget, Kegan describes the acquisition of the capacity for reflection, noting that "the child [gradually moves] from being subject to its reflexes, movements, and sensations, to having reflexes, movements, and sensations."[72] Kegan does not suggest that the foundational movements go away, but rather suggests

---

[66] Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, 31.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid., 32.

[69] Ibid., 42.

[70] Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self*: *Problem and Process in Human Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 76-77. Kegan develops this theory of motion as the underlying structure of personality theory based on, and as an extension of, his review of the structural developmental work of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg.

[71] Ibid., 83. Kegan uses the terms *subject* and *object* rather than *self* and *other*.

[72] Ibid., 30.

that they serve as the foundations of thinking that precede the capacity for later abilities of perception. Perception, then, develops from infancy as a new structure of human capacity that allows a person "to reflect on sensations and actions."[73] Along with other structural developmentalists, Kegan emphasizes the primacy of the role of meaning-making as fundamental to human experience. He proposes that "the activity of being a person is the activity of meaning-making"; humans literally "make sense" from what happens to them.[74] This perspective on meaning-making parallels the emphasis on both immediacy and deepening within the lens of ordinary experience. Furthermore, Kegan establishes movement as an inherently relational category.

This section both begins and ends with two interdisciplinary perspectives that draw specifically from the category of movement or motion to describe meaning-making processes. Frank and La Barre articulate a specific theoretical framework of six fundamental movements that they use in their clinical practice. Kegan demonstrates in his work that motion is the underlying source of structural developmental theories, which is evidenced in the work Piaget and Kohlberg. Parks draws upon the work of Kegan and applies it to her theoretical framework for faith development theory, noting that faith is "the motion of life." Perhaps the most significant aspect of movement as a category is its capacity for crossing over boundaries. As a boundary-crossing category, it demonstrates an immense capacity for drawing together some of the most complex notions within

---

[73] Ibid., 31.

[74] Ibid., 11.

human perception and understanding and being, such as those addressed in the earlier and present chapters of this work, including experience, culture, and faith.

In the following section, movement is unpacked for the contributions it makes to the fields of practical theology and spirituality. Again, it is significant that one category or movement can provide a language and meaning framework sufficient for addressing concerns in two different but related fields, such as practical theology and spirituality. Similar to motion, *action* is a prominent category in practical theology and spirituality. Among others, this theme is addressed in the following sections as the focus of this writing as it returns to explicitly theological conversations.

Contributions to Practical Theology and Spirituality

Movement as a relational metaphorical theological category

This work suggests that movement, which composes nearly all aspects of everyday living, serves as a fruitful framework for addressing the holistic and relational aspects of ordinary experience. This framework is built upon the notion of movements both in their literal sense as well as in a metaphorical sense. Gerald Arbuckle points to three qualities of symbols as layered: first, is the layer of meaning; second, is the layer of the emotive; and third, is the layer of the directive.[75] The meaning layer recognizes the cognitive understanding of the image. The emotive layer speaks to the ability of a metaphor to provoke feeling, which allows for a re-presentation or re-living of the image. The directive layer of symbols draws upon the first two. People are often prompted toward action because of the impact of the meaning and emotive qualities of symbols.[76]

---

[75] Arbuckle, *Culture, Inculturation, and Theologians*, 22. Arbuckle further mentions other qualities of symbols, including multi-vocality, timelessness, and polarity.

As a symbol, the metaphor of movement speaks to the immediacy of experience as well as to the subsequent deepening of the experience through affect, conceptual reflection, and volitional activity.

For example, the image of Ups and Downs stirs both the sensed experience of floating on waves in a body of water, but also undergirds the meaning in phrases such as “life is like a roller coaster.” The image of Back and Forth might remind a person of the experience of rocking in a wooden chair, but the image can also provoke the memory of participating in an argument and then trying to learn from the experience of arguing in order to heal the relationship. The image of cycling of spirals might be visible in the mighty physical experience of watching a tornado, but the image can also be perceived in the subtleties of personal growth over time. The image of Tension of a Web might be reflected in the beauty of a spider’s morning creations, but the image also speaks to a complex of meaning, especially if the observer takes a moment to note the spider’s motive in spinning its web in order to catch a meal. The Vibration of Concentric Circles might be experienced when one drops a rock in a still pond and observes the ripples, but the image can also be used to represent one’s self-understanding in relation to the communion of saints who have come and gone from the world of the living. Schneiders suggests that the value of metaphor as a preferred alternative to literal language inheres in its ability to express complexes of meaning. Metaphors destabilize the literalistic mind, keeping it “in motion” when it would like to “land” in literalistic concreteness.[77] As both

---

[76] Ibid., 22-23.

[77] Sandra M. Schneiders, "The Bible and Feminism," in *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*, ed. Catherine Mowry LaCugna (San Franciso: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 38-39.

symbol and metaphor, movement is highly conducive to dynamic representation of varied layers of experience.

McFague attends extensively to the workings of metaphor and points out in particular the polar nature of metaphor as inherently relational. "The heart of metaphorical thinking is the 'is and is not."[78] The metaphor is the image itself but is also more than the image. The metaphor is not the entire reality of the image because it is also the layered reality of affect, meaning, and action that are prompted by the image. "By retaining the interaction of the two thoughts active in the mind, one recalls, as one does not with simile, that the two are dissimilar as well as similar."[79] Nuance such as this comes as the fruit of ongoing interactions. "The tensive or interactive view of metaphor also reveals the fact that both fields or subjects are influenced or changed by being brought into relationship with the other."[80] McFague suggests that this relationship between the poles of metaphors is important when using metaphor especially because of the effect of the usage of personal metaphors for describing the experience and understanding of God.[81] Because metaphor is a tool for deepening the immediacy of experience, its power for naming relational realities must be attended to.

---

[78] Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*: *Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 74.

[79] Ibid., 38.

[80] Ibid.

[81] *Models of God*: *Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 18-21.

For example, metaphors that are based upon negative human experiences of reality (such as slavery, oppression, and abuse) may also point to negative experiences and understandings of God. She points out that personal models of God that draw upon monarchical, triumphalist, and dualistic images (such as king, almighty, and lord) are insufficient for contemporary times, and should be seriously critiqued in light of models of God that are intrinsically relational.[82] In this sense, movement offers an alternative possibility to personal models of God as a model of God that is based on relational metaphors.

While not personified, the framework of Five Ordinary Movements is relational. McFague points out that metaphorical thinking recognizes both the unlike and the like of two compared subjects, but that this type of theologizing uses the sense of the similar as a way to move beyond what is already known and lean toward the unknown.[83] The pervasiveness of participation in movement within daily life allows for a breadth and depth of constructive language about God drawn from ordinary experience. For example, the repetitive Up and Down movement experienced when riding on a boat in a large body of water might remind someone of the constant companionship of God that was felt throughout the lived experience of losing a loved one. The Back and Forth movement might represent the ways in which God feels present or absent during the days and weeks in which a person experiences a crisis of faith along the spiritual journey. The cycling of spirals, perhaps experienced in the joy of a child unwinding on a spun-up playground swing, might remind a mother of the playfulness of God. The Tension of a Web, perhaps

---

[82] Ibid., 19.

[83] *Metaphorical Theology*, 36.

felt when many competing voices are vying for attention in light of a major decision, might encourage a seeker to wait patiently upon God until a clearer sense comes forth determining which voice should be listened to. The Vibration of Concentric Circles might be sensed through a young person opening her eyes to a call to justice, and then be further supported by the sense that God demands such justice. The actual lived experiences suggested here are not necessarily only positive. Movement as a metaphor allows for an intermingling of positive and negative perceptions about God in both good and bad experiences of life. The value of movement as a relational metaphor in each of these examples suggests both fluidity and mutuality.

In particular, the Five Ordinary Movements serve as a dynamic and expansive metaphorical model. McFague suggests that metaphorical, constructive theology is experimental, imagistic, and pluralistic.[84] As experimental, it has an as-if and not-yet quality to it, which contrasts closed, fixed models.[85] As imagistic, it emphasizes many faculties of knowing, which contrasts with purely conceptual models of theology.[86] As pluralistic, it recognizes that no one image is sufficient and that many images are necessary. Related to this point, metaphorical theology is expressive of relational experiences of God, rather than attempts to define God.[87] Metaphors are concerned with meaning, and a metaphorical approach to knowing is undertaken with an indirection and tentativeness of judgment. The binary nature of metaphor is a reminder that

---

[84] *Models of God*, 37-40.

[85] Ibid., 37.

[86] Ibid., 38.

[87] Ibid., 39.

apprehension is never simple and unitary.[88] "The most fruitful metaphors are the ones with sufficiently complex guides to allow for extension of thought, structural expansion, and suggestions beyond the immediate linkages."[89] Metaphorical, constructive theology addresses the complexity of ordinary experience. The Five Ordinary Movements provide an example in line with this approach and make a further contribution to a relational framework of metaphor for addressing the Presence of God in daily life. The following section reviews the categories of model and method in spirituality and practical theology and suggests another contribution from the Five Ordinary Movements framework in this area as well.

Five Ordinary Movements as model and method in practical theological spiritual formation

Whereas metaphors emphasize the way in which images or concepts address the complexity of experience, model and method address the way in which the complexity of ordinary experience can be unpacked. Whitehead and Whitehead distinguish between model and method in theological reflection by suggesting that a model provides an image of the elements that are involved.[90] A method, then, describes the dynamic or movement of the reflection.[91] Movement, as metaphor, model, and method, includes Whitehead and Whitehead's elements simultaneously.

---

[88] *Metaphorical Theology*, 38-39.

[89] Ibid., 39.

[90] Whitehead and Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*, x. In their model, the elements involved are tradition, culture, and experience.

Lartey suggests that theological methods are the means by which critical reflection is engaged, which then allows for a deeper understanding of the divine mystery and the human-divine connection.[92] It is important to note Lartey's use of the term *deeper*. Lartey does not suggest in this language that critical reflection is a "step back" from the experience of the divine; rather, such language describes critical reflection more adequately as a pause within the experience. Critical reflection is a deepening part of the process of experiencing. The complexity of ordinary experience demands a deepening layered approach rather than a compartmentalized approach in order to be adequate.

Stephen Bevans notes that models can be experimental, logical, mathematical, and theoretical. Models are simple, constructed cases that are useful for illuminating more complex, differentiated realities. He emphasizes their metaphorical nature, noting that they are not to be taken literally.[93] McFague agrees with Bevans in that models provide a way of talking about an unknown area, giving intelligibility to the unintelligible in a structural or comprehensive manner.[94] Bevans points out that models are partial descriptors of reality and are inadequate for describing reality in totality. At the same time, models disclose reality; they are "really real."[95] McFague further elaborates three qualities of models, one of which aligns with Bevans's in her assertion that models are

---

[91] Ibid. Whitehead and Whitehead suggest *attend*, *assert*, and *respond* in their method.

[92] Lartey, *Pastoral Theology*, 78. Lartey also contrasts theological methods with "methodology" and "research methods."

[93] Bevans, *Models*, 29.

[94] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 73.

[95] Bevans, *Models*, 30.

both true and untrue because they are partial and inadequate. However, McFague also asserts that models are both concerned with behavior, or how things work, and also with discovery because they enlarge and open the perspective of the experience.[96] Bevans notes that theology tends to draw upon theoretical models. He also suggests that models are either linear and compartmentalized or descriptive.[97]

According to Bevans, theology proposes cases that are useful for simplifying a complex reality. Each case or model does not fully capture reality, but does yield true knowledge of it.[98] The framework of Five Ordinary Movements affirms this suggestion that no one model is adequate for naming God or for reflecting on ordinary experience as a stand-alone. McFague suggests that a model is “a metaphor that has gained sufficient stability and scope so as to present a pattern for relatively comprehensive and coherent explanation.”[99] The Five Ordinary Movements, for example, can be quite helpful as descriptors when they are addressed one by one. However, they can also be used together in a framework to address multiple and dynamic factors, which provides a more linear, compartmentalized approach. Whereas Bevans elaborates theological “models of operation” as distinct from symbolic, image-based models, such as those considered by McFague, the Five Ordinary Movements holds the symbolic image and the operation in

---

[96] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 92.

[97] Bevans, *Models*, 30.

[98] Ibid., 31.

[99] McFague, *Models of God*, 34.

tension with one another.[100] In this way, the Five Ordinary Movements provide a model (or image, in Whitehead and Whitehead's sense) for drawing together multiple layers.

McFague suggests that the most effective models are specific and common. The best models are sufficiently different from their principal subjects so that insight can be generated through encountering similarity, in spite of difference. Helpful models maintain a dialetic of simplicity and detail; they simplify the chaotic but must also be complex enough to offer suggestive connections between the subjects.[101]

By drawing upon the broader category of movement and proposing five specific experiences of movement, the Five Ordinary Movements are both common and specific. Any one of the Five Ordinary Movements can be explored on its own; and at the same time, the Five Ordinary Movements share a common framework. Furthermore, each image, when coupled with an interpersonal practice based on the basic sense of the movement, provides a natural corollary expansion of the basic model and adds another layer of relevant depth and breadth.

The importance of skill and relationship in practice is unpacked in the next section, which reviews the treatment of *praxis* and practice in practical theology and spirituality. This review keeps an eye on the interpersonal gap in practice within both practical theology and spirituality.

---

[100] Bevans, *Models*, 31.

[101] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 73-74.

Action as a relational category in practical theology

Action or activity is a category that addresses many concerns. A number of analysts in interdisciplinary fields address action as a relevant category for addressing meaning. Geertz suggests that human behavior is best understood through symbolic action.[102] He further asserts that the goal of theory is to provide a vocabulary where symbolic action can be expressed.[103] He notes that especially in the field of semiotics there is a need for adequate theories of symbolic action.[104] A similar assertion might be made about the category of action for practical theological spiritual formation.

Tillich describes the universal character of life through the category of "motion."[105] He describes action as the immediate expression of love, asserting that love lives in works.[106] Similarly, in Moltmann's treatment of the Spirit, Ruach is that experience of the divine that creates space and sets life in motion.[107] Action speaks to both immediacy and depth.

In particular, action is a prominent category within practical theology. Heitink dedicates an entire chapter to "Practical Theology as a Theory of Action."[108] He also

---

[102] Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 10.

[103] Ibid., 27.

[104] Ibid., 208.

[105] Tillich and Kimball, *Theology of Culture*, 30.

[106] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 133-34.

[107] Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 43.

[108] Heitink, *Practical Theology*, 124-47.

proposes "A Practical-Theological Theory of Action" in another chapter."[109] Terry Veling describes practical theology as more of a doing, an activity, a verb, than as a thing.[110] Duncan Forrester describes practical theology as "a study which is concerned with questions of truth in relation to action."[111] He suggests that patterned activity informs notions of practice.[112] Lartey links the language of action to the ongoing concern in practical theology about the relationship between theory and practice, describing *praxis* as "reflected-upon-action and acted-upon-reflection."[113] Similarly, Wolfteich notes that practical theology's emphasis on practice allows for a focus on the outward and the active, though she critiques an overemphasis on outward action.[114] Here, action speaks to both personal and communal practices.

A number of practical theologians make the explicit connection between the category of action as a tool that addresses both human and Divine activity. Jacob Firet describes practical theology's emphasis as not "a description of human action in general, nor of the action of the believer or the minister, but with the action that has to do with the actualization and the maintenance of the relationship between God and humanity and

---

[109] Ibid., 148-77.

[110] Terry A. Veling, *Practical Theology*: *On Earth as It Is in Heaven* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 4.

[111] Duncan B. Forrester, *Truthful Action*: *Explorations in Practical Theology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 22.

[112] Ibid., 3.

[113] Lartey, *Pastoral Theology*, 24.

[114] Wolfteich, "Graceful Work," 21.

humanity and God."[115] Heitink similarly suggests that a pneumatological emphasis in practical theology asks the core question about the relationship between God's actions and human action.[116] Reflecting academic circle concerns, Heitink asserts that "the work of the Spirit cannot be put in a framework of method."[117] However, he does offer some suggestions about how to theorize action, noting the distinction between an "action structure" and an "action system."[118] Schreiter nuances the academic concern and points out that the purpose of theory is to provide for analysis of social structures, which indicate how God is active in history. He asserts that transformative action in society reveals God's activity in the world.[119] Here, action addresses multiple layers within ordinary experience as well, in this instance, on activity in the sociocultural realm in relationship to Divine activity.

Some practical theologians construct frameworks for addressing action at multiple levels. For example, Browning defines action as first, made up of concrete practices including rules, roles, and communication patterns; second, as motivated by needs and tendencies; third, as limited and channeled by social-systemic and ecological constraints; fourth, as further ordered by principles of obligation; and fifth, as given meaning by visions, narratives, and metaphors.[120] These five dimensions of action parallel

---

[115] Heitink, *Practical Theology*, 129.

[116] Ibid., 194.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Ibid., 157.

[119] Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 91.

Browning's "five dimensions of moral thinking."[121] He proposes that the five dimensions be used to "describe the thickness of situations and to guide critical thinking about their construction."[122] Here, attention is given to both immediacy in experience and later reflection on it.

Elaine Graham notes the value of Browning's work yet also critiques his model of practical moral reasoning as "an inadequate reflection of the breadth of human action."[123] In particular, Graham cites cultural homogeneity and overemphasis on rational moral ethics as two key areas where Browning's work is too narrow in focus. Alternatively, Graham points to theories of action that build upon "difference" as a broadening category and suggests that communication and dialogue help to broaden the conversation.[124] Graham also suggests that categories from interdisciplinary fields, such as "gender" and "culture," help to broaden practical theological analysis, noting that "perspectives that insist on the plurality and inter-subjectivity of human identity and communication have proved fruitful in honoring a model of practice which refuses rigid dichotomies."[125] The major contribution to a theory of action that Graham offers is her stance on the

---

[120] Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, 111.

[121] Ibid., 105.

[122] Ibid., 107.

[123] Graham, *Transforming Practice*, 6.

[124] Ibid., 169.

[125] Ibid., 170.

"participatory and performative" nature of human activity through practice.[126] Graham's emphasis points to the layered relational nature of ordinary experience.

Similarly, Goizueta emphasizes the relational and participatory nature of action, claiming that it is in the action itself that God is revealed.[127] He suggests that embodied action in the world is reflective of the human relationship to God.[128] Goizueta claims aesthetics as a key category for interpreting human action.[129] The aesthetic perspective emphasizes interpersonal action over an instrumentalist emphasis on practical action.[130] From the aesthetic point of view, "the ultimate goal of human action is active participation in relationships and enjoying them."[131] Goizueta critiques modern Western notions of human action for their overemphasis on the autonomous subject in his or her external environment.[132] He emphasizes relationship with God as well as interpersonal relationships as the appropriate frameworks for analysis of action. The Five Ordinary Movements framework makes a contribution to this conversation by offering a particular example of an organizational framework that attends explicitly to relationship.

---

[126] Ibid., 7.

[127] Goizueta, *Caminemos con Jesus*, 103.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid., 89.

[130] Ibid., 106.

[131] Ibid., 130.

[132] Ibid., 80.

Moving toward interpersonal practices in practical theology and spirituality

Duncan Forrester draws upon four layers of a dictionary definition of practice, describing it first, as patterned activity; second, as habitual behavior; third, as repeated activity with the aim of developing proficiency and skill (which he associates with habitus); and fourth, as the exercise of a profession.[133] Consideration of practice in practical theology and spirituality reveals the need for a middle layer of practical formation that binds the second (habits) and third layer (skills) of Forrester's definition of practice to the first (patterned activity) and fourth (professionalized activity) layers.

A practical theological method for spiritual formation that emphasizes both relational and skill frameworks as middle layer practices is needed.[134] Such interpersonal practices frameworks must speak simultaneously to the personal, communal, cultural, social and spiritual nature of practices. The embodied nature of practices mandates this. Yet it is this point of practice that is most difficult to get at, since it is doing something that is interactive, performative, and expressive of the self-in-relationship all at once.[135]

Early liberation and political theologians such as Leonardo Boff and Johann Metz struggled with the relationship between theory and practice as primarily a dialectic

---

[133] Forrester, *Truthful Action*, 3-6.

[134] Miller-McLemore, "Five Mis-understandings," 14-15. In drawing from the same Greek categories that other practical theologians often use, Miller-McLemore suggests as one of five corrections to common mis-understandings in practical theology that indeed practical theology "did not go wrong in emphasizing skills" as part of its scope.

[135] Cahalan, *Introducing the Practice of Ministry*, 107-08.

phenomenon.[136] Metz proposes that *praxis* integrates the distinct moments of theory and understanding and, furthermore, that *praxis* is in no way subordinate to nor linearly situated after theory.[137] Boff argued that in fact it is *praxis* which "gets theory going," describing cognition as the immediate end of *praxis* and (in a new moment) *praxis* itself as both the mediate and terminal end of the dialectic.[138] Boff also argues that *praxis* ultimately carries primacy over theory, noting that theory is a function of *praxis*.[139] At this point, the conversation emphasizes the dialectic nature of the relationship between theory and practice. The models remain linear in shape and not conducive to the multifaceted reality of ordinary experience.

The hermeneutic circle sets the stage for expansion in the conversation toward nonlinear approaches. Gadamer critiqued Schleiermacher's dialectic approach in favor of a more process-oriented model, in contrast to a linear method.[140] He proposes the hermeneutic circle as an alternative model that serves as a description of the ontological structure of understanding.[141] By describing the structure of understanding rather than proposing a method per se, Gadamer contributes to a shift that emphasizes process and dynamism. Practical and pastoral theologians began to highlight categories such as

---

[136] Johannes Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society*: *Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, trans. J. Matthew Ashley (New York: Seabury, 1980), 27.

[137] Ibid., 61.

[138] Boff, *Theology and Praxis*, 190.

[139] Ibid., 215-16.

[140] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. ed., Continuum Impacts, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London; New York: Continuum, 2004), 189.

[141] Ibid., 296.

action or change in order to avoid the traps of prior methodological concerns about the moment of *praxis* as an afterthought or applied theory.[142] This shift in pastoral and theological conversations toward an emphasis on process and dynamism revitalizes an emphasis on life as it is lived. The ongoing nature of the hermeneutic circle provides greater freedom for attending to various influences that converge in reflection on ordinary experience. However, some suggest that the hermeneutic circle is still inadequate.

Pete Ward unpacks this critique through the lens of the move toward the cultural in practical theology.[143] He describes the move toward culture as precisely "some way towards helping the ministerial practitioner to find a more sympathetic form of theological reasoning and reflection on practice."[144] Ward notes a desire among theologians "to use the cultural to reposition or reframe the oppositional and dualistic relationship between human experience and theology as it has been played out in modern theology."[145] Ward critiques methods of correlation for their linear nature.[146] He further suggests that even though the circles of pastoral reflection have taken a different shape, they ultimately remain linear.[147] For example, from the perspective of the practitioner,

---

[142] Heitink, *Practical Theology*, 165. Heitink's is one of many illustrations of the various interacting circles that point to non-linear approaches to method. Many hermeneutical and pastoral circle models have been developed. For example, in Spirituality, see Liebert, "The Role of Practice," 83; in pastoral theology, see Lartey, "Practical Theology," 129.

[143] Ward, *Participation and Mediation*, 40-50.

[144] Ibid., 47.

[145] Ibid., 43.

[146] Ibid., 43-46.

"the modern dislocation between experience and doctrine and the subsequent methodologies of correlation as seen in the pastoral cycle are counter-intuitive for the practitioner because they present the cultural and the theological as two distinct worlds that must in some way be reconciled."[148] Fortunately, Ward offers a response in light of his critiques.

Ward proposes that the multivalent categories of participation and mediation address some of these concerns. "Participation refers both to a communion in the divine life and to a sharing in the cultural expression of the Church. Mediation relates to the way that expression becomes a place of divine indwelling and presence through the operation of various forms and processes of cultural communication. It is this element of divine indwelling as it is mediated in cultural and theological expression that transforms practical theology from a distanced or uncommitted academic practice into a spiritual discipline."[149] Ward is concretely concerned with how thinking about God and relating to God occurs in the actual lives of real people. Participation addresses the human side of varied relationships, and mediation emphasizes the divine action among humans. These contributions address many layers of relational strata, including an explicit reference to relationship to the Sacred.

Ward further develops the relationship between theology and cultural studies as a tool for addressing complexity.[150] He borrows the notion of a "circuit" from cultural

---

[147] Ibid., 34-36.

[148] Ibid., 36.

[149] Ibid., 95-96.

[150] Ibid., 66-80.

studies.[151] The model of a "cultural circuit" considers many elements simultaneously rather than in a step-by-step or binary process.[152] As a theological method, the circuit moves beyond a dualistic and separatist approach. "The circuit expresses the idea that it is only through a consideration of the articulation of these processes that an explanation can be found."[153] He elaborates: "in each of the moments in the circuit the other moments are also taken up and form part of the understanding."[154] A circuit approach is notable for two distinct reasons: first, the process of analysis can begin at any point, though it is important that all points be passed through at some time; and second, at any one point that is being considered, the other points are simultaneously taken up as well.[155] Intercultural thinking is "a kind of thinking that requires a contextualized, three-dimensional theoretical model that is able to take into account many factors at once, both analytic and synthetic in nature."[156] The turn toward culture in practical theology prompts theologians to move away from linear and compartmentalized models toward frameworks that address simultaneity, dynamism, and multiplicity.

Practice, as a critical category in spirituality, similarly suggests the need for a layered approach to analysis.[157] For example, personal practices have historically been

---

[151] Ibid., 78-80.

[152] Ibid., 79.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Ibid., 79.

[156] Bedford, "Making Spaces," 64.

an emphasis in spirituality. Wolfteich notes that "traditions of Christian spirituality bring centuries of wisdom about the teaching of practices, including practices of prayer, *lectio divina*, silence, humility, discernment, and spiritual friendship."[158] However, Wolfteich points to disagreement among scholars about what should contribute to formative spirituality and academic study of spirituality. For example, she points to Schneiders's concern that the self-implicating aspect of spirituality is the area toward which other academic disciplines tend to launch their critiques about the rigor of such methodological perspectives.[159] In pointing to the self-implicating and transformative aspects of practice, Schneiders notes that precisely as the subject matter of spirituality, the complex interactions between the human spirit and God are the ultimate locus of personal transformation.[160] Wolfteich further draws out internal debates about the relationship of experience and practice within spirituality. She notes that some scholars prefer the broader term *experience* to denote the subject matter of academic spirituality, while others prefer the term *practice*.[161] Experience is considered more inclusive than practice, especially if practice is limited to individual practices. From the perspective of spirituality and pastoral theology, Elizabeth Liebert suggests a response. She notes that in the personal realm, there is an emphasis on practice as intentional and repeated. In scholarly work, practice is about attending to experience intentionally, repeatedly,

---

[157] Wolfteich, "Graceful Work," 18.

[158] "Animating Questions," 140.

[159] Ibid.

[160] Schneiders, "A Hermeneutical Approach," 57.

[161] Wolfteich, "Animating Questions," 141.

publicly, and self-critically, as it is lived out in ordinary spirituality.[162] This distinction points to different treatments of practice; however, "the development of skill, nuance, and critical reflection" is absolutely necessary in each level.[163]

From the lens of practical theology, Don Browning names three levels of practice: first, he points to the personal layer through interpretations of practices, inner motivations, and the sociocultural history of individual agents; second, he points to the communal layer of practice through interpretations of relevant institutional patterns and their shared practices; and third, he points to the sociocultural layer through interpretations of the cultural and religious symbols that give meaning to individual and institutional action.[164] While Browning names the varied layers, he does not address the practices that are needed within each level.

Craig Dykstra and Dorothy Bass similarly name three different ways in which the term *practice* is often used in practical theological contexts. First, practice refers to any socially meaningful action. Second, practice refers to specifically aesthetical or spiritual disciplines. Third, practice refers to a virtue within a framework for moral philosophy. Dykstra and Bass point out that their own views align most with the latter perspective.[165] Similar to Browning, they name different levels of practice. However, they also express the specific concern that Christian practices are understood as both constitutive of a way

---

[162] Elizabeth Liebert, "The Role of Practice," 86.

[163] Ibid., 89.

[164] Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, 61.

[165] Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra, "A Theological Understanding of Christian Practices," in *Practicing Theology*: *Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*, ed. Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 20.

of life and sufficient in scope to address fundamental human needs.[166] This concern recognizes that practices look different in different realms. In their case, the emphasis is on the personal-communal realm (to which an entire book has been dedicated), which names the types of activity that fall within this understanding of Christian practice. The practices include: honoring the body, hospitality, household economics, saying yes and saying no, keeping Sabbath, discernment, testimony, shaping communities, forgiveness, healing, dying well, and singing our lives to God.[167]

Similarly, Cahalan emphasizes personal-communal practices as seven features of discipleship in her work, including following a teacher, worshipping in community, witnessing to the truth, reaching out to neighbors, offering forgiveness, fighting injustices, and stewarding the resources of the earth and the community. She alternatively names these features both as Christian practices and also as basic human practices that are embraced worldwide. For Cahalan, being a practitioner is a basic anthropological constant. Practice is a part of ordinary life. However, she indicates that particular persons both act as agents of practice in the present and also inherit social practices from the past.[168] She elaborates on hospitality as an example of practice in these two ways.[169]

---

[166] Ibid., 19.

[167] Dorothy C. Bass and M. Shawn Copeland, *Practicing Our Faith*: *A Way of Life for a Searching People*, 2nd ed., The Practices of Faith Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010).

[168] Cahalan, *Introducing the Practice of Ministry*, 102.

[169] Ibid., 103.

Broadly, Cahalan describes practice as a group of component actions. However, she distinguishes between two aspects of practice. First, she notes the intention of practices, the "why" behind them, which for purposes of analysis relates to the realm of morality. Second, she notes the way in which practices are done, the "how" undergirding them, which for purposes of criteria relates to the realm of competence.[170] Cahalan's reflections on defining practice helpfully stress the importance of the role of skill in practice. Cahalan emphasizes the value of practice as a skill as she notes that "[God is known as] God through God's practices," which emphasizes a conceptual-relational understanding of God as a God of Practice.[171] She further points out that "God's way of being in relationship points to the kind of relationality [humans] are called to live."[172] Such aspirations require the development of interpersonal skills, which can be learned from observations about God's interactions with others. Goizueta similarly emphasizes the relational nature of practice as interpersonal when he points out that relationship presupposes interaction between persons.[173] Goizueta points to the truth that emerges from the interaction between two particular persons.[174] Truth in this sense emerges as a holistic type of knowing that emphasizes the relational component of knowing. Similarly, Elaine Graham emphasizes holistic knowing in her treatment of practice.

---

[170] Ibid., 101.

[171] Ibid., 163.

[172] Ibid., 157.

[173] Goizueta, *Caminemos con Jesus*, 73.

[174] Ibid., 158.

Graham considers the role of practice both as a holistic way for knowing and also as a categorical tool for naming interactive relational strata. She suggests that practices, "as purposeful activity performed by embodied persons in time and space as both subjects and objects of history," are "processes by which social relations are generated."[175] Graham contends "that 'practice' as both the expression and creative locus of value is a sufficiently strong concept upon which to construct a renewed understanding of pastoral action."[176] For Graham, theology is a performative discipline.[177] Consequently, she asserts that faith communities, in relation to tradition, derive their epistemic authority from the *praxis* of the community.[178]

Graham expands beyond the communal, however, and also alludes to the cultural force of practice, describing practice as constitutive of a way of life both individually and collectively, and personally and structurally.[179] Graham points out the situated and contingent nature of meaning and value in relation to cultural practices, and yet asserts that the divine dimensions of human experience are most authentically apprehended in human practice.[180] She brings together personal, communal, and cultural elements, noting that "identity and knowledge as grounded in practice brings into focus a method of being, acting, and reflecting that is self-reflexive, yet maintains ethical and political

---

[175] Graham, *Transforming Practice*, 110.

[176] Ibid., 6.

[177] Ibid., 204.

[178] Ibid., 199.

[179] Ibid., 110.

[180] Ibid., 10.

integrity."[181] Graham consistently suggests that practice in one layer affects practice in all layers.

Graham also acknowledges the holistic nature of practice for its capacity in deepening knowing within ordinary experience, when she describes practice as technique, capacity, and skill, which suggests the possibility of a new reality and informs subsequent experience.[182] She asserts that practices are not simply about rule-governed behavior but rather are purposeful strategies with many layers of meaning.[183] She proposes practice as the root of cognition rather than as a separate stage distinct from reflection.[184] She emphasizes the performative and enacted nature of human practice.[185] While Graham's work seeks to broaden a narrow focus on the morality of practice, by stressing the importance of performative practices, the scope of her work does not propose how to develop particular skillsets that might facilitate the interactions that are necessary for threading across relational realms.

Practical theology is sometimes critiqued for its narrow emphasis on practice as rational moral discourse that tends to overemphasize external, and often individualistic, practices.[186] Conversely, classic spirituality is sometimes critiqued for emphasis on pietistic and devotional practices, which, on their own, overemphasize the internal.

---

[181] Ibid., 156.

[182] Ibid., 99-100.

[183] Ibid., 101.

[184] Ibid., 158.

[185] Ibid., 10.

[186] Ibid., 6.

Another potential pitfall for spirituality is that its scope is often perceived as being limited to the experience of individuals. As Schneiders notes, “spirituality is characteristically involved in the study of individuals.”[187] Even though the individual “self” in her definition of spirituality reaches beyond itself toward an “ultimate,” the lens of perspective begins with the individual. Wolfteich addresses this issue in her work, noting that even though spirituality is sometimes perceived as individualistic, private, and disembodied, much of the recent literature emphasizes its relational, prophetic, liberating, and embodied nature.[188] Spirituality tends to start from the perspective of the individual and moves toward self, others, the world, and the Transcendent. By contrast, Wolfteich suggests that practical theological literature “tends to focus on the outward, active character of practices,” especially because of its contextual focus on communities of faith.[189] These complementarities justify Wolfteich’s “empha[sis on] the crucial importance of practical theological study of spirituality.[190]

Her suggestion also alludes to the need for methodology that can adequately address multiple layers of human experience. Contextual-cultural understanding of the term *practice* potentially broadens spirituality’s classic focus on the skill development of individual prayer practices to more explicit consideration of the contextual elements of practice. While the emphasis on *praxis* and performative practice within practical theology has helpfully contributed to the development of methodological tools for

---

[187] Schneiders, "Spirituality in the Academy," 33.

[188] Wolfteich, "Animating Questions," 129.

[189] "Graceful Work," 21.

[190] Ibid.

understanding the contextual activity of reflective communities, it has less to offer than spirituality in light of relational skills for formation within the communities.

A number of practical theologians draw explicitly upon the philosophical origins of the term *praxis* in support of their arguments for the inclusion of broadened realms of human experience as relevant to the academic conversations in method. Chopp describes Aristotle's emphasis on *praxis* as pertaining to "the sphere of human action in the virtuous life of the citizen in the polis."[191] Heitink describes Aristotle's *praxis* as a form of life in which humans act based upon their life experience, which includes ordinary actions such as seeing, thinking, reading, and living.[192] Groome distinguishes between Aristotle's realms: theoria, which is theoretical and scientific; poeisis, which is productive and creative; phronesis, which is practical wisdom, and *praxis*, which is the realm of the practical and political.[193] Groome points to two moments in the realm of *praxis*, one of which is engagement through rational reflection and the second of which is responsible living in society.[194] As David Tracy notes, the emphasis is on a *praxis,* which is more than simple practice and requires involvement and commitment in the world.[195] Consequently, in each of these treatments of *praxis*, different relational strata are recognized; however, the particularity of each theologian's emphasis differs. After

---

[191] Rebecca S. Chopp, *The Praxis of Suffering*: *An Interpretation of Liberation and Political Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 122.

[192] Heitink, *Practical Theology*, 149.

[193] Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 43-45.

[194] Ibid., 44.

[195] Tracy, *Analogical Imagination*, 69-71.

establishing the shared philosophical foundations of *praxis* as a theological category, practical theologians often offer their own particular slant on contemporary use of *praxis* in theological conversation.

For example, Groome offers a contemporary definition of *praxis*: “consciousness and agency that arise from and are expressed in any and every aspect of people’s ‘being’ as agent-subjects-in-relationship, whether realized in actions that are personal, interpersonal, sociopolitical or cosmic.”[196] Groome further elaborates three dimensions in his description: creative, reflective, and active .[197] He eventually arrives at the notion of shared *praxis*, which involves partnership, participation, and dialogue.[198] Groome’s model of shared *praxis* suggests an inherent relationship between the individual person and his or her contextual relationships.

Immink links *praxis* to faith, noting that “*praxis* of faith” involves a spiritual human subject, institutionally religious activity, and the realm of daily life.[199] Heitink similarly picks up on this distinction of layers, defining Christian *praxis* as “the actions of individuals and groups in society with and outside the church, who are willing to be inspired in their private/public lives by the Christian tradition, and who want to focus on the salvation of humankind and the world.”[200] For analytical clarity, Heitink suggests a division of *praxis* into *praxis* 1, which “indicates that the unique object of practical

---

[196] Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 136.

[197] Ibid., 137.

[198] Ibid., 144.

[199] Immink, *Faith*, 52.

[200] Heitink, *Practical Theology*, 151.

theology is related to intentional, intermediary, mediative actions, with a view to changing a given situation through agogics," and *praxis* 2, which "emphasizes context, where these actions take place, as a dynamic context in which humans in society interact, whether or not their actions are religiously motivated."[201] Heitink's model tends to focus on the local community as it is situated within the broader sociocultural realm.

Schreiter distinguishes between theology as wisdom, theology as sure knowledge, and theology as *praxis*.[202] Theology as *praxis* is "the ensemble of social relationships that include and determine the structures of social consciousness."[203] He further asserts that three tasks of a theology of *praxis* include, first, the disentanglement of true and false consciousness; second, a concern for ongoing reflection on action; and third, a motivation to sustain transformative *praxis*.[204] Similar to Heitink, Schreiter's emphasis focuses on the locally situated community of believers.

Goizueta links *praxis* to human actions, which reveal a relational anthropology that is intrinsically social; for Goizueta, *praxis* is derived from communal life and not from metaphysical categories.[205] Goizueta draws from Aristotle's categories of *praxis* and poiesis and distinguishes *praxis* as the realm in which human activity is valuable as an end in itself, whereas poiesis is focused on the type of activity and emphasizes the

---

[201] Ibid., 8.

[202] Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 85-91.

[203] Ibid., 91.

[204] Ibid., 92.

[205] Goizueta, *Caminemos con Jesus*, 77.

value of productive activity.[206] He insists that such a distinction is important because contemporary *praxis* is action that results in an effect of transformation.[207] Goizueta acknowledges that *praxis* in contemporary conversation carries varied usage, including the historical *praxis*, Christian *praxis,* and liberating *praxis*.[208] Specifically, he draws out elements of *praxis* for US Hispanic popular Catholicism, noting that such *praxis* is first, sacramental; second, communal and relational; third, valuable as an end in itself; fourth, empowering; and fifth, liberating.[209] Goizueta suggests that development of the term *praxis* is highly indebted to liberation theology.[210] Similarly, political theologians such as Metz also shaped practical theology's concern for the transformative nature of knowledge. Metz, for example, asserts that the search for truth must be relevant for all subjects, especially those who suffer.[211] The US Latino/a, liberation, and political theologies tend to emphasize the daily struggles and suffering of particular persons and communities in relation to the broader sociopolitical systems that impact the daily lives of those who suffer most. While different practical theologians emphasize different divisions and articulate varied naming structures for their divisional organization of experience, a common product among these treatments of the term *praxis* is the

---

[206] Ibid., 82.

[207] Ibid., 86.

[208] Ibid., 87.

[209] Ibid., 103.

[210] Ibid., 78.

[211] Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 69.

development of a theological category that emphasizes the realm of immediate experience, or life as it is lived.[212]

While the conversations about *praxis* tend to name the structural divisions of ordinary experience in varied social realms using the Greek philosophical categories, conversations around practice tend to emphasize either the personal or the communal nature of practices, such as in prayer or worship. Related to the broader goals of this work, the structural nature of *praxis* conversations and the relational nature of practice conversations converge in cross-conversation, which engages the strengths of each framework.[213] This work in particular proposes interpersonal practices as an example of drawing together the structural and relational aspects of these conversations in a middle-layer approach. Interpersonal practices are proposed as a layer of practice distinct from personal prayer practices. Similarly, the interpersonal practices proposed in this work are also distinct from the communal nature of practices such as those found in public worship settings. Furthermore, interpersonal practices are not the same as cultural practices. However, interpersonal practices can be discerned as present in each of these varied layers. Interpersonal practices in this work are proposed as a way of being together both in prayer and worship (practices), and especially in the many interacting layers of ordinary life (culture and *praxis*). As such, interpersonal practices here are both relational and skilled.

---

[212] Goizueta, *Caminemos con Jesus*, 111-13. Goizueta uses precisely that analogy of *praxis* as "life as it is lived." He further points out that the perspective of praxis helps to undo separatist notions that would divide the private from the public, the interpersonal from the institutional, and the natural from the supernatural.

[213] The author points to Groome and Goizueta for preferred *praxis* models and Cahalan and Wolfteich for conversations on practice.

Chapter Seven: A Case-study Investigation of Five Ordinary Movements

Whereas the initial chapters of this work establish the complexity of ordinary experience, explore the broad turn to culture and a specific practitioner's space-making model for deepening ordinary experience through the lens of intercultural ministry, and address the transformative nature of ordinary experience through its attentiveness to life as it is lived, subsequent fourth and fifth chapters shift in emphasis and move toward the fruits of this current chapter, which emphasizes on-the-ground investigation. As part of that shift, chapter 4 introduces the Five Ordinary Movements, including the five interpersonal practices, within the context of layered examples from daily life, the Christian spiritual tradition, and communal Christian prayer practice. Chapter 4 proposes the Five Ordinary Movements framework as a response to the pastoral concern, which both recognizes the complexity of ordinary experience as well as the need for intentional space-making activities that promote healthy and authentic interpersonal interactions. Chapter 5 returns to practical theology and spirituality and suggests four specific contributions that the movement framework offers to prominent themes in the fields of spirituality and practical theology, including metaphor, model/method, action, and practice/*praxis*. This current chapter seeks to further deepen and broaden the descriptive introduction to the Five Ordinary Movements framework presented in chapter 4, which is based primarily on the writer's observations, by extending and describing the results of an invitation to others to engage the Five Ordinary Movements framework in light of its relevance for discerning the Presence of the Sacred within their daily lives. This invitation was extended to persons in two different settings, including the classroom and a retreat. This work now turns toward attention to the responses of that invitation.

Practical Theological Investigation

John Swinton and Harriet Mowat describe practical theology as "an intricate and complex enterprise"; as such they describe diversity within practical theological perspectives, and yet name a common theme through "its perspective on, and beginning-point in, human experience and its desire to reflect theologically on that experience."[1] This work is also a theological project, designed to explore a model and method for practical theological spiritual formation. The investigator recognizes concerns about objectivity that might arise within the scope of a more sociological endeavor.[2] In particular, the role of the case-study investigator as designer, provider, and analyzer of the retreat and online experience could potentially evoke concerns related to objectivity. However, the case-study investigator deems the consciously subjective and constructive nature of this work as essential to establishing a theological model in which ordinary and specialized knowing are in conversation with one another.[3]

This case-study investigation is designed to explore the adequacy of the movement framework with real people in ordinary life, and is not concerned at this point with establishing scientific or statistical validity. While the case-study investigator expects the model and method to be relevant in a variety of contexts, her concern within

---

[1] John Swinton and Harriet Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM, 2006), v.

[2] Ibid., vi-vii. Swinton and Mowat also address this tensive relationship.

[3] Ibid., viii. Swinton and Mowat note that the "situations" that are studied in practical theology are "filled with hidden values, meanings, and power dynamics." As such, the theologian's conscious subjectivity is of crucial importance. At the same time, the specifically theological lens addresses a type of knowing that is "faithful and transformative," according to Swinton and Mowat. The author recognizes these tensions.

the scope of this work is with accessing the depth and breadth of the model and method in single settings rather than with proving the universality of the model and method in many settings.

Design

This investigation primarily uses a case-study approach.[4] It seeks out the perspectives of ordinary people situated in their daily lives. However, as Swinton and Mowat suggest, a multi-method approach is often necessary in practical theological investigations because of the polyvalent reality of the situations that are explored.[5] Creswell speaks directly to "transformative mixed methods" in which the investigator "uses a theoretical lens as an overarching perspective within a design,"[6] which in the case of this work is related to the theoretical and practical scope of ordinary experience. It must be recognized that the Five Ordinary Movements are proposed by the investigator based upon her observation of the movements both in daily life experience as well as in her observations of the movements as present in academic theological and spiritual discourse. However, this chapter also includes the perspectives and insights of the case-study investigation participants as they engage in their own experience of the Five Ordinary Movements in their daily lives. Their reflections on their experiences are placed in conversation both with one another and also with the case-study investigator. The case-study investigator recognizes the power differential that exists because of her

---

[4] John W. Creswell, *Research Design*: *Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2009), 13-15. Creswell describes "case-study as a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals."

[5] Swinton and Mowatt, *Practical Theology*, 50-51.

[6] Creswell, *Research Design*, 15.

role as the professional theologian and case-study investigator. Consequently, she explicitly invites participants to cooperate in the development of the Five Ordinary Movements framework. The case-study investigator maintains that the small-group experience empowers participants to engage the framework as co-investigators with the case-study investigator and at least partially responds to the potential power differential issue. Having situated this investigation within the scope of practical theology, attention now turns toward the actual contexts of the case study environments.

Two Contexts

This case study looks at two different settings, including a retreat and classrooms. The retreat portion of this case study is the more formal of the two settings, and included informed consent participation from persons who are aware that the case-study investigator seeks to further understanding about the specific framework of the Five Ordinary Movements. The classroom setting is presented here as less formal and anecdotal, and mostly reflects the ongoing nature of the investigator's continued understanding of and presentation of the Five Ordinary Movements framework. Each context is described in further detail.

The retreat experience was offered to parishioners at St. Mary's Catholic Church located in Alexandria, Minnesota. The case-study investigator approached the local pastor about the possibility offering a retreat to women parishioners. The director of adult faith formation was also invited to consider and plan for the retreat offering. The retreat was advertised over a two-week period in the local bulletin and was announced after the Sunday masses. The retreat and online experience was advertised as for women, and potential participants were directed to contact the case-study investigator directly to

sign up. No limitations other than gender were placed on the invitation to participate. The age range of the actual participants was 31 to 75 years old.

The case-study investigator facilitated a two-session in-person retreat experience. Each session lasted three hours. The dates and time frames for the two sessions of the in-person retreat were Tuesday, May 22, and Wednesday, May 23, 2012, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on both days. The six-week online retreat period lasted from Sunday, May 27, through Sunday, July 8, 2012. During the in-person sessions, light refreshments were provided to the participants by the parish. The retreat was held within the church's school facilities in a small room conducive to small-group gatherings.

The case-study investigator provided an audiovisual presentation that included introductory material and an introduction to each of the movements. In addition to textual descriptions of each movement, photos and music were included in the presentation as further expressions of how each movement might be perceived in daily life. The retreat experience included conversation and prayer experiences related to each movement among the participants. Each of the Five Ordinary Movements was presented one-by-one with its related textual, visual, and audio material. During the last session, participants were also instructed as to how to access the online materials through Moodle, using a particular user name and password unique to each person.

The case-study investigator moderated a six-week online experience through Moodle in which participants were invited to provide weekly personal reflections and to interact with one another through online discussion. Participants were prompted weekly by reflection questions posted in Moodle, which were designed to encourage them to cite and describe daily life experiences that relate to each movement. Participants were

encouraged to first engage in the online discussion throughout each week and then compose a personal reflection on each movement at the end of the relevant week. A total of three of the five women actively participated in the online aspect of the retreat experience.

After the six-week online experience period, all five participants gathered for a final in-person focus group conversation on Tuesday, July 10, 2012, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. This session was audio-recorded with permission from each person. During that session, participants were invited to reflect on their experiences and reflect critically on the movement framework.

In the classroom setting, the case-study investigator shared the Five Ordinary Movements framework in two different classes. The first was during an undergraduate course entitled Prayer and Spirituality, and was located at St. Thomas University in Miami Gardens, Florida. The second took place during a graduate course entitled Foundational Issues in Spiritual Direction, and was located at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minnesota. Because these classroom settings serve as anecdotal evidence based on the role of the instructor who is also the case-study investigator, the specific semesters in which these courses took place is not named in order to protect the anonymity of the students. In the case of the undergraduate students, after having been introduced to the Five Ordinary Movements framework over a course of five weeks, students were asked to identify the Five Ordinary Movements within the story lines of two contemporary movies, The Avatar and The Nativity. When placed in small groups after having viewed one or the other movie, students were amply able to identify each of the Five Ordinary Movements in both movies. The graduate students were similarly introduced to the Five

Ordinary Movements framework gradually, every two weeks, over the course of six class sessions. In between class sessions, students were asked to write personal reflection essays of one to two pages citing where they noticed the Five Ordinary Movements in the course of their daily lives.

Related to the broader treatment of the nature of ordinary experience as complex and inclusive of both immediacy and deepening, it is noteworthy that the first undergraduate course was offered chronologically before the formal retreat experience. The second graduate course was offered chronologically after the retreat experience. The investigator's presentation of the Five Ordinary Movements shifted throughout each of these time periods, and continues to shift Further insights from this observation are offered later in this chapter. For now, attention is turned back toward the goals of this case-study investigation by exploring the guiding questions that shape the investigation.

Guiding Questions

Broadly, this case-study investigation explores the following question: In what ways do the retreat and classroom experiences of the Five Ordinary Movements inform a model and method of practical theological spiritual formation that addresses discernment of the Sacred in ordinary experience? More specifically, the holistic qualities of knowing in ordinary experience are addressed through the following subsets of case-study investigation questions, which are organized into three categories, including conceptual, relational, and active experience:[7]

---

[7] These categories reflect the investigator's initial understanding and expression of the holistic knowing and stratified relationality that was eventually developed within the theoretical framework of ordinary experience. A deepened sense of these categories is presently reflected in this work throughout the initial chapters; however, at the time of

Conceptual experience

Which concepts, images, and sounds do the participants use to express their perspectives? Are concepts, images, discussion, and sounds all helpful for expressing participants' perspectives of the Five Ordinary Movements in their daily lives?

Relational experience

Which relationships are most prominently addressed by the participants within the framework of the Five Ordinary Movements? To what extent do the movements inform the depth, breadth, growth, and healing in their relational awareness?

Active experience

What practices do the participants cite as helpful for developing the skilled activities (openness/receptivity, mutuality, dynamism, ambiguity, resonance) in their daily lives? To what extent do the skilled activities align with the proposed parallel movements?

Assessing the Five Ordinary Movements

Sources

This section refers to the case-study investigator's explicit process for collecting, interpreting, and expressing the responses from participants. This process included use of two analytical tools and the written materials of the participants, which are both further described in this section. Within the formal context of the retreat, each participant completed an informed consent form that gives the case-study investigator permission to

---

the retreat, the language represented in this chapter reflects the initial understanding and expression for organizing the framework.

use all written materials in the investigation, including the interpretation of the materials and expression of findings.[8] Participants also consented to confidentiality regarding all of the materials posted online with their peers. During the in-person follow-up focus group, two tools were administered. Participants completed one survey and one evaluation. First, the survey tool addresses the movement framework itself, and probes into respondents' experience through a framework of knowledge, relationships, and actions. Five areas of relationality are addressed in each of the three categories, including self, family, friends, people different than me, and God. Second, the evaluation tool addresses the design of the retreat experience. The evaluation is divided into a section related to the in-person experience and the online experience. Both the online and in-person parts of the retreat are evaluated according to the following elements: location, timing, facilitation style, presentation, group interaction, and ease of access. Both the survey and evaluative tool include quantitative and qualitative response formats, including multiple choice options, Likert scales, and open-ended questions. All five of the retreat participants completed both of the tools. The survey questions are designed around key areas, including demographic information, questions about the conceptual, relational, and practical nature of the model. The survey design follows the guidelines set forth by Mertens.[9] Details about the written materials are included in the next section and

---

[8] Creswell, *Research Design*: *Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2009), 89. Creswell offers the main features required in a form that acknowledges the participants' rights. A full proposal for the Internal Review Board was approved at St. Thomas University before the retreat portion of the case-study investigation began.

include both the formal retreat participant's writing and anecdotal reference to student observations from class both in their writing and verbal comments.

Written materials for the retreat participants were collected during the online period. Throughout the six-week online period, a total of seven discussion contributions were posted by three of the five women, and a total of three reflections were posted by two of the five participants. All of these posts were completed through Moodle. The posts were copied from Moodle into word-processor documents and color-coded to protect anonymity when necessary. Written materials for the undergraduate students were not a required part of the coursework; however, the small-group assignment mentioned earlier was the primary material from which the investigator gained a sense of the student's perceptions about the relatedness of the Five Ordinary Movements framework. Written materials for the graduate students included six one-to-two page personal reflections completed by six women.

Guiding Questions

Broadly, this case-study investigation explores the ways in which the retreat experience of the Five Ordinary Movements might inform a developing model and method of practical theological spiritual formation that addresses discernment of the Sacred in ordinary experience. The case-study investigator assumes that the Five Ordinary Movements framework addresses the layered nature of ordinary experience. In order to test this assumption, the survey and evaluative tools and writing materials are designed to pull forth the participants' perceptions of the movements as related to three

---

[9] Donna M. Mertens, *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology: Integrating Diversity with Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2005), 179-87.

particular aspects of experience: conceptual experience, relational experience, and active experience. The remainder of this section presents the findings from the survey and evaluation tools provided by the participants as they relate to the case-study investigator's initial subsets of case-study investigation questions. Findings from the weekly online discussions and written reflections are also integrated.

Conceptual experience

The initial subset of case-study investigation questions that address conceptual experience include the following: Which concepts, images, and sounds do the participants use to express their perspectives? Are concepts, images, discussion, and sounds all helpful for expressing participants' perspectives of the Five Ordinary Movements in their daily lives? The latter case-study investigation sub-question is addressed on the survey through the following question: Which elements of the experience best helped you to express your perspectives related to the Five Ordinary Movements? Participants are directed within the instructions included in the survey to rank the following sets in response to the above question: writing/reflection, providing images/pictures, using song/sound, discussion, other. All but one of the participants ranked discussion as their number one choice for best expression of their perspectives. Using song/sound was ranked by three of the five participants as the second-choice in this category.

In light of the first question in this subset, the only specific image/picture that was referred to in the online reflections and discussion posts was the image of water and waves as representative of the Up and Down movement. No songs/sounds were specifically mentioned, despite having been ranked as the second preferred way to

express perspectives. One respondent reflected on the interplay of the themes of joy and sorrow in her writing on the Ups and Downs. Another brought out the theme of balance in her reflection on the Back and Forth movement. When asked on the survey tool about the respondent's favorite ordinary movement and least favorite ordinary movement, two respondents chose Tension of a Web as their favorite; one person elected Back and Forth; and the fourth person circled Cycling of a Spiral. This latter choice was described as her favorite, "because of its continuity and smoothness." In regard to their least favorites, two people chose Vibration of Concentric Circles; one person circled Ups and Downs; and another person selected Cycling of Spirals. The fifth person did not answer either question. Students from the graduate course did not explicitly rank any of the movements in regard to preference. However, one student did comment that she appreciated when the movement assigned for a given week intersected with significant life events; conversely, she was disappointed to have to "move on" to the next movement because the prior one had animated her reflections so intensely.

It is noteworthy that three different movements were cited among four people in both the least favorite and most favorite questions. The case-study investigator interprets this as a generally positive reception of the breadth in which the framework of the five movements adequately expresses conceptual experiences. One of the respondents commented in an open-ended question that, "it is hard for me to identify which things are in each movement." A similar concern arose during the focus group session, when a participant indicated that she still found it confusing to go from the presenter's examples of photos and songs related to each movement into her own examples related to each movement. She further indicated a desire to "get it right." Similarly, the graduate

students reflected this same concern during oral evaluation of the Five Ordinary Movements on the last day of class. The graduate students suggested that the storytelling done by the presenter was helpful in this regard, but more examples could have been given.

This concern potentially speaks to the need for group sharing of examples in addition to the presenter's examples that are given during the in-person part of the retreat, especially in light of the survey findings that expressed "discussion" as the preferred method for sharing perspectives. Hearing from others in-person would potentially strengthen each person's confidence in naming her own specific examples before they are sent out on their own during the online experience. Given these latter reflections, the case-study investigator interprets the low frequency of examples offered to be associated with a need for greater confidence and not necessarily as an indication that the Five Ordinary Movements are not relevant to the sounds and images found in daily life.

Finally, participants were asked to evaluate the impact of knowledge on five subsets of relationships, including knowledge of self, of family members, of friends, of people different than me, and of God. Respondents were instructed to indicate whether knowledge in each category had gotten worse, stayed the same, or improved. Not a single person indicated in any category that things had gotten worse. Two people indicated that their knowledge had stayed the same in all five categories. The other three respondents indicated a mix between the categories of stayed the same and improved. A number of questions on the survey attempted to pull forth their perspectives about the relational impact of the retreat experience. As noted above, the five sets of relationships were addressed through sets of questions in three different categories—knowledge of

(which was just presented), relationship to, and actions toward. The relational and active categories are presented below, along with their relevant subset of case-study investigation questions.

Relational experience

The initial subset of case-study investigation questions that address relational experience include the following: Which relationships are most prominently addressed by the participants within the framework of the Five Ordinary Movements? To what extent do the movements inform the depth, breadth, growth, and healing of their relational awareness? The latter sub-question was addressed on the survey tool as, Which elements of your relationships were best addressed by the Five Ordinary Movements framework? Again, the instructions asked them to rank among the following choices: learning more about others, deepening relationships, healing broken relationships, and awareness of relationships. One person did not respond to this question. Another person used a check mark for two of the selections, including learning more about others and deepening relationships. The third person ranked only two of the choices, including learning more about others and awareness of relationships. In the remaining two sets of responses, a mix of ranking between first and second choices favored deepening relationships, awareness of relationships, and learning more about others. Not a single person ranked healing broken relationships in their top three.

Two sets of information from the data address the first relational subset case-study investigation question, Which relationships are most prominently addressed by the participants within the framework of the Five Ordinary Movements? First, among the written reflections and discussion posts, immediate family members such as children,

spouses, and parents were most often mentioned. In one case, a writer reflected on the range of generational relationships starting with the legacy of her husband's aging parents and concluding with her hopes for the values that she and her husband are setting for their own children. The general setting of work was also mentioned frequently, but specific relationships with colleagues were not addressed. In another case, a writer reflected on how the change inherent in the Cycling of Spirals invites her to give time to her relationships with new people and strangers before making negative conclusions about them. Similar trends were observed in the graduate student reflective writing. Immediate familial relationships tended to be addressed at more length, whereas relationships with coworkers and acquaintances were more generally referenced. One exception to this was the case of a student who wrote about the fiery Back and Forth exchange between herself and a stranger who had offended her and her walking companion.

Similar to the knowledge category, participants were asked to evaluate the impact of the Five Ordinary Movements on their relationship to five subsets of people: self, family members, friends, people different than the respondent, and God. Respondents were instructed to indicate whether the relationship in each category had gotten worse, stayed the same, or improved. Not a single person indicated in any category that things had gotten worse. One person indicated that her relationships had stayed the same in all five categories. Another person indicated that her relationships had improved in all five categories. The other three respondents indicated a mix between the categories of stayed the same and improved. The graduate student cited above about her interactions with a stranger reflected that the Back and Forth interactions prompted her toward the Cycling

of Spirals because of the interior awareness that she recognized and the consequent growth that she experienced.

Another way to look at the relational categories is to consider patterns across each of the five subsets of people within each of the three categories of knowledge, relationships and actions. For example, among the respondents who indicated any variety in their responses describing the subsets of relationships as having improved or stayed the same, it was more likely for improvement to have been experienced with God and with self. Only one respondent indicated that people different than me had improved in all three categories of knowledge of, relationship to, and actions toward; however, this same respondent also indicated improvement in self and God. These findings may be the consequence of a retreat design that only allowed for face-to-face interactions among participants during the beginning and ending sessions, with an absence of physical interactions during the six weeks of the online experience.

Active experience

The initial subset of case-study investigation questions that address active experience include the following: What practices do the participants cite as helpful for developing the skilled activities (openness/receptivity, mutuality, dynamism, ambiguity, resonance) in their daily lives? To what extent do the skilled activities align with the proposed parallel movements? The latter sub-question was addressed on the survey tool as, Which sets of the five movements and its parallel skilled activity seem to fit best together (make sense) according to your perspective? Again, the instructions asked them to rank among the following choices: openness/receptivity and the Ups and Down, mutuality and Back and Forth, dynamism and Cycling of Spirals, ambiguity and Tension

of Webs, freedom and Vibration of Concentric Circles. Two people marked only one of the choices, which were openness/receptivity and the Ups and Downs as well as ambiguity and Tension of Webs. Another person marked only two of the choices, ranking first, openness/receptivity and the Ups and Downs and second, ambiguity and the Tension of Webs. For the remaining two respondents who ranked all five of the pairs, mutuality and Back and Forth fell within the top two for both of them, while ambiguity and Tension of Webs was ranked fourth and fifth among these two respondents. Additionally, three of the five skilled activities were mentioned in the open-ended questions: ambiguity was associated with the most challenging part of the Five Ordinary Movements; openness was listed as one important thing that I learned from this experience; and the ongoing nature (dynamism) in everyday life was described as the best thing about the Five Ordinary Movements.

Of the five pairings, the least frequently ranked or written about was freedom and Vibration of Concentric Circles. Also, the Vibration of Concentric Circles was chosen twice among respondents' least favorite Ordinary Movement. As a consequence, the case-study investigator decided to shift the language related to this pairing, and refers to the skilled activity of resonance rather than freedom in further presentations and writing about the Five Ordinary Movements. Anecdotally, the case-study investigator has received confirmation of this shift in language as potentially speaking more accurately and meaningfully to people's ordinary experience both in professional collegial conversations as well as in student input conversations.

Regarding the first relational sub-question—What practices do the participants cite as helpful for developing the skilled activities (openness/receptivity, mutuality,

dynamism, ambiguity, resonance) in their daily lives?—the primary sources included the written posts and reflections and open-ended responses in the evaluation tool. For example, the prayer practice of Lectio Divina was talked about between respondents in the online discussion posts, and was also mentioned in the evaluation questions as something that should stay the same and something that helped them tune into the presence of God. Another prayer practice that was cited in a discussion post on the Ups and Downs was gratitude. Being in nature, paying attention to the body, and expressing creativity through art were other practices written about during the Ups and Downs week. Because no reflections and only one discussion post were provided during the third through fifth weeks, it is difficult to further assess the remaining movements.

Implications for Practice

The most consistent finding related to the retreat experience of the Five Ordinary Movements was the desire on the part of the participants for more interactive, in-person presence to one another. This was supported statistically by a near-unanimous ranking of discussion as the preferred way to express their perspectives. Qualitatively, this concern was addressed in the evaluation and survey tools through numerous comments, such as a desire to have "a few more people involved," which would have made it better, and the insight, "I found that I do need people interaction instead of the computer." One respondent commented that "it allowed me to meet some good people," as part of her response on how the experience helped her to tune into the presence of God in her life. Contrast comments about the in-person retreat as "enriching" and the online experience as "dry" also support this finding. Similar comments dominated the in-person focus

group conversation as well. This primary finding informs both logistical and also relational considerations.

In response to the logistical considerations, the case-study investigator takes note of several suggestions for future improvements regarding the retreat experience itself. First, rather than addressing more than one Ordinary Movement during each of two in-person sessions, it is recommended that one Ordinary Movement be introduced at a time. Giving more time to each movement, by allowing for more storytelling on the part of the presenter and more discussion among the participants to illustrate and pull out the dynamics of each movement, would likely increase confidence and familiarity with each movement among the participants.

Second, given the strong desire for more in-person time, it is recommended that participants gather together physically once a week over the course of six weeks. It is still likely that the online element could enrich the in-person experience; however, it is evident that this aspect is insufficient on its own for building up interpersonal skills and connectivity. For example, participants could check-in with one another during the week before they meet again and still turn in more formal reflections for the retreat moderator. Another possibility would be to encourage a post-six-week continuation of the retreat experience in daily life, which would allow the participants to continue ongoing communication after having experienced sufficient interpersonal interactions during the first six weeks. Related to this is one of the participant's observations about the "real" dynamics of the movements, which was shared during the post-retreat focus group: "it's good to separate the movements, but in real life they all go on at once. It's easier to get at that in live conversation with each other." After sharing the movements with one another

one-by-one over the first six weeks, participants would likely benefit from a time period to observe the movements at work simultaneously in their ordinary lives. This improvement is corroborated by the graduate student course experience, in which the students were given two weeks in between classes and came back together every two weeks.

In response to relational considerations, the importance of the in-person theme remains. One of the challenges as a retreat moderator is how to familiarize participants with concepts that are practical in nature. A short time frame does not allow for much experiential activity beyond a basic description of each movement and its interpersonal practice. While songs, images, and descriptions were used to illustrate each of the Five Ordinary Movements, only a textual description and a general reference to an example were used for each of the interpersonal practices during the retreat. Participants expressed desire for more examples of the interpersonal practices both during the retreat and also in the evaluations. Similarly, even though more storytelling and real-life examples were incorporated into the graduate student experience of the Five Ordinary Movements, students cited "more of that" as desirable for helping to improve understanding and relatability to the Five Ordinary Movements framework.

This gap in practice during the retreat correlates to the gap in the literature on practice in practical theology and spirituality, discussed in chapter 4. The case-study investigator's own sense of inadequacy in providing sufficient experiential activities through which to illustrate the five interpersonal practices activities became a prominent lens through which her readings of the literature were evaluated and assessed. As a result the interpersonal gap is identified along with a needed emphasis on practice that is both

skilled and relational. As relational, such practical formation requires both time and actual people who come together and are willing to be shaped by one another together. In the case of the retreat experience six women, including the case-study investigator, did come together. As skilled, a primary discovery from the retreat experience was recognition of the need for more time together to put the concepts described into practice and to learn from each other's daily life experiences through ongoing, in-person discussion and prayer together. This insight corroborates the call toward space-making found in the intercultural literature.

Finally, the case-study investigator returns to consideration of the most basic question of this work, which is an investigation of the ways in which the retreat experience of the Five Ordinary Movements might inform a developing model and method of practical theological spiritual formation that addresses discernment of the Sacred in ordinary experience. In other words, is the conceptual weightiness of the category of movement as a metaphor broad and deep enough to actively engage the fullness of the participants' ordinary lives?

Participants were attracted to the idea of looking for God as present in ordinary living. In both the surveys and the focus group discussion, they described the movement framework as "something that brought the spiritual into the everyday" and also stated that "the movements clarified different ways of seeing God in the ordinary." Second, the variety of responses, especially in the survey questions, to the particular presentation of the Five Ordinary Movements and their corollary interpersonal practices suggests that this particular framework of Ordinary Movements does speak broadly to ordinary experience. The movements provide "a name for things," according to one of the

participants. Continued experience of putting these relational insights into action through the offering of future retreats will provide a further and ongoing sense of the adequacy of the interpersonal layer of practice provided by the Five Ordinary Movements framework.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

This work begins by establishing that the adjective *ordinary* is a necessary addition to the category of experience in theological conversations. Such an addition within practical theological conversations emphasizes an inclusive approach to theological reflection. Central to the author's conviction about this necessary emphasis on inclusion is the pastoral concern connected to two related tendencies that tend to exclude the Sacred from the realm of ordinary life. The first is the tendency for seekers to divide their understanding of the Sacred and the profane into dualistic, separate categories. As Kathleen Cahalan notes, even contemporary believers often think that they must retreat to some location outside of daily life in order to find space for relating to God.[1] The author anecdotally refers to this tendency as *the great chasm*, which suggests that there is a large gulf between one's self and God, which consequently prevents seekers from being able to discern God's active presence in their daily lives. Related to this first tendency is a tendency among professional theologians to use specialized language for talking about God. The author understands the need for clarity within the realm of academic conversations and professional work, which is a likely counter-statement to the concern expressed here. However, she shares Wolfteich's concern that even graduate students of theology often feel overwhelmed by the academic pursuits of theological truths.[2] If ordinary seekers tend to go outside of ordinary experience to find God, and professional and graduate students of theology, who are charged with the primary task of understanding God, tend to talk *about* God and not necessarily relate to God, then this author worries about the role of the Sacred as an

[1] Cahalan, *Introducing the Practice of Ministry*, 113-14.

[2] Wolfteich, "Graceful Work," 7-8.

active aspect of meaning-making in public life. As a practical theologian concerned about meaningful theological rhetoric in the public arena, this author insists that it is much more pressing that ordinary people show up, feel welcomed, and engage in important conversations about how God is active in the world and is concerned about its transformation toward the common good of all of creation. As a further example of this concern, the author notes the response of one of the participants in the women's retreat, who communicated through an e-mail outside of the context of the retreat setting, that she was thankful for the retreat and the author's presence in her life because she often feels that even in church, she is not able to express herself fully or ask about all of the questions that she has.[3] She struggles to find a place where she can be authentic and faithful to a particular institution, while also carrying significant doubts and questions. An emphasis on ordinary experience seeks to lessen the likelihood of *the great chasm* as a pervasive aspect of *any* theologian's foundational assumptions, and to provide a context in which tough questions can be brought up even if clarity is unlikely and conflict is probable.

A second emphasis on ordinary experience established in this work suggests that ordinary experience is complex, and that layered approaches to grappling with ordinary experience are more adequate than linear or step-by-step approaches. The author agrees with Pete Ward when he suggests that even the pastoral circle, which appears to be cyclic, is in fact a linear approach that confounds pastoral practitioners.[4] The author

---

[3] Personal communication, May 24, 2012. This participant gave permission to use her communication as an example.

[4] Ward, *Participation and Mediation*, 34-36.

suspects that Ward would also critique many of the three-tiered methods proposed in spirituality, such as that of Sandra Schneiders, which suggests a sequential process of describing experience, analyzing experience, and posing a constructive criticism.[5] Schneiders's approach is intended for academic theologians and understandably does not line up well with the often-messy nature of life as it is lived. While Schneiders does admirably speak up for the voice of justice and transformation within the academy, and while her suggestion that later prophetic reflection must accompany the thick description of lived experience does suggest that she acknowledges the deepening nature of ordinary experience, her method lacks in its ability to address simultaneity. This quality is present in Pete Ward's notion of the circuit as a theological method. A circuit approach is notable for two reasons: first, the process of analysis can begin at any point, though it is important that all points be passed through at some point; and second, at any one point that is being considered, the other points are simultaneously taken up as well.[6] These assumptions about how analysis of experience functions do tend to address the often messy and complex nature of experience. As an analytical tool, the circuit is helpful for analyzing phenomena within experience, but it does not address epistemic and relational assumptions as explicitly as the layered approach proposed in this work through ordinary experience, with its two prongs of the personal and relational, each with layers, which address knowing as holistic and being as relational, respectively. This quality of explicit naming of the epistemic and ontological assumptions as built into the framework suggests

---

[5] Schneiders, "Theology and Spirituality," 254.

[6] Ward, *Participation and Mediation*, 79.

a third contribution of the current work, which addresses the interstices among the layers of the personal and relational realms.

A third emphasis in this work suggests that the personal element of experience points to knowing as holistic (i.e., inclusive of corporeal, volitional, affective, conceptual, relational, and spiritual ways of knowing). It further suggests that the relational element of experience is concentric and inclusive of ever-widening relational strata, such as relationship to self, to family, to communities, to society, to creation, and to God. Two perspectives that emphasize the intersections of points within these layers come from Elaine Graham and Eric Law. Graham notes that "location, positioning, and historicity define the language by which we can understand our experiences."[7] Whereas Graham argues for attentiveness to interstices in the academic community, Eric Law's work suggests that attentiveness to interstices impacts practices on-the-ground. The notion of cultural makeup is a practical notion that Law uses to illustrate to training participants just how it is that their own particular, personal, and unique cultural makeup is also simultaneously embedded in the cultural and historical strata of relationality. Through the exercise that was described in chapter 2, participants recognize both how their own cultural makeup emphases change over time (e.g., at one point in life a person's migration history might be a prevalent life factor, whereas at a later point in life one's education or age might become prevalent), and also how their personal story is intertwined in the sociological, cultural, and historical factors of others (e.g., a young woman might come to see how gender was more of an issue for her mom than it is for her because of the prominence of gender equality issues that surfaced in the broader culture

---

[7] Graham, *Transforming Practice*, 159.

during a certain decade in her mother's life). To simultaneously recognize the co-mingling of both personal and relational dimensions of experience lays the foundation for attentiveness to the interpersonal layer of ordinary experience, which this work establishes as an underdeveloped category in both theoretical and practical frameworks.

The author first recognized the fourth emphasis of this work (the interpersonal layer as an underdeveloped category) through her own process of developing, presenting, and reflecting upon the women's retreat experience. In developing the visual and practical materials to be included in the retreat experience, it was fairly easy to choose images, songs, and prayer practices that would help to illustrate and offer a sense of each of the Five Ordinary Movements. It was more difficult, however, to design aspects of the retreat that could illustrate and offer a sense of the corollary interpersonal practices. This challenge remained unnoticed as an interpersonal concern until after the retreat experience when during the focus session the women suggested that they would have benefitted from more from face-to-face time with one another. In subsequent reflection about the retreat design, the author determined that each movement should ideally be considered one at a time during a face-to-face meeting with others and with time in between each meeting. Such shifts in design would potentially allow for interactive practices and for practicing the corollary interpersonal practices.

Because these subsequent reflections took place as the author began to return to the literature, it was then that she also began to recognize a gap in the literature regarding the interpersonal layer. This interpersonal gap became clearer as the elements of skill development, interpersonal practices, and space-making appeared within the written work as areas that needed attention, but in these same writings there was very little documented

activity that actually support the call for attention. For example, performative theology is a prominent theme within Elaine Graham's work, which suggests an emphasis on activity. However, beyond naming empathy, solidarity, openness, and the fostering of encounters, Graham does not describe any work in which these skills are actually taught and practiced as part of theological discourse or formation.[8] The author recognizes that there are significant limitations that challenge the development of the interpersonal layer. Much as Eric Law's work in intercultural ministry leadership training suggests, the factors of time, cost, and space do not make interpersonal skills, practices, and space-making environments easy to come by. Nonetheless, the author considers it as both a prominent theme that emerges both in the literature of practical theologies, spirituality, feminist theologies, US Latino/a theologies, and intercultural theologies, as well as a prominent issue in pastoral and spiritual settings, such as churches, retreats, and daily life relationships.

The author further suggests as a fifth area of emphasis in this work that the category of movement provides for the development of a framework in which this interpersonal concern, expressed as a common concern among many voices in diverse theological camps and also discovered directly by the author in her own theological work, can be developed and attended to. In sum, the Five Ordinary Movements framework, with its five corollary interpersonal practices serves as a boundary-crossing framework in which the many layers of personal and relational elements within ordinary experience can be addressed. In the following section, a few suggestions are offered about possible

---

[8] Ibid., 10.

future conversations in practical theology and spirituality that might shape this further development.

Continuing Conversations in Practical Theology and Spirituality

Methodological Considerations

The Five Ordinary Movements framework suggests that relational approaches to methodology are necessarily layered.[9] As Pete Ward suggests, complex reality warrants the development of models and methods that can simultaneously address many factors.[10] Frequently, theologians become associated with one particular method in their work. For example, Paul Tillich developed the correlational approach in theological method.[11] This method is frequently drawn upon and revised in contemporary practical theological and spirituality methods.[12] Another prominent model is the hermeneutic circle.[13] Each of

---

[9] Harold W. Turner, "A Model for the Structure of Religion in Relation to the Secular," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, no. 27 (1979), 45. Turner similarly suggests that relational models suggest interaction between distinct elements through modes of encounter, and that consequently such models require a “spatial” dimension, as opposed to a one- or two-dimensional model. For Turner, within the scope of religion and the secular, the basic elements include humans, divinity, and the world.

[10] Ward, *Participation and Mediation*, 79.

[11] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 66-70; Tillich and Kimball, *Theology of Culture*, 125.

[12] Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 165. Osmer offers a thorough summary of Tillich’s contribution and subsequent critiques of the correlation model, such as those of Tracy and Browning, who offer a “mutual, revised” correlation model with an emphasis on mutuality between the two sources, and Chopp and Lamb, who further suggest a “revised *praxis*” correlation with an emphasis that extends beyond purely academic interests.

these models emphasizes a particular aspect of relatedness, which can be expressed using the Five Ordinary Movements framework. For example, the correlation models emphasize the back and forth dynamics of relationship between two distinct elements. Hermeneutic circle models emphasize a third element (or multiple elements) that flow out of the back and forth movement into repetitions, which evolve into the ongoing dynamism of something new that develops from the initial encounter of two, or from the cycling of the circles when many elements are considered together. Similar methodological parallels could be drawn between contextual models and the Ups and Downs, between narrative models and the Tension of a Web, and between models of suspicion and retrieval and the Vibration of Concentric Circles. Those methodological comparisons and parallels are not developed here. However, such possible developments suggest the viability of the Five Ordinary Movements framework as a layered, relational approach to methodology that would potentially draw upon well-established methods and models and form a meta-methodology in which the relational contributions of each method can be considered together. Doing so potentially broadens the relational limitations that have been addressed by critiques of methods, such as the correlational or hermeneutic approaches, when they stand on their own. Another layer of this possible future exploration is the way in which the corollary interpersonal practices might serve to name explicitly the relational dynamics that are at work in each parallel method or model. A brief survey of theologians suggest that the five corollary interpersonal practices, though not named until now as a unified framework, are certainly present in theological

---

[13] Liebert, "The Role of Practice," 83; Schneiders, "Study of Christian Spirituality," 6; Heitink, *Practical Theology*, 165; Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 11; Lartey, "Practical Theology," 129.

conversations.[14] By drawing out these interpersonal practices, the possibility of a contemplative approach to methodology emerges as a future methodological development in practical theology and spirituality.

Contemplation itself is an elusive concept. Contemplation is described as a loving, simple, permanent attention toward God and others.[15] It can also be named as the state of being absorbed in something outside of one's self.[16] Another definition of contemplation is radical self-giving.[17] Yet another is being open to and receptive of God and others.[18] Each of these definitions suggests the highly relational nature of contemplative frameworks; additionally, the contemplative prayer tradition also suggests that skill development is an inherent quality of contemplative approaches.

For example, Richard Hauser, SJ, suggests a connection between deepening in prayer life and deepening in one's relationship with God, which leads one to toward

---

[14] For treatments of openness and receptivity as foundational relational stances, see Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 321-25; see also, Gratton, *Art of Spiritual Guidance*, 34, 44. For treatments of mutuality in relationships, see Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology*, 94-100; see also Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is*: *The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*, 10th anniversary ed. (New York: Crossroad, 2002), 216-21. For treatments of dynamism, see Cahalan, *Introducing the Practice of Ministry*, 154-56; see also, Graham, *Transforming Practice*, 148-49. For treatments of ambiguity, see Ross, *Extravagent Affections*, 54-65; see also Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 84.

[15] Louis K. Dupré and James A. Wiseman, *Light from Light*: *An Anthology of Christian Mysticism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 2001), 369.

[16] William A. Barry and William J. Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* (New York: Seabury, 1982), 48.

[17] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *We Drink from Our Own Wells*: *The Spiritual Journey of a People*, 20th Anniversary ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), 110.

[18] Maureen Conroy, *Growing in Love and Freedom: Personal Experiences of Counseling and Spiritual Direction* (Denville: Dimension Books, 1987), 26.

service of others.[19] In this process, Hauser suggests that the skills of prayer must be learned and deepened over time. As prayer deepens, a person's relationship with God also changes as well. As one's relationship with God deepens, a person is more likely to engage in healthy service of and actions toward others. "Happily, there is a relationship between contemplative prayer and being contemplative in action."[20] Hauser's work illustrates that both skill and relationship inform contemplative actions at varied interacting relational strata.

Contemplation is also a descriptive category that helps to address these under-treated aspects of practice in practical theology and spirituality as an interpersonal emphasis. For example, within the practice of spiritual direction from a contemplative-evocative approach, such as is emphasized in the Ignatian tradition, contemplation is "a lingering process that enables absorption in God, growth in inner freedom, and the ability to make the right decisions."[21] Conroy describes the contemplative atmosphere that is fostered in the practice of spiritual direction as that which "enables directees to experience the fullness of life and the ramifications of intimate relating that occur through developing a personal relationship with God."[22] Contemplative presence, as a way of knowing and of relating, emphasizes depth rather than quantity of insight.[23] The

---

[19] Richard J. Hauser, *Moving in the Spirit*: *Becoming a Contemplative in Action* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 16-21.

[20] Ibid., 19.

[21] Maureen Conroy, *The Discerning Heart*: *Discovering a Personal God*, A Campion Book (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1993), 78.

[22] Ibid., 89.

contemplative presence fostered in spiritual direction encourages a “lingering that sits with” ordinary experience through evocative questions that encourage the directee to delve into the depth that might be present in any particular moment of experience.[24] The fostering of contemplative presence as a spiritual practice is strikingly similar to the types of Sacred and open spaces that are called for from within a number of intercultural theological perspectives.[25] Both the interpersonal practices and the intercultural lens suggest an intersection in which the need for the creation of Sacred spaces that are intentional and inclusive and attentive to holistic and relational aspects of ordinary experience, potentially contributing to an aspect that is underrepresented in current theological methodology.

Reflection on Practice

The case-study investigator’s experience of noticing the Five Ordinary Movements in both daily life and in theological discourse, and then investigating the Five Ordinary Movements framework within the context of the participants’ daily life experience reveals the deepening nature of reflection on experience. For example, prior to leading the retreat experience, the case-study investigator had not yet named the middle layers of practice as an interpersonal gap. Through both the challenge of trying to develop experiential learning moments within the context of the short time together during the retreat, and also through the participants’ personal reflections about a desire for more time together, it became evident that skill development and relationality are key

---

[23] Ibid., 79.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Aquino, "Latina Feminist Theology," 260; Caro, "Toward a Feminist," 252.

elements of practice that take time and space to develop and foster. This might explain why these elements are so often overlooked in written, conceptual treatments of spiritual practices. The middle layers of practice as skilled and relational is a place of encounter, and encounter takes time.

The lens of ordinary experience suggests that reflection on experience is a deepening process, especially when holistic epistemological and relational ontological perspectives are at the forefront of the framework. Mary Reuter, OSB, suggests that "the process of reflection is strategic in realizing the formative potential in an encounter in daily life."[26] Reuter suggests that reflection as an ongoing practice places persons "in a position of readiness to receive directives from daily life."[27] She suggests a distinction between thinking as informative, with its linear, progressive, and argumentative qualities, and thinking as formative, with spiraling, interpersonal practices, and repetitive qualities.[28] The development of formative thinking requires the passing of time. The "capacity to see in surface phenomena, the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structure below the surface," is an ability and skill that is acquired through practice.[29] Wisdom is "a practical kind of knowledge that is obtained through reflection on people's lives and through study of the events of nature and history."[30] As a conceptual framework, the Five Ordinary Movements draw upon a prevalent aspect of daily life

---

[26] Mary Reuter, "Formation Through Encounters of Daily Life" (Volumes I and II), PhD diss. (Duquesne University, 1982), 259.

[27] Ibid., 262.

[28] Ibid., 267.

[29] Rodriguez, "Latina Activists," 74.

[30] Cespedes, "Sources and Processes," 32.

experience, movement, and allow that category to speak broadly and deeply as a wisdom way of knowing. As a relational framework, the five corollary interpersonal practices provide a complement to the movement metaphors, which allow for concrete naming of the relational dynamics that occur in contemplative encounters.

Review

This work introduces a framework of Five Ordinary Movements in response to the need for layered approaches to practical theological spiritual formation with an emphasis on holistic knowing and interpersonal practices. This investigation further assesses the Five Ordinary Movements framework in light of its ability to prompt discernment of the Sacred in ordinary experience. The author suggests that the need for layered approaches and interpersonal practices in practical theological spiritual formation arises out of the complexity of ordinary experience. Through review and critique of linear, compartmentalized approaches in theology and spirituality, this work suggests that attentiveness to the category of ordinary experience helps to address epistemic and relational gaps found within linear, compartmentalized approaches (e.g., overemphasis of cognition or of the personal or communal aspects of being in relationship). The complexity of ordinary experience is established by defining it, and in doing so, naming the holistic nature of knowing and the concentric nature of relationships. Through the lens of intercultural encounter, the argument is made for the establishment of intentional spaces in which interpersonal interactions can occur as part of practical theological spiritual formation. Emphasis on the interpersonal layer suggests a need to attend to both the personal and the relational aspects of ordinary experience simultaneously. In

particular, intercultural theology and ministry provide examples of holistic approaches to spiritual formation that specifically address the epistemic gaps related to knowing and the relational gaps related to practice.

Having established the complexity of ordinary experience, and, with the intercultural approach as an example of how to respond to such complexity through layered approaches for formation models, this work suggests movement as a layered metaphorical theological category, and proposes a specific framework of Five Ordinary Movements with five corollary interpersonal practices as an approach to practical theological spiritual formation. The effectiveness of the Five Ordinary Movements framework is investigated through case study both in the context of a retreat in daily life and also in the classroom setting. The multifaceted methodological and formational potential of the movement framework is reviewed and further explored through the methodological implications for practical theology and spirituality. The remainder of this current section previews the steps in this work in more detail as they are addressed in each chapter.

In chapter 1, experience is addressed as a challenging theological category because of its scope and complexity. Drawing upon treatments of experience in theology and spirituality, two elements of experience provide a conceptual framework for defining ordinary experience. These two elements include the personal and the relational. The complexity of each element is recognized by naming the effect of the passing of time, which contributes to the layered nature of each element as holistic and concentric, respectively. This chapter also critiques and outlines linear, compartmentalized treatments of ordinary experience in theology and spirituality for their limiting and

exclusivist scope. By contrast, ordinary experience is presented as non-specialized, non-elitist, and non-separatist. The last section further addresses the complexity of ordinary experience through a review of the Sacred and cultural realms as part of ordinary experience. The specific challenge of irrelevance that the lens of culture directs at theology and spirituality suggests further that attention to ordinary experience is imperative.

Chapter 2 draws upon the layered nature of ordinary experience and suggests that all theological reflection is contextual by pointing to the category of *location*. This chapter suggests that a turn toward location in theology is an indication of the import of focusing greater attention on the layers of ordinary experience. The lens of intercultural theology further suggests a need for the creation and maintenance of intentional spaces wherein persons with varied voices can gather and interact with one another in significant and prolonged ways. The intercultural practices of Eric Law are presented as an example of a layered approach to practical theological spiritual formation, in which both holistic knowing and interpersonal practices are attended to.

Chapter 3 deepens the contextual commitment of theology through a review of particular theological treatments of experience. A number of voices and common themes are brought forward within various theological camps, including practical theology, spirituality, feminist theologies, and US Latino/a theologies. These theological camps, though diverse and particular, each demonstrate in varied ways and with different emphases, the transformative value of reflection on life experience. The theological import of attention to daily life comes forward through a review of prominent themes

within these contemporary theological treatments of experience through the lens of the ordinary.

Chapter 4 introduces the particular framework of Five Ordinary Movements in response to the needs established by the intercultural and contemporary theological conversations, as a theological framework that addresses discernment of the Sacred within the layered and complex nature of ordinary experience. The specific movements are Ups and Downs, Back and Forth, Cycling of Spirals, Tension of a Web, and Vibration of Concentric Circles.[31] While not construed as an exhaustive list of movements, they are presented as a representation of common movements that are easily recognizable and broadly sensed in the course of daily living. Each of the movements is paired with a corollary interpersonal practice, which emphasizes the interpersonal layer of relationality.

Chapter 5 returns again to the camps of practical theology and spirituality, this time with the lens of a pastoral concern for developing approaches to practical theological spiritual formation that address the complex and layered nature of ordinary experience through attention to holistic ways of knowing and interpersonal practices. Movement is first reviewed as a category in other disciplines by identifying its conversation partners in foundational movement analysis and in faith development theory. In these conversations, movement is considered as a category that informs both knowing and relationality. Movement is also addressed as a category for practical theological spiritual formation in light of four contributions to the fields of practical theology and spirituality related to themes of metaphor, model/method, action, and

[31] Refer to the appendix for images representing each of the Five Ordinary Movements.

practice/*praxis*, all of which are drawn from the particular framework of the Five Ordinary Movements.

Chapter 6 presents two case-study experiences of the Five Ordinary Movements. The first setting is in the context of a retreat focused on the theme of finding God in daily life and relationships through movement, and the second setting is in the classroom. The goals for the case-study investigation are first presented, and then followed by a description of the retreat experience and class settings. Findings from the case-study investigation are presented with an emphasis on how the retreat experience of the Five Ordinary Movements in daily life impacted the conceptual, relational, and active components of the participants' daily life experience. Both the retreat and classroom experiences are assessed in light of their attentiveness to finding God in ordinary experience through both holistic knowing and interpersonal practices.

The final chapter reviews the work and concludes by addressing potential implications of the movement framework within practical theology and spirituality, especially in the areas of practice and methodology. Contemplative approaches are suggested as a response, and future investigations are projected.

Second Invitation

As a final invitation, a song from folk composer and performer Peter Mayer is offered. The lyrics to his song "God Is a River" address the concerns that are raised in this work about the holistic nature of knowing and the concentric quality of relationality in ordinary experience. The metaphor of river flows quite naturally with the metaphor of movement that is developed in this work. The reader is invited to sit with the themes.

In the ever-shifting water of the river of this life

I was swimming, seeking comfort; I was wrestling waves to find

A boulder I could cling to, a stone to hold me fast

Where I might let the fretful water of this river 'round me pass

And so I found an anchor, a blessed resting place

A trusty rock I called my savior, for there I would be safe

From the river and its dangers, and I proclaimed my rock divine

And I prayed to it "protect me" and the rock replied

God is a river, not just a stone

God is a wild, raging rapids

And a slow, meandering flow

God is a deep and narrow passage

And a peaceful, sandy shoal

God is the river, swimmer

So let go

Still I clung to my rock tightly with conviction in my arms

Never looking at the stream to keep my mind from thoughts of harm

But the river kept on coming, kept on tugging at my legs

Till at last my fingers faltered, and I was swept away

So I'm going with the flow now, these relentless twists and bends

Acclimating to the motion, and a sense of being led

And this river's like my body now, it carries me along

Through the ever-changing scenes and by the rocks that sing this song

God is the river, swimmer

So let go[32]

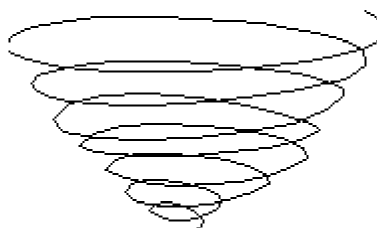
[32] Peter Mayer, "God Is a River" in *Midwinter,* Blue Boat, 2005, compact disc. http://www.petermayer.net/music/

Appendix 1: Images Representing the Five Ordinary Movements

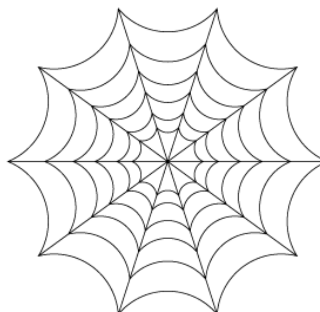
Ups and downs

Back and forth

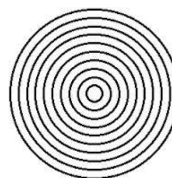
Circling of spirals



Tension of a web



Vibration of concentric circles



Christine Luna Munger
425 Dayton Ave. #5
St. Paul, MN 55102
10 October, 2014

[Name and address of addressee]

Dear Peter:

I am completing a doctoral dissertation at Saint Thomas University in Miami Gardens, Florida, entitled "Five Ordinary Movements for Practical Theological Spiritual Formation." I would like your permission to reprint in my dissertation excerpts from the following:

Complete lyrics to the song, God is a River, by Peter Mayer.

The excerpts to be reproduced are: the entire song, in written format.

The requested permission extends to any future revisions and editions of my dissertation, including non- exclusive world rights in all languages, and to the prospective publication of my dissertation by ProQuest through its ProQuest® Dissertation Publishing business. ProQuest may produce and sell copies of my dissertation on demand and may make my dissertation available for free internet download at my request. These rights will in no way restrict republication of the material in any other form by you or by others authorized by you. Your signing of this letter will also confirm that you own [or your company owns] the copyright to the above- described material.

If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter where indicated below and return it to me in the enclosed return envelope. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Christine Luna Munger

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE:

Signature:__Peter Mayer________ Date: ____10-23-14________
(printed Name—insert here)

7777 West Bluemound Road
P.O.Box 13819
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53213

Tel: 414-774-3630
Fax: 414-774-3259

ncherwin@halleonard.com

VIA EMAIL: lunamunger@gmail.com

December 5, 2014

Christine Luna Munger
425 Dayton Avenue, #5
St. Paul, MN 55102

RE: **When I Was A Boy**
Words and Music by Dar Williams
Copyright (c) 1993 Burning Field Music
All Rights Administered by BMG Rights Management (US) LLC
All Rights Reserved Used by Permission

Dear Ms. Munger:

We hereby grant you permission to include the complete lyrics to the above-cited composition in your dissertation entitled *Five Ordinary Moments For Practical Theological Spiritual Formation.* Credit will be given directly under the music to be included as listed above. This permission is limited to use of the above-cited composition for purposes of your dissertation, and does not include any right to use the composition, or any part thereof, in any other publications, or for any commercial purposes.

Our fee for this usage is US$25.00.

The terms of this agreement shall not be deemed effective unless and until we receive a countersigned copy of this letter, along with the fee cited above in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank.

Sincerely,

Licensing Administrator

Business Affairs

:nlc

Agreed to:

By______________________
Christine Luna Munger

Bibliography

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands: La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 4th ed. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012.

Aquino, María Pilar. "Feminist Intercultural Theology: Toward a Shared Future of Justice." In Aquino and Nuñez, *Feminist Intercultural Theology*, 9-28.

———. "Latina Feminist Theology: Central Features." In Aquino, Machado, and Rodriguez, *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology*, 133-60.

———. "Theological Method in U.S. Latino/a Theology: Toward an Intercultural Theology for the Third Millenium." In Espín and Díaz, *From the Heart of Our People*, 6-48.

Aquino, María Pilar, Daisy L. Machado, and Jeanette Rodriguez, eds. *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology: Religion and Justice*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002.

Aquino, María Pilar, and María José Rosado Nuñez, eds. *Feminist Intercultural Theology: Latina Explorations for a Just World*. Studies in Latino/a Catholicism. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007.

Arbuckle, Gerald A. *Culture, Inculturation, and Theologians: A Postmodern Critique*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2010.

Barry, William A., and William J. Connolly. *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*. New York: Seabury, 1982.

Bass, Dorothy C., and M. Shawn Copeland. *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*. 2nd ed. The Practices of Faith Series. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010.

Bass, Dorothy C., and Craig Dykstra. "A Theological Understanding of Christian Practices." In Volf and Bass, *Practicing Theology*, 13-32.

Bedford, Nancy Elizabeth. "Making Spaces: Latin American and Latina Feminist Theologies on the Cusp of Interculturality." In Aquino and Nuñez, *Feminist Intercultural Theology*, 49-69.

Bennett, Milton J. "A Developmental Approach to Training for Intercultural Sensitivity." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 10 (1986): 179-96.

———. "Towards Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity." In *Cross-Cultural Orientation: New Conceptualizations and Applications*, 27-69. Edited by R. Michael Paige and Council on International Educational Exchange. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986.

Bevans, Stephen B. *Models of Contextual Theology*. Rev. ed. Faith and Cultures Series. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002.

Boff, Clodovis. *Theology and Praxis: Epistemological Foundations*. Translated by Robert R. Barr. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987.

Browning, Don S. *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.

Cady, Linell Elizabeth. "Identity, Feminist Theory, and Theology." In Chopp and Davaney, *Horizons in Feminist Theology*, 17-32.

Cahalan, Kathleen A. *Introducing the Practice of Ministry*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2010.

Cahill, Lisa Sowle. "Feminism and Christian Ethics." In LaCugna, *Freeing Theology*, 211-34.

Campbell, Alastair. "The Nature of Practical Theology." In Woodward and Pattison, *The Blackwell Reader,* 77-88.

Campusano, Maria Cristina Ventura. "Between Oppression and Resistance: From the Capture of the Imaginary to the Journey of the Intercultural." In Aquino and Nuñez, *Feminist Intercultural Theology*, 179-95.

Caro, Olga Consuelo Velez. "Toward a Feminist Intercultural Theology." In Aquino and Nuñez, *Feminist Intercultural Theology*, 248-64.

Carr, Anne E. "The New Vision of Feminist Theology." In LaCugna, *Freeing Theology*, 5-30.

Cartledge, Mark J. "Pentecostal Theological Method and Intercultural Theology." In Cartledge and Cheetham, *Intercultural Theology*, 62-74.

Cartledge, Mark J., and David Cheetham, eds. *Intercultural Theology: Approaches and Themes*. London: SCM, 2011.

Cespedes, Geraldina. "Sources and Processes of the Production of Wisdom: An Approach from Intercultural Feminist Criticism." In Aquino and Nuñez, *Feminist Intercultural Theology*, 29-48.

Cheetham, David. "Intercultual Theology and Interreligous Studies." In Cartledge and Cheetham, *Intercultural Theology*, 43-61.

Chopp, Rebecca S. *The Power to Speak: Feminism, Language, God*. New York: Crossroad, 1989.

———. *The Praxis of Suffering: An Interpretation of Liberation and Political Theologies*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986.

Chopp, Rebecca S., and Sheila Greeve Davaney, eds. *Horizons in Feminist Theology: Identity, Tradition, and Norms*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997.

Conde-Frazier, Elizabeth, S. Steve Kang, and Gary A. Parrett. *A Many Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamics for Spiritual Formation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.

Conn, Joann Wolski. "Toward Spiritual Maturity." In LaCugna, *Freeing Theology*, 235-59.

Conroy, Maureen. *The Discerning Heart: Discovering a Personal God*. A Campion Book. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1993.

———. *Growing in Love and Freedom: Personal Experiences of Counseling and Spiritual Direction*. Denville: Dimension Books, 1987.

Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2009.

Davaney, Sheila Greeve. "Continuing the Story, but Departing the Text: A Historicist Interpretation of Feminist Norms in Theology." In Chopp and Davaney, *Horizons in Feminist Theology*, 198-214.

Díaz, Miguel H. *On Being Human: U.S. Hispanic and Rahnerian Perspectives*. Faith and Cultures Series. Edited by Robert J. Schreiter. Marynoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001.

Dreyer, Elizabeth. *Earth Crammed with Heaven: A Spirituality of Everyday Life*. New York: Paulist Press, 1994.

Dreyer, Elizabeth, and Mark S. Burrows, eds. *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005.

Dupré, Louis K., and James A. Wiseman, eds. *Light from Light: An Anthology of Christian Mysticism*. 2nd ed. New York: Paulist Press, 2001.

Elizondo, Virgilio P. *Galilean Journey: The Mexican-American Promise*. Rev. and expanded ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000.

Erikson, Erik H., and Joan M. Erikson. *The Life Cycle Completed*. Extended ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 1997.

Espín, Orlando. *The Faith of the People: Theological Reflections on Popular Catholicism*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997.

———. "The God of the Vanquished: Foundations for a Latino Spirituality." In Espín, *Faith of the People*, 11-31.

———. *Grace and Humanness: Theological Reflections Because of Culture*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007.

Espín, Orlando O., and Miguel H. Díaz, eds. *From the Heart of Our People: Latino/a Explorations in Catholic Systematic Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999.

Farley, Edward. "Interpreting Situations: An Inquiry into the Nature of Practical Theology." In Woodward and Pattison, *The Blackwell Reader*, 118-27.

Forrester, Duncan B. *Truthful Action: Explorations in Practical Theology*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000.

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

Frank, Ruella, and Frances La Barre. *The First Year and the Rest of Your Life: Movement, Development, and Psychotherapeutic Change*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Frohlich, Mary. "Spiritual Discipline, Discipline of Spirituality: Revisiting Questions of Definition and Method." *Spiritus* 1, no. 1 (2001): 65-78.

Fulkerson, Mary McClintock. *Changing the Subject: Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. 2nd rev. ed. Continuum Impacts. Translated by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. London; New York: Continuum, 2004.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Culture: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books, 1973.

Goizueta, Roberto S. *Caminemos Con Jesús: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995.

Graham, Elaine. "Practical Theology as Transforming Practice." In Woodward and Pattison, *The Blackwell Reader*, 104-17.

Graham, Elaine L. *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2002.

Gratton, Carolyn. *The Art of Spiritual Guidance: A Contemporary Approach to Growing in the Spirit*. New York: Crossroad, 1992.

Groome, Thomas H. *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991.

Guardiola-Saenz, Leticia A. "Reading from Ourselves: Identity and Hermeneutics among Mexican-American Feminists." In Aquino, Machado, and Rodriquez, *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology*, 80-97.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. *We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People*. 20th anniversary ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003.

Hammer, Mitchell R., Milton J. Bennett, and Intercultural Communication Institute. *The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Manual*. Portland: Intercultural Communication Institute, 1998.

Hanson, Bradley, ed. *Modern Christian Spirituality: Methodological and Historical Essays*. AAR Studies in Religion. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990.

Hauser, Richard J. *Moving in the Spirit: Becoming a Contemplative in Action*. New York: Paulist Press, 1986.

Heitink, Gerben. *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains*. Studies in Practical Theology. Translated by Reinder Bruinsma. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999.

Hildegard, Columba Hart, and Jane Bishop. *Scivias*. *The Classics of Western Spirituality*. New York: Paulist Press, 1990.

Hines, Mary E. "Community for Liberation." In LaCugna, *Freeing Theology*, 161-84.

Hofstede, Geert H. *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations across Nations*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2001.

Immink, Gerrit. *Faith: A Practical Theological Reconstruction*. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2005.

Isasi-Díaz, Ada María. *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996.

Johnson, Elizabeth A. *Quest for the Living God: Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God*. New York: Continuum, 2007.

———. *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*. 10th anniversary ed. New York: Crossroad, 2002.

Jones, Serene. "Women's Experience between a Rock and a Hard Place: Feminist, Womanist and *Mujerista* Theologies in North America." In Chopp and Davaney, *Horizons in Feminist Theology*, 33-53.

Julian, Edmund Colledge, and James Walsh. *Showings*: *The Classics of Western Spirituality*. New York: Paulist Press, 1978.

Kaufman, Tone Stangeland. "A Plea for Ethnographic Methods and a Spirituality of Everyday Life in the Study of Christian Spirituality: A Norwegian Case of Clergy Spirituality." *Spiritus* 14, no. 1 (2014): 94-102.

Kegan, Robert. *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Kohlberg, Lawrence. *Essays on Moral Development*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981.

Kwok, Pui-lan. *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.

LaCugna, Catherine Mowry, ed. *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993.

———. *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991.

Lartey, Emmanuel Yartekwei. *Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World*. Peterborough, England: Epworth, 2006.

———. "Practical Theology as a Theological Form." In Woodward and Pattison, *The Blackwell Reader*, 128-34.

Law, Eric H. F. *The Bush Was Blazing but Not Consumed: Developing a Multicultural Community through Dialogue Liturgy*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1996.

———. *Finding Intimacy in a World of Fear*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2007.

———. *Holy Currencies: Six Blessings for Sustainable Missional Ministries*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2013.

———. *Inclusion: Making Room for Grace*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000.

———. *Sacred Acts, Holy Change: Faithful Diversity and Practical Transformation*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2002.

———. *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1993.

———. *The Word at the Crossings: Living the Good News in a Multicontextual Community*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004.

Liebert, Elizabeth. *Changing Life Patterns: Adult Development in Spiritual Direction*. Expanded ed. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000.

———. "The Role of Practice in the Study of Christian Spirituality." In Dreyer and Burrows, *Minding the Spirit*, 79-99.

Lozano-Diaz, Nora O. "Ignored Virgin or Unaware Women: A Mexican-American Protestant Reflection on the Virgin of Guadalupe." In Aquino, Machado, and Rodriguez, *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology*, 204-16.

Mayer, Peter. "God Is a River." In *Midwinter.* Blue Boat, 2005, compact disc. http://www.petermayer.net/music/

McFague, Sallie. *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982.

———. *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987.

McGinn, Bernard. *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*. Modern Library Classics. New York: Modern Library, 2006.

———. "The Letter and the Spirit: Spirituality as an Academic Discipline." In Dreyer and Burrows, *Minding the Spirit*, 25-41.

McGuire, Meredith B. "Why Bodies Matter: A Sociological Reflection on Spirituality and Materiality." In Dreyer and Burrows, *Minding the Spirit*, 118-34.

Mertens, Donna M. *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology: Integrating Diversity with Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2005.

Metz, Johannes Baptist. *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*. A Crossroad Book. Translated by J. Matthew Ashley. New York: Seabury Press, 1980.

Miller-McLemore, Bonnie. "Five Mis-Understandings of Practical Theology." *International Journal of Practical Theology* 16, no. 1 (2012): 5-26.

Moltmann, Jürgen. *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.

Nanko, Carmen Marie. "Justice Crosses the Border: The Preferential Option for the Poor in the United States." In Aquino, Machado, and Rodriguez, *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology*, 177-203.

Osmer, Richard Robert. *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2008.

Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational*. 2d ed. Translated by John W. Harvey. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Pare, Louise M. "Moving between the Worlds She Brings Forth All Things from within Her Body: Intrinsic Movement as Transformative Spiritual Practice and Expression of Women's Spirituality." PhD diss., California Institute of Integral Studies, 2002.

Parks, Sharon Daloz. *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.

Parra, Olga Villa. "Foreward." In Aquino, Machado, and Rodriguez, *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology*, ix-xii.

Piaget, Jean, and Bärbel Inhelder. *The Psychology of the Child*. New York: Basic Books, 1969.

Pineda-Madrid, Nancy. "Notes toward a Chicana Feminist Epistemology (and Why It Is Important for Latina Feminist Theologies)." In Aquino, Machado, and Rodriguez, *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology*, 241-66.

Principe, Walter H. "Toward Defining Spirituality." *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 12, no. 2 (1983): 127-41.

Reuter, Mary. "Formation through Encounters of Daily Life" (Volumes I and II). PhD diss., Duquesne University, 1982.

Rodriguez, Jeanette. "Latina Activists: Toward an Inclusive Spirituality of Being in the World." In Aquino, Machado, and Rodriguez, *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology*, 114-30.

———. *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Faith and Empowerment among Mexican-American Women*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994.

Ross, Susan A. *Extravagant Affections: A Feminist Sacramental Theology*. New York: Continuum, 1998.

———. "God's Embodiment and Women." In LaCugna, *Freeing Theology*, 185-210.

Schneiders, Sandra M. "The Bible and Feminism." In LaCugna, *Freeing Theology*, 31-58.

———. "A Hermeneutical Approach to the Study of Christian Spirituality." In Dreyer and Burrows, *Minding the Spirit*, 49-60.

———. "Religion and Spirituality: Strangers, Rivals, or Partners?" In *The Santa Clara Lectures*, 1-26. Edited by Santa Clara University and Bannan Institute for Jesuit Education. The Santa Clara Lectures, 2000.

———. "Spirituality in the Academy." In Hanson, *Modern Christian Spirituality*, 15-37.

———. "The Study of Christian Spirituality: Contours and Dynamics of a Discipline." In Dreyer and Burrows, *Minding the Spirit*, 5-24.

———. "Theology and Spirituality: Strangers, Rivals, or Partners?" *Horizons* 13, no. 2 (1986): 253-74.

Schreiter, Robert J. *Constructing Local Theologies*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985.

Sedmak, Clemens. *Doing Local Theology: A Guide for Artisans of a New Humanity*. Faith and Cultures Series. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002.

Sheldrake, Philip F. "Christian Spirituality as a Way of Living Publicly: A Dialectic of the Mystical and Prophetic." In Dreyer and Burrows, *Minding the Spirit*, 282-98.

Slee, Nicola. *Women's Faith Development: Patterns and Processes*. Explorations in Practical, Pastoral, and Empirical Theology. England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003.

Swinton, John, and Harriet Mowatt. *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*. London: SCM, 2006.

Tanner, Kathryn. "Social Theory Concerning the 'New Social Movements' and the Practice of Feminist Theology." In Chopp and Davaney, *Horizons in Feminist Theology*, 179-97.

———. "Theological Reflection and Christian Practices." In Volf and Bass, *Practicing Theology*, 228-44.

———. *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*. Guides to Theological Inquiry. Edited by Kathryn Tanner and Paul Lakeland. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997.

Teresa. *The Interior Castle*. The Classics of Western Spirituality. Translated by Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriquez. New York: Paulist Press, 1979.

Thérese. *Story of a Soul: The Autobiography of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux*. 3rd ed. Washington, DC: ICS, 1996.

Tillich, Paul. *Dynamics of Faith*. Harper Torchbooks. New York: Harper, 1958.

Tillich, Paul, and Robert C. Kimball. *Theology of Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1959.

Tracy, David. *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism*. New York: Crossroad, 1981.

Turner, Harold W. "A Model for the Structure of Religion in Relation to the Secular." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 3, no. 27 (1979): 42-64.

Ustorf, Werner. "The Cultural Origins of 'Intercultural' Theology." In Cartledge and Cheetham, *Intercultural Theology*, 11-28.

van der Ven, Johannes. A. *Practical Theology: An Empirical Approach*. Translated by Barbara Schultz. Kampen, The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1993.

Veling, Terry A. *Practical Theology: On Earth as It Is in Heaven*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005.

Volf, Miroslav, Dorothy C. Bass, eds. *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2002.

Ward, Pete. "The Hermeneutical and Epistemological Significance of Our Students: A Response to Bonnie Miller-Mclemore." *International Journal of Practical Theology* 16, no. 1 (2012): 55-65.

———. *Participation and Mediation: A Practical Theology for the Liquid Church*. London: SCM, 2008.

Whitehead, James D., and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead. *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry*. Rev. ed. Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1995.

Williams, Dar. "When I Was a Boy." In *The Honesty Room.* Razor and Tie, 1995, compact disc. http://www.darwilliams.com/releases/music/lyrics-the-honesty-room/

Wolfteich, Claire E. "Animating Questions: Spirituality and Practical Theology." *International Journal of Practical Theology* 13, no. 1 (2009): 121-43.

———. "Devotion and the Struggle for Justice in the Farm Worker Movement: A Practical Theological Approach to Research and Teaching in Spirituality." *Spiritus* 5, no. 2 (2005): 158-75.

———. "Graceful Work: Practical Theological Study of Spirituality." *Horizons* 27, no. 1 (2000): 7-21.

———. *Navigating New Terrain: Work and Women's Spiritual Lives*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2002.

———. "Where Two or Three Are Gathered: Christian Families as Domestic Churches." *Journal of Religion* 85, no. 1 (2005): 145-46.

Woodward, James, and Stephen Pattison, eds. *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000.